

RULERS OF THE AIR: DEMONIC BODIES AND THE MAKING OF THE ANCIENT  
CHRISTIAN COSMOS

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## ABSTRACT

Travis W. Proctor: Rulers of the Air: Demonic Bodies and the Making of the Ancient Christian Cosmos  
(Under the direction of Bart D. Ehrman)

This dissertation uses demonology as a lens through which to explore early Christian theorizations of the body's entanglement with nonhuman entities. Through four case studies on Christian demonologies in the first three centuries of the Common Era, I demonstrate that early Christians held to a wide variety of views on the demonic body. Early texts such as the Gospel of Mark and Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, for example, portray demons as "incorporeal." Writings from Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage, however, depict the demonic body in ways that stress its corpulence.

Despite these demonological discrepancies, in each case differences in demonic corporeality run parallel to divergences in Christian characterizations of the ideal Christian body. The hybridity of the demonic body, then, reflects broader multiplicities in Christian modes of corporeality. This suggests that the bodies of demons served as fruitful sites of negotiation and invention for Christians as they fashioned the contours of human corporeality within and among other cosmic forces. The propinquity between demonic and human corporealities, moreover, materialized in the ritual activities of early Christians. I point out that ideas regarding demonic bodies informed early Christian rites such as exorcism, the Eucharist, ritual contemplation, and baptism. In such a way, demonic bodies came to play a central role in the ritualization of Christian corporeality as an embodied repudiation of its demonic assailants. In this way, the contours of the demonic body both *reflected* and *reproduced* Christian corporeal ideologies.

The tandem construction of demonic and human corporeality demonstrates how early Christian authors constructed the bodies that populated their cosmos – human, demon, and otherwise – as part of broader cosmic networks. Configurations of the human body, on the one hand, took shape in light of the many bodies and objects adjacent to it. Similarly, the cosmos and its denizens were fashioned relative to ideals regarding the makeup and performance of Christian embodiment. By tracing this close interconnection, my project serves the broader purposes of re-centering the nonhuman in our study of early Christianity while enriching the cosmic contexts in which the Christian body took shape.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction: Bodies of a Subtler Type

*Only those who are guarded by the spirit of God can easily perceive the bodies of demons.*  
Tatian, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 15.3

*Being invisible is also not the same as being a metaphor.*  
Gregory Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?”

Augustine of Hippo warned his readers: never underestimate the speed of a demon. In his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, published in the early fifth century, Augustine explains that demons are able to predict events in the human sphere. This capability stems not from innate foreknowledge, but from the demons’ “far more subtle” (*longe subtilior*) bodies, which allow them to move swiftly across the surface of the earth to witness an event in one place and then “predict” its occurrence to unsuspecting humans in other locations.<sup>1</sup> The fourth-century Greek *Life of Antony* likewise claims that demons use their bodies, “thinner than those of humans” (*λεπτοτέροις...σώμασι μᾶλλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων*), to witness events and then “foretell” their occurrence in other areas.<sup>2</sup> Augustine’s and Antony’s comments here speak to two points on which early Christians agreed regarding demons: (1) the demonic body was far more “subtle” or “thin” than the fleshly corporeality of humans, and (2) this attribute served as a very powerful weapon for a very mischievous adversary.

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<sup>1</sup>Augustine of Hippo, *Literal Commentary on Genesis* 12.17.34–38.

<sup>2</sup>Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 31.2–3.

Early Christian concurrence on the nature of the demonic body, however, only goes so far. If we turn our view to the third century, we encounter in the writings of Origen of Alexandria a theologian who is frustrated by Christian disagreements over doctrinal matters of all sorts. In *On First Principles*, Origen notes, among other issues, that Christians differ on whether the demonic body is “bodily” or “bodiless”:

Now this [demonic] body is by nature a fine substance and thin like air, and on this account most people think and speak of it as incorporeal...It is customary for everything which is not like [the human body] to be *termed incorporeal by the more simple and uneducated of humans*, just as the air we breathe may be called incorporeal because it is not a body that can be grasped or held or that can resist pressure.<sup>3</sup>

Origen’s comments here hint at early Christian divergence on several interrelated issues:

definitions of the “body,” the body’s relation to “materiality,” and the corporeality of intermediary entities such as demons. On the last issue, even a brief survey of early Christian literature substantiates Origen’s observation: early Christians held variant viewpoints on the substance of the demonic body. Several Christian writers depict demons as *lacking* bodies; Ignatius of Antioch, for example, refers to demons as “bodiless” and contrasts their ephemeral existence with the “flesh” of human corporeality.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, several Christian authors posit that demons indeed possess bodily vessels, which are composed of thin material “stuff” (e.g., *pneuma*) and which have become encumbered with excess materiality due to the demons’ inhabitation of the lower realms of the cosmos.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Pref.8. Emphasis mine. Translations of *On First Principles* from G.W. Butterworth, tr., *Origen: On First Principles* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973). This point appears as part of a broader discussion on the embodiment of (semi-)divine entities such as God, angels, and demons. In Book One, Origen argues stridently that God is indeed “incomprehensible” and “immeasurable,” and, thus, “incorporeal” (I.5), but contrasts this with the subtle corporeality of demons. For discussion on ancient definitions of “corporeality” and “incorporeality” as applied to divine figures, see discussion below.

<sup>4</sup>*Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 2-3. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, Ignatius substantiates this point by quoting a passage identical to the one quoted by Origen from the *Teaching of Peter*.

<sup>5</sup>On this, see especially the discussion of “demonic sacrifice” and Clement of Alexandria in Chapter Four.

Extant early Christian literature, therefore, confirms Origen's observation regarding Christian disagreement over the demonic body. I am wary, however, of attributing such discordance purely to varying levels of "ignorance" among Christians, as Origen does in *On First Principles*. My research demonstrates that this discrepancy cannot be explained so "simply," but that it is linked to a set of concomitant divergences concerning the makeup of the (ideal) Christian body. I argue that early Christian inconsistencies over demonic corporeality simultaneously *reflect* and *reproduce* attendant differences concerning Christian (human) incarnation. First, Christian descriptions of demonic corporeality *reflect* shifts and differences in early Christian anthropology, insofar as the attributes that characterize Christian constructions of proper human embodiment are portrayed as inverted or deficient in Christian representations of the demonic body. When early Christians differed on the nature of appropriate Christian corporeality, therefore, these differences surfaced in apposite portrayals of the demonic body.

Second, Christian discourses surrounding demonic bodies *reproduce* particular modes of embodiment by informing the ritual "materialization" of the Christian body. I trace this process by demonstrating the interconnection between ideas regarding demonic bodies and Christian discussions of proper and improper ritual practice. Through the entanglement of demonology and ritual praxis, the bodies of demons played a significant role in constructing, constraining, and empowering the bodily performance of Christian corporeal ideals. The interimplication of demonic and human bodies, seen in particular through both demonological and ritual discourses, underscores the thoroughgoing entanglement of the Christian body with nonhuman entities in the ancient cosmos.

## Significant Previous Research on Early Christian Demons

While demons have long occupied an important place in the study of ancient Christianity, they have received renewed scholarly scrutiny in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>6</sup> Scholars of the New Testament and historical Jesus, for example, have shown particular interest in demonic possession and exorcism narratives in the early Gospels.<sup>7</sup> In early Christian studies, several scholars have noted the important functions that demonological traditions served in their respective textual and socio-historical contexts. The work of Annette Yoshiko Reed, for example, has combined reception histories of Enochic fallen angel (and demon) traditions with examinations of their importance for shaping Jewish and Christian identity.<sup>8</sup> Elaine Pagels and Jennifer Wright Knust, furthermore, have examined how early Christian authors utilized demons in their responses to Roman imperial authority, particularly regarding issues of gender and sexuality.<sup>9</sup> Dale Martin has traced, moreover, the role demons played in the construction of ancient “superstition” by Hellenic and Christian intellectuals.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For an overview of past researches in demonology, see especially Jonathan Z. Smith, “Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.16:1 (1978), 430-433. For earlier anthological treatments, see Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development* (London: The Epworth Press, 1949); C.D.G. Müller, “Geister (Dämonen)” in Theodor Klauser, ed., *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* Vol. IX (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976), col. 546-797; Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup>For more on this, see Chapter Two.

<sup>8</sup>Annette Yoshiko Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12:2 (2004), 141-171; eadem, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup>Elaine Pagels, “Christian Apologists and ‘the Fall of the Angels’: An Attack on Roman Imperial Power?” *Harvard Theological Review* 78.3/4 (1985), 301-325; Jennifer Wright Knust, “Enslaved to Demons: Sex, Violence, and the Apologies of Justin Martyr,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 431-455.

<sup>10</sup>Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Scholars have also pointed to the significance of demons for the shaping of human identity and embodiment. Richard Valantasis, for example, has explored the importance of ideas concerning demonic bodies for constructions of ascetic virtue in monastic literature.<sup>11</sup> In a similar vein, David Brakke has analyzed how the diverse embodied states of demons – including ethnic, sexual, and material characteristics – fashioned the bodily identity of Christian monks. Brakke notes, for example, that monks often molded their identity as powerful “ritual experts” through their intimate knowledge and thwarting of demons.<sup>12</sup> Brakke’s discussion of ritual expertise builds upon the now-classic portrayal of the late antique “holy man” by Peter Brown, who argued that the dramatized performance of exorcism “imbued power within the body of the holy man.”<sup>13</sup> David Frankfurter has explored how late antique religious experts and institutions used the classification and control of evil spirits as a way to consolidate their authority and address the concerns of local clients.<sup>14</sup> Heidi Marx-Wolf has offered several fruitful expansions of Frankfurter’s focus on ritual experts and demons, concentrating on how intellectuals such as Origen of Alexandria, Porphyry of Tyre, and Iamblichus of Apamea utilized their purported knowledge of and power over demons to reinforce their intellectual and social clout.<sup>15</sup> As a final

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<sup>11</sup>Richard Valantasis, “Demons and the Perfecting of the Monk’s Body: Monastic Anthropology, Demonology, and Asceticism,” *Semeia* 58 (1992), 47-79.

<sup>12</sup>David Brakke, “Ethiopian Demons: Male Sexuality, the Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001), 501-535; idem, *Demons and the Making of the Monk* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

<sup>13</sup>Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101 [89]. See also idem, “Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages,” in Mary Douglas, ed., *Witchcraft: Confession and Accusations* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 17-45.

<sup>14</sup>David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>See especially her most recent work, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), as well as eadem, “Platonists and High Priests: Demonology, Ritual and Social Order in the Third Century CE.” (Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2009); eadem, “Third-Century Daimonologies and the *Via Universalis*: Origen, Porphyry and Iamblichus on Daimons and Other Angels.” *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 207-215; eadem, “A Strange Consensus:

example, Dayna Kalleres has demonstrated the utility of expanding the focus on demons in late antiquity to urban and ecclesiastical settings, where early Christian clerics employed discourses of spiritual warfare to shape orthodoxy and orthopraxy in significant ways.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to the current study, the most thoroughgoing treatment of demonic embodiment appeared in Gregory Smith's 2008 article "How Thin is a Demon?" Focusing on examples from the early Christian apologists and later church fathers, Smith points out that Christian (and non-Christian) portrayals of demonic bodies ranged from incorporeal to somatic, with several forms of attenuated corporeality in between.<sup>17</sup> Smith pointed out, furthermore, that the "substance" used to describe the demonic body (i.e., *pneuma*) typically entailed some form of "material" existence, even if more "fine" than that of humans or animals. In similar ways to Smith, Dyan Elliott argues that (medieval) Christian theologians have evinced surprisingly divergent views of the demonic body.<sup>18</sup> Elliott's work adroitly connects changes in depictions of demonic corporeality to shifts in related intellectual issues. She notes, for example, that the rejection of demonic embodiment by 13<sup>th</sup> century scholastics correlates to the increasingly positive view of the human body's "salvific potential"; this shift, Elliott points out, was a response to the Cathar "heresy" that repudiated positive valuations of human embodiment.<sup>19</sup> Smith's and Elliott's

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Demonological Discourse in Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus" in Robert M. Frakes, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Justin Stephens, eds., *The Rhetoric of Power in Late Antiquity* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2010), 219-240.

<sup>16</sup>Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

<sup>17</sup>Gregory Smith, "How Thin is a Demon?" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16:4 (2008), 479-512.

<sup>18</sup>*Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid*, 136-7.

contributions underscore the simultaneous diversity and significance of Christian demonologies, and provide fruitful models for future explorations of the demonic body.

My project distinguishes itself from these predecessors by its focus on the first three centuries of the Common Era, a pivotal time in Christian history that has remained relatively untitled in studies of early Christian demonology. To date, there has been no analysis that has traced Christian demonologies from their origins in the early Jesus movement and New Testament Gospels through their reception in the writings of early Christians in the “post-apostolic” period.<sup>20</sup> This scholarly lacuna is in part due to scarcity of resources. Unlike late antiquity and the medieval period, the first three centuries of the Common Era yield relatively few instances of comprehensive “demonologies” (i.e., systematic classifications of demonic entities). When reconstructing early Christian demonologies in this period, then, scholars must rely on short discussions and fleeting allusions. What is more, in the early centuries we often lack important biographical and contextual information for authors who provide valuable insights (e.g., Athenagoras of Athens, Tatian of Syria), which complicates our ability to situate demonological tenets within their respective cultural contexts and so qualifies the types of historical claims we can make regarding shifts or differences in Christian demonologies. Despite such challenges, the “thinness” of our demonological evidence in this early period presents an opportunity for fruitful comparison to other areas of Christian belief and practice. Although we might not be able to reconstruct comprehensive demonological systems, we might still catch

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<sup>20</sup>Analyses of early Christian demonology have largely focused either on demonologies in the New Testament Gospels or their later reception, rarely combining the two for concurrent exploration. As such, in telling the history of the demonic body, we lack analysis of its earliest origins and developments. Annette Reed’s *Fallen Angels* comes closest to such a survey, though her focus on Watchers traditions naturally precludes a thoroughgoing consideration of New Testament gospel demonologies (where fallen angels are mostly out of view). Partial exceptions to this generalization would be the anthological surveys of F.C. Conybeare (*Christian Demonology* [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007 {1896-7}], Edward Langton (*Essentials of Demonology*), and Everett Ferguson (*Demonology of the Early Christian World*), though such treatments largely provide chronological surveys rather than comparative analyses.

glimpses of the complex ways that demons contributed to larger Christian debates, and thereby gain a better appreciation for how demons “fit” in the broader cosmos in which Christians lived and moved.

### **Theory and Methodology**

My research comprises what Elizabeth Clark calls a ‘New Intellectual History’ of the demonic body.<sup>21</sup> This brand of intellectual history, in ways similar to its more traditional predecessors, is interested in the meaning and function of ideas or concepts within their authorial and socio-historical contexts. As part of this new form of inquiry, however, Clark encourages historians to conduct *ideological* analyses of the complex relationships between texts and their multiply interpenetrating contexts. Here drawing on Marxist theorists such as Anthony Giddens and John B. Thompson, Clark calls for analyses that explore how meanings and forms of signification interact with, undergird, perpetuate, and contest particular relations of power that, in the words of Thompson, are “systematically asymmetrical.”<sup>22</sup> This approach calls attention to how ideology “fixes” subjects so that historians might denaturalize and re-historicize the products of ideological discourses.

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<sup>21</sup>Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Clark here builds on the work of Dominick LaCapra, particularly his work *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). LaCapra reformulates intellectual history in part by redefining “text,” the frequent foundations of such histories, away from simply referring to literary tractates, and toward a reformulated definition as “a texture or network of relations interwoven with the problem of language” (Ibid, 19). LaCapra likewise repositions “context” not simply as the “background” for ideas, but as multiple, interactive, and typically founded on the basis of textual traces (Ibid, 27). Most importantly, the biographical or intellectual context of the author is no longer thought to maintain control over meaning, a methodological approach informed by the recognition that the meanings of a text proliferate beyond that of the author and the text’s original contexts (on this, see Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 158).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, 158.

My project denaturalizes and historicizes the bodies of Christians and demons by contextualizing both within broader anthropological, demonological, and ritual discourses. My work here builds on the robust scholarly interest in ideational perceptions and portrayals of the body. In this line of inquiry, the body and its concomitant materiality or gender/sexuality are not natural attributes, but culturally contingent products of ideological constructions. My approach draws on the work of gender theorist Judith Butler, who argues that gender (alongside other bodily attributes) is essentially “performative,” or, “a stylized repetition of acts...in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusions of an abiding gendered self.”<sup>23</sup> Butler’s repositioning of the body as a performative “illusion” of fixity does not undermine its fundamental “materiality.” Rather, Butler reconfigures bodily materiality as “*a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter.*”<sup>24</sup> This move towards an “emergent” view of materiality calls to attention the complex ways in which bodies take shape as part of “reiterative and citational” practices – that is, as part of bodily performances that echo and allude to preexisting cultural paradigms.<sup>25</sup> In Butler’s formulation, then, bodies are neither “purely” discursive nor “merely” physical; they are entities that “materialize” through the performative enactment and perpetuation of regulatory discourses.<sup>26</sup>

Butler’s notion of performativity lends itself to a fruitful consideration of religious ritual, that is, the way in which humans engage in formal, rule-governed, symbolic, and, most

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<sup>23</sup>Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 140.

<sup>24</sup>Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9. Emphasis original.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, xii.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

importantly, *performative* activities that distinguish a particular time or space as sacred or important.<sup>27</sup> Drawing on ritual studies scholarship, my work examines how ritual discourses enact “bodily dispositions” that hold “practical sense” for their practitioners.<sup>28</sup> Ritual actions do not emerge *ex nihilo*, of course, but take shape in part based on authoritative traditions and texts. The authors that form the foundation for my study draw on a wide range of textual resources in their demonological speculations and attendant ritual prescriptions. One important aspect of my project, then, is the analysis of the complex ways that texts and rituals are mutually informative in the shaping of Christian authority, tradition, and practice.<sup>29</sup> Put another way, I study how the Christian ritual performances “cite” or “reiterate” ritual discourses and, in doing so, contribute to the “materialization” of Christian ritual bodies.

Reading ritual through Butler’s lens of performativity signals my indebtedness to gender and cultural studies scholarship that traces the social contingency of human embodiment.<sup>30</sup> Early

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<sup>27</sup>This provisional outline of “ritual” is adapted from Catherine Bell’s discussion of “ritual-like” characteristics in *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 138-170.

<sup>28</sup>On this, see Marcel Mauss, *Sociology and Psychology: Essays* (tr. B. Brewster; London: Routledge, 1979); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (tr. Richard Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [1972]); idem, *The Logic of Practice* (tr. Richard Nice; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990 [1980]); Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*; eadem, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>29</sup>On this, see Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 140.

<sup>30</sup>Some of the classic treatments of the cultural construction of the body in early Christianity include Peter Brown, *Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008 [1988]); Maureen Tilley, “The Ascetic Body and the (Un)making of the World of the Martyr,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1991), 467-480; Virginia Burrus, “Word and Flesh: The Bodies and Sexuality of Ascetic Women in Christian Antiquity,” *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 10 (1994), 27-52; eadem, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Stephen D. Moore, *God’s Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Brent D. Shaw, “Power/Body/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 269-312; Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998); Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to be Men* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Gail Corrington Streete, *Redeemed Bodies: Women Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009); Virginia Burrus, Karmen

Christian studies has drawn extensively on this brand of scholarship, but one aspect of ancient embodiment has remained relatively underexplored: the interconnection between cultural constructions of the body and surrounding *nonhuman* environments. This may be due in part to the difficulty of assessing the impact of entities, such as demons or angels, which contemporary scholars often ascribe to Christian “imaginative” cosmologies rather than ancient empirical “realities.” While it may be true that demons are less “available” to modern readers for close analysis and investigation, it must be emphasized that they were no less impactful to ancient Christian worldviews and lived realities. Peter Brown has taken note of this important aspect of ancient corporeality, and has encouraged scholars to recognize more readily that the ancient Christian body “was embedded in a cosmic matrix in ways that made its perception of itself profoundly unlike our own.”<sup>31</sup> Based on this recognition, and drawing on Ellen Muehlberger’s work on early Christian angels, my project analyzes demons as “culturally operational” – that is, as entities that “are real to religious practitioners” insofar as they are capable of “influencing behavior and the generation of new ideas because they are given parts of late ancient Christian culture.”<sup>32</sup> Muehlberger’s approach resonates with recent trends in humanities scholarship that situate the human body within broader interconnected networks of nonhuman entities. Sometimes grouped under the rubric of “posthumanism,” such methods work to “decenter” the

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MacKendrick, & Mark Jordan, *Seducing Augustine: Bodies, Desires, Confessions* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); Jennifer Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>31</sup>Brown, *Body and Society*, xlvi. Brown’s comments here were made as part of the introduction to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of his *Body and Society*, and thus serve as Brown’s retrospective on studies of the body in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

<sup>32</sup>Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

human in order to correct prevailing anthropocentric tendencies.<sup>33</sup> For my own work, three current strands of posthumanist approaches have been particularly fruitful conversation partners: multispecies analysis, New Materialism, and nonhuman cosmic historiography.

Cultural theorist Donna J. Haraway has called for “thinking-with” nonhuman entities such that “the domain of ways of being and knowing *dilates*, expands, adds both ontological and epistemological possibilities, *proposes and enacts what was not there before*.”<sup>34</sup> Haraway positions this approach as an essential step in enacting the “Chthulucene,”<sup>35</sup> an era where proper consideration of the interconnected, multispecies nature of the earth’s ecosystems informs scientific practices and cultural theorizations such that humanity can become a more responsible ecospecies.<sup>36</sup> Haraway’s proposal here highlights the imaginative and constructive possibilities of historiographies that give due attention to nonhuman agents like demons, angels, animals, plants, and other critters. In doing so, we might expand the ways in which we conceive of our

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<sup>33</sup>For an overview of posthumanist theory, see especially Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), where such approaches are traced through their origins in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century cybernetics and systems theories to more recent inquiries in environmental, animal, and technology studies (xii). See also Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); eadem, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Neil Badmington, *Posthumanism* (Hampshire, NY: Palgrave, 2000); idem, *Alien Chic: Posthumanism and the Other Within* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Elaine Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens, and Others in Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002). For the use of posthumanism in biblical studies, see especially the collection of essays in Jennifer L. Koosed, ed., *The Bible and Posthumanism* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

<sup>34</sup>Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 126-7. Emphasis mine. See also her now-classic essay “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in eadem, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*.

<sup>35</sup>Haraway’s term here works as a subversive replacement for the more common epoch monikers, “Anthropocene” (“era of the human”) and “Capitalocene” (“era of capital”). “Chthulu” draws upon ancient terms for chthonic (“earthly”), and seeks to articulate the complex “tentacular” interconnections between both human and nonhuman earth-bound creatures (Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 30-57).

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

world and the intricate web of ecosystems within it; along the way, we create the possibility for imagining different kinds of relations, futures, and modes of being.

Demons challenge us, moreover, to rethink our approaches to issues of embodiment and materiality. Jane Bennett has called for renewed analyses on these issues that call attention to “the *material* agency or effectivity of nonhuman or not-quite-human things,” as part of an effort to “promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities.”<sup>37</sup> Central to Bennett’s proposals are considerations of the “agency” or “vitality” of nonhuman materiality – including plants, animals, microorganisms, soil, water, and other environmental entities. Bennett suggests that we must theorize “horizontal” (i.e., equitable and non-hierarchical) representations of the relations between humans and these nonhuman agents in order to recognize that human and nonhuman things “have always performed an intricate dance with each other. There was never a time when human agency was anything other than an *interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity*.”<sup>38</sup> The notion of an “interfolding” grid of agency resonates with what I trace in the relationship between Christians and the demonic. As seen especially in cases of demonic possession, but also in the overlapping cultural constructions of Christian and demonic bodies, human and nonhuman agency is oftentimes difficult to untangle. Bennett’s work demonstrates how rethinking humanity’s relationship with nature entails reshaping the way we view nature. No longer an inert material backdrop, nonhuman nature must be viewed as a vibrant, complex, always-changing ecosystem, containing multiple and overlapping “agents.”

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<sup>37</sup>Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), ix-x. Emphasis mine.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, 31. Emphasis mine.

Heidi Marx-Wolf has demonstrated how Bennett's concept of vital materialism can provide a fruitful lens through which to analyze the "fine material" bodies of demons in antiquity. Marx-Wolf argues, "there was little disagreement about the fact that *matter was enlivened or animated by forces*...Ancient matter stubbornly resists form, not because it is passive, dull, inert; rather it is up to something else, or many other things."<sup>39</sup> Due recognition of matter's "vibrancy" entails an attendant reconsideration of ancient embodiment, as noted by Marx-Wolf: "the body was not merely a passive implement of the spirit animating it. It was already in some sense animated by other forces."<sup>40</sup>

In similar ways to Marx-Wolf, Catherine Chin has demonstrated the profitability of highlighting nonhuman participation in the broader world of early Christianity. Chin calls on scholars to conduct multifaceted "cosmological historiographies," which duly appreciate that "events and actions are necessarily the products of multiple interacting agents, only some of whom are human."<sup>41</sup> A focus on nonhuman agency, Chin suggests, can enrich our understandings of ancient subjectivity: "by virtue of knowing the cosmos, the human beings in this history also know themselves to be variously actors, acted upon, and caught up as instruments in the actions of invisible others."<sup>42</sup> Chin's comments here highlight how nonhuman historiographies do not necessarily entail a disregard for issues of human culture and practice, but enrich the ways that we reconstruct ancient human perspectives on the world. Denise Kimber

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<sup>39</sup>Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies*, 68. Emphasis mine.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid, 67-68.

<sup>41</sup>Catherine Chin, "Cosmos," in eadem and Moulie Vidas, eds., *Late Ancient Knowing: Explorations in Intellectual History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 99-111 [100].

<sup>42</sup>Ibid, 111.

Buell similarly asserts that posthuman lines of inquiry provide “questions to ask about how the “human” emerges always in and through and from that which becomes “nonhuman.””<sup>43</sup>

My research investigates the process through which ancient Christian embodiment is created, in Buell’s words, “in and through and from” its interimplication with nonhuman, demonic bodies. In better accounting for their invisible-yet-potent actions, my work explores the entanglement of the “human” with those elements (e.g., the body, the biological, the natural, the material) that have often been repressed as part of the consolidation of the proper Enlightenment ideal of “human” subjectivity. In this way, my use of “posthumanism” does not function as a “predictive” moniker – i.e., one that envisages humans “overcoming” their current human status – but as a recognition of the many contingencies that attend the consolidation of “human” as a distinct category of existence and identity. When we more effectively highlight and historicize this contingency, we come closer to recognizing that our shared cosmos – whether ancient or modern – is thickly populated by multiply intersecting, vibrant ecosystems of human and nonhuman entities.

### **Demons and Bodies in the Ancient Mediterranean**

Past treatments of the “demonic” have used the term and its cognates to refer to a wide range of “evil spiritual beings” or “divine intermediaries” that populated ancient cosmologies.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Denise Kimber Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” in Koosed, *The Bible and Posthumanism*, 29-56 [44].

<sup>44</sup>This is especially true of studies of Old Testament “demonology,” when entities that appear similar to the demonic, but otherwise are not identified as such (e.g., “azazel” [Lev 16:8-10]), are sometimes described in the same category as “demons.” On this, see especially Judit M. Blair, *De-demonising the Old Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) and Anne Marie Kitz, “Demons in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135.3 (2016), 447-464.

While such an expansive approach can enable certain types of fruitful cross-cultural comparison, it has sometimes functioned to collapse the demonic into a monolithic category that otherwise might be better understood as disparate (if related) classes of nonhuman entities.<sup>45</sup> In order to move toward more a more precise intellectual history of such categories, I restrict the scope of my study to examining only those instances where early Christian writers specifically utilize the Greek, Latin, or Coptic terms that are the semantic predecessors for the English term “demon” (e.g., δαίμων, δαιμόνιον, *daemon*, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ).<sup>46</sup> In such a way, my project aims to conduct a more specific analysis of the terms’ formulation and reception history, while also avoiding the mistake of assuming equivalency based on (English) translation practices.<sup>47</sup> Relatedly, I use the term “demonology” as shorthand for ideas or discourses about the entities that are indexed using these terms. In my approach, then, Christian “demonologies” include not only the systematic demonological systems of later periods, but also more fleeting comments regarding demons as are typically found in Christian writings of the pre-Nicene period.

In analyzing the demonic, I eschew artificial distinctions between “popular” and “elite” demonologies. Some scholars have posited a wide gulf between understandings of ambiguous local spirits “on the ground” and the completely evil demons constructed as part of Christian

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<sup>45</sup>For this type of approach, see especially David Frankfurter’s *Evil Incarnate*.

<sup>46</sup>At times, this will occasion the inclusion of non-demonic terminology, but only when prompted by explicit or apparent equation of such terms by ancient sources. Chapter Two, for example, will consider exorcism stories that discuss “unclean” or “evil” spirits, when appropriate, based on the Gospels’ explicit equation of these terms with “δαίμων/δαιμόνιον.”

<sup>47</sup>For a discussion on the use of the term “demon” in scholarship, see Anders Klostergaard Petersen, “The Notion of Demon: Open Questions to a Diffuse Concept,” in Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld, eds., *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 23-41.

discourses.<sup>48</sup> While I appreciate the important corrective that such scholarship provides – namely, to disabuse scholars of the idea that our extant texts are representative of “everyday” Christians – I do not draw such a stark distinction between extant literature and more “popular” paradigms. This stems from two observations: (1) we have little evidence that can tell us anything about “everyday” religion which is not also mediated by at least some level of “scribal” or “intellectual” fashioning, a fact that severely limits our ability to draw distinctions between “popular” and “elite” intellectual programs,<sup>49</sup> and (2) even “high” intellectual texts are born of and interact with specific local contexts. While we should of course never read texts as transparently reflective of their authors’ “background,” we should equally avoid presuming that they have little relationship with it.<sup>50</sup> Rather than positing the dichotomous existence of “popular” and “elite” demonologies, then, my work considers the ways that ancient textual productions built upon, diverged from, and constructed their respective contexts. Through this approach, I trace a more dynamic interaction between textualized demonologies and the “practical” contexts from which they emerge (and which they sometimes shape). In doing so, I

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<sup>48</sup>See especially David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*; idem, “Where the Spirits Dwell: Possession, Christianization, and Saints’ Shrines in Late Antiquity,” *Harvard Theological Review* 103.1 (2010), 27-46. Dale Martin likewise makes distinctions between popular and elite demonologies, though based upon differences between philosophical approaches (where demons are largely benevolent) and purported “popular” approaches (where demons are ambiguous and/or evil) (*Inventing Superstition*).

<sup>49</sup>I should note that this holds true for the *Greek Magical Papyri*, which are sometimes cited as evidence for broader and more popular Greco-Roman ideas on magic and demons, and yet were themselves produced as part of specific scribal cultures. Thus, even the *PGM*, which do indeed provide a (selective) window into popular “magical” practices, should not be cited as representative of more “general” practices, nor contrasted so sharply with “elite” demonological discourses. On this issue, see Lynn R. LiDonnici, “The Disappearing Magician: Literary and Practical Questions about the Greek Magical Papyri,” in Benjamin G. Wright, ed., *A Multiformal Heritage: Studies on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Robert A. Kraft* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 227-243 and William M. Brashear, “Magical Papyri: Magic in Bookform,” in Peter Ganz, ed., *Das Buch als magisches und als Repräsentationsobjekt* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 35-57.

<sup>50</sup>For a particularly interesting case of a “popular” demonology appearing in an intellectual context, see the analyses of the “Etruscan” demon in the writings of Porphyry of Tyre by Heidi Marx-Wolf (*Spiritual Taxonomies*, 64-69) and Aaron Johnson (*Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 93-94).

strive to provide a model for how we might construct more “localized” and less universalistic demonological paradigms in our analyses of the ancient world.

Finally, I should note that I avoid *a priori* categorical distinctions between Christian and non-Christian demonologies. Instead, I view Christian demonological discussions as part of broader, overlapping discourses in the ancient Mediterranean, which include Christian, Jewish, and other Greco-Roman interlocutors. At times, scholars have posited stark distinctions between Jewish/Christian and other Greco-Roman demonologies. Scholars typically base this thoroughgoing differentiation on ancient Judaism’s and early Christianity’s understanding of demons as wholly malevolent, whereas traditional Greco-Roman mythologies viewed them as capricious or capable of benevolence in their various cosmic roles. There is some truth to this distinction, as early Christians, alongside their Jewish neighbors, typically exhibited an “apocalyptic” demonology – that is, an understanding that demons were wholly malicious entities, diametrically opposed to the Hebrew/Christian God, and part of a pervasive onslaught of evil powers that was characteristic of the end times.<sup>51</sup> Non-Christian and non-Jewish Greco-Roman literature employs “demon” for a broader range of entities, including anonymous or unknown deities/divine forces,<sup>52</sup> cosmic administrators,<sup>53</sup> personified Fate,<sup>54</sup> semi-divine

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<sup>51</sup>I adapt this phrasing and definition from the work of David Frankfurter, “Overview of the Study of Angels and Demons” a presentation to the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (October 29, 1987) (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/psco/year25/>). Frankfurter here builds on a definition of “apocalyptic” that includes both revelatory and eschatological aspects.

<sup>52</sup>Homer, *Iliad*, III.420, I.922; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 984-91, I.655; Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* II.707-715; Euripides, *Hippolytos* 99; Plato, *Phaedrus* 274c5-7, 240a9-b1, *Politicus* 271d6-7, 272e6-8, *Timaeus* 40d6-e4, *Laws* 9.877a2-b2.

<sup>53</sup>Pindar, *Pythian* X.10, *Olympian* IX.28.

<sup>54</sup>Homer, *Iliad*, XII.103-105; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 314, *Theogonis* II.149-150; Pindar, *Isthmian* VI.11.40-45.

avengers,<sup>55</sup> spiritual guides,<sup>56</sup> and the souls of deceased humans.<sup>57</sup> As part of this wider range of roles, demons carried a more ambiguous valence, and often treated humans capriciously in parallel with other members of the traditional Greco-Roman pantheon.<sup>58</sup>

Despite this general distinction between Jewish/Christian and Greco-Roman demonological systems, several recent scholarly treatments have noted that Christians and Jews shared many demonological tenets with their non-Jewish/Christian contemporaries. Dale Martin and Heidi Marx-Wolf, for example, have demonstrated that early imperial Greco-Roman intellectual traditions have much in common with their Christian counterparts vis-à-vis the nature of the demonic.<sup>59</sup> This is notable especially in the increasingly malevolent portrayal of demons in the writings of later Greco-Roman authors such as Porphyry of Tyre.<sup>60</sup> Thus, while my exploration will focus on debates internal to the Christian tradition, I should emphasize that such accounts nonetheless participated in and drew upon broader ancient Mediterranean demonological discourses, including contemporaneous Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman

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<sup>55</sup>Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1569, 1660; *Persians* 158, 472, 345, *Seven Against Thebes* 705; Sophocles, *Philoctetes* li.1464-68, *Oedipus Tyrannus* II.1478-79; Euripides, *Trojan Women* 103, *Alcestis* 561, 931; Plutarch, *De def. or.* 417A–B.

<sup>56</sup>Plato, *Phaedrus* 1075d5-e4, 108a2-3, b2-3, *Republic* 10.617e1-2, 620.d7-e1; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 758A–B.

<sup>57</sup>Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 109-110; Plutarch, *De def. or.* 417B, *De Iside* 360E.

<sup>58</sup>For more on demons in the Greco-Roman tradition, see especially Frederick Brenk, “In the Light of the Moon: Demonology during the Early Imperial Period,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.16.3 (1986), 2068-2145; J.E. Rexine, “Daimon in Classical Greek Literature,” *Platon* 37 (1985), 29-52; Rita Lucarelli, “Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods in Egypt,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011), 109-125.

<sup>59</sup>Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, esp. pp. 93-108, 187-206; Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies*; eadem, “A Strange Consensus”; eadem, “Third-century Demonologies and the *Via Universalis*.”

<sup>60</sup>On this point, see my “Daemonic Trickery, Platonic Mimicry: Traces of Christian Daemonological Discourse in Porphyry’s *De Abstinencia*,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 68.4 (2014), 416-449,” and “Bodiless Docetists and the *Daimonic* Jesus: *Daimonological* Discourse and Anti-Docetic Polemic in Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 14 (2013), 183-204.

traditions. Throughout this dissertation, therefore, I maintain the use of the English “demon” for Jewish, Christian, and other Greco-Roman demonologies in order to acknowledge this shared discursive context.<sup>61</sup>

*“Bodies” and “Corporeality” in Greco-Roman Antiquity*

What might it mean to say that a demon has a body, especially in the context of Greco-Roman antiquity? This question raises several complicated issues, not the least of which is how we translate ancient concepts of embodiment or materiality into comprehensible contemporary categories. For the purposes of this project, I will use the English term “body” to represent its equivalent terms in Greek (σῶμα), Latin (*corpus*), and Coptic (CΩMΔ). This equivalency is not perfect, of course, as each of these terms have their own lexicographical peculiarities. That said, these ancient terms and their English equivalents are used in similar fashion for “bodies” of all sorts – including the exemplary case of the human body, but also that of animals and (semi)divinities. By including within my inquiry nonhuman “ephemeral” corporeality, I follow the lead of Gregory Smith, who has emphasized that ancient modes of embodiment included many examples of “fine” or “thin” bodies.<sup>62</sup> As noted by Smith, demons provide particularly

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<sup>61</sup>My approach here differs from the popular method of referring to Greco-Roman “demons” using Latin (*daemon*) or Greek (*daimon*) transliterations. Scholars justify this distinctive terminology based on the different levels of benevolence between Greco-Roman and Jewish/Christian demons. It should be emphasized, however, that relative benevolence is not the only important aspect of ancient demonologies, and that these demonologies converge in many ways despite their peculiarities. In my view, the use of divergent terminology obscures the many shared characteristics of Greco-Roman and Jewish/Christian demonologies, while implying that ancient discussions of demons took place in completely separate “spheres” or as part of wholly distinctive discursive contexts. To the contrary, writers in the ancient Mediterranean used overlapping Greek and Latin terminology for what we call “demons,” and often engaged in direct debates about how to define these terms properly. In our contemporary analyses, therefore, it is important to acknowledge this ongoing debate while avoiding any approaches that imply that demonological discussions took place as part of disparate cultural contexts.

<sup>62</sup>Gregory Smith, “Very Thin Things: Towards a Cultural History of the Soul in Roman Antiquity” (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2005).

interesting examples of subtle forms of embodiment within both Greco-Roman and Christian intellectual traditions. Greco-Roman writers, for example, often described the demonic body as consisting of “air” or “pneuma.” Apuleius of Madaura asserts that demons have an “aery” body that keeps them suspended in the cosmological middle ground between gods and humans.<sup>63</sup>

Apuleius’ description likely harkens back to the *Epinomis*, a fourth century BCE pseudo-Platonic writing where the author claims that demons are neither incorporeal nor immaterial, but rather made of “purest air.”<sup>64</sup> According to Plutarch, moreover, demons’ bodies possess “complex characteristics” similar to that of the moon (a celestial entity often seen as part of the “middle region” of the cosmos).<sup>65</sup> Porphyry of Tyre asserts that demons possess a polymorphic pneumatic vessel that can sometimes appear to humans:

For they are not cloaked with a solid body nor do they all have one shape, but they take many forms: the shapes which imprint and are stamped upon their *pneuma* sometimes becomes visible, sometimes invisible, and the worse ones sometimes change their shape. The *pneuma*, insofar as it is corporeal, is passible and corruptible.<sup>66</sup>

According to Porphyry’s contemporary Iamblichus, demons inhabit bodies that are “unchanging and impassive, in the form of bright light.”<sup>67</sup>

Christian authors align with their Greco-Roman counterparts by characterizing demons as possessing “airy” or “pneumatic” corporealities. Tatian of Syria, for instance, contends that

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<sup>63</sup>*De Deo Socratis*, 142. Translation from S. J. Harrison, J. L. Hilton, and Vincent Hunink, trs., *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Emphasis mine. For an analysis of demons in Apuleius’ *De Deo Socratis*, see Peter Habermehl, “Quaedam divinae mediae potestates: demonology in Apuleius’ *De deo Socratis*,” in H. Hofmann (Ed.), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* Vol. VII (Groningen: E. Forsten Verlag, 1996), 117-142.

<sup>64</sup>*Epinomis* 984b-c.

<sup>65</sup>*De Defectu Oraculorum* 415f-418a. See also Plutarch, *De Fac.* 944D.

<sup>66</sup>Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 2.39. Translation from Gillian Clark, tr., *Porphyry: On Abstinence from Killing Animals*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 71.

<sup>67</sup>Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 5.10. Translation from Emma Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson Hershbell, trs., *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), 243.

divine *pneuma* pervades the world and constitutes the bodies of both souls *and* demons.<sup>68</sup> Tatian elaborates: “None of the demons possesses a particle of flesh, but their constitution is spiritual, like that of fire and air.”<sup>69</sup> In similar fashion, Athenagoras of Athens states that demons are the “souls” of antediluvian giants.<sup>70</sup> Gregory Smith has noted, furthermore, that early Christian descriptions of demonic consumption of pneumatic “vapors” reveal an understanding of the demonic body as possessing a pneumatic substance.<sup>71</sup>

As seen in this brief sampling of Greco-Roman and Christian authors, the ancient term most often used to describe the demonic body was *pneuma* (“spirit”; πνεῦμα, *spiritus*, ΠΝΕΥΜΑ). This term sometimes refers simply to “breath” or “spirit,” but Greco-Roman philosophers often understood *pneuma* to be the cosmic material that “fills out” the seemingly vacuous spaces of organisms and explains the “communication” between diverse types of bodies (e.g., divine entities and humans).<sup>72</sup> Ancient writers consistently characterize *pneuma* as “fine material” – that is, it possesses some form of material “stuff,” even if imperceptibly so. Gregory Smith has traced this understanding of *pneuma* through the writings of Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian intellectuals.<sup>73</sup> Dale Martin likewise emphasizes that *pneuma* is “a kind of “stuff” that is the agent of perception, motion, and life itself.”<sup>74</sup> Accounting for the material nature of *pneuma* is

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<sup>68</sup>Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 4.2, 11.2.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, 15.31. Translation from Molly Whittaker, ed./tr., *Tatian: Oratio ad Graecos* (Clarendon Press, 1982), 31.

<sup>70</sup>Athenagoras, *Leg.* 25.1. For more on this, see Chapter Two.

<sup>71</sup>Smith, “How thin is a demon?” 497. For more on this, see Chapter Four.

<sup>72</sup>For more on this concept, see Gerard Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du pneuma, du stoïcisme à s. Augustin* (Paris: D. de Brouwer, 1945) and Marie E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop College, 1976).

<sup>73</sup>Smith, “Very Thin Things.”

<sup>74</sup>Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 21.

integral for the purposes of this project, as it underscores the fact that demons did often possess a form of “embodiment,” even if such corporeality appears rather ephemeral. This should alert us to the fact that ancient modes of embodiment included a much more expansive range of entities than those frequently indexed by the contemporary English use of “body” (which is often restricted to the tangible bodies accessible to human sight and touch). What is more, while Greco-Roman intellectual traditions did include the concept of “incorporeal” (ἄσώματος), they often reserved pure incorporeality for the highest divine entities. As such, semi-divine beings, such as demons, angels, or the human mind/soul, were typically understood to possess some form of attenuated corporeality.<sup>75</sup>

This seems to be the point stressed by Origen in his discussion of demons, above: while the demonic body may be very thin and therefore different from the human body, it is not “incorporeal” in the strict sense. Demons still enjoy some form of embodiment, Origen avers. Interestingly, Jerome later critiques Origenist Christians for their equivocations on this term:

“We believe,” (the Origenists) say, “in the future resurrection of bodies.” If this be rightly said, it is an innocent confession. But since “bodies” are celestial and terrestrial and since this air as well as the subtle breeze (*aura tenuis*) are called “bodies” according to their proper nature, they say “body”, not “flesh”, so that the orthodox when hearing “body” will think “flesh”, while the heretic will understand it as “spirit.”<sup>76</sup>

According to Jerome, then, Origenist Christians manipulate ancient terminological ambiguities in order to position their own beliefs within the proper bounds of orthodoxy.<sup>77</sup> Whether or not

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<sup>75</sup>Robert Renehan, “On the Greek Origins of the Concepts of Incorporeality and Immateriality,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980), 105-138 [127-132]. Renehan argues that the concept emerged in late presocratic and Academic philosophy as part of the philosophers’ “reflection on the relationship between Body and Soul” (Ibid, 130-131). For more on the soul in ancient Greek traditions, see Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). See also Smith, “Very Thin Things,” 25.

<sup>76</sup> Jerome, *Epistle* 84.5. Translation here from Smith, “Very Thin Things,” 26.

<sup>77</sup>On Jerome’s role in the Origenist controversy, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 121-151.

Jerome is summarizing Origenist practice correctly, his comments exhibit the at-times ambiguous and imprecise nature of ancient terminology for the body.

This brings to light what is one of the major insights of this dissertation: the scale of embodiment in ancient Greco-Roman cultural traditions is often much more expansive, elastic, and mutable than that of contemporary corporeal ideologies. Put another way, ancient terminology for the “body” in Greco-Roman antiquity refers to a much wider range of corporeal entities than does its modern English counterpart. What is more, terms for various modes of “corporeality” were matters of intense dispute in Greco-Roman philosophical circles. For the purposes of this dissertation, then, I will treat terms having to do with embodiment as *contested* concepts that functioned in diverse ways as part of fluctuating and inexact constructions of corporeality. Such conceptual ambiguity will at times frustrate attempts at terminological precision. Yet this uncertainty provides a fruitful foundation for the study to follow, in that such areas of indeterminacy bring into relief the way in which the malleable bodies of demons shaped the world around them.

## **Chapter Overview**

The dissertation consists of four main chapters. In the first two, I examine early Christian traditions regarding “bodiless” demons. Chapter Two focuses on traditions of demonic possession and exorcism in the texts of the Jesus movement and early Christianity. I note that texts such as the Gospel of Mark portray demons as disembodied entities. This depiction closely mirrors contemporary Jewish traditions that identify demons as the residual souls of antediluvian giants. Contrasted with the disembodiment of the demons is the potent corporeality of the

Christian exorcist, as evidenced both in the portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of Mark as well as his followers in writings of the first and second centuries. I argue that early Christian exorcism narratives reflect broader Christian corporeal paradigms that construe the human body as particularly prone to possession. The ritual practice of exorcism, in turn, contributed to the shaping of the Christian body as an entity adept in particular forms of ritual practice, and thus undergirded broader Christian claims to religious superiority.

In Chapter Three, I turn to another tradition of “bodiless” demons, found in Ignatius of Antioch’s *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. There, Ignatius claims that any Christian who believes in a phantasmal Jesus will be “just like what they believe,” that is, they will be “bodiless and demonic.” Through this equivalency, Ignatius caricatures his opponents’ views of Christ by equating them with a “demonic” Christology. Furthermore, Ignatius condemns his opponents to a bodiless and “demonic” afterlife. Elsewhere in his letters, Ignatius emphasizes the importance of Jesus’ existence as a dyadic “flesh and spirit” body, as well as the continued presence of Jesus’ “flesh and spirit” in the Christian Eucharist. Ignatius’ citation of demonic incorporeality, therefore, serves Ignatius well in circumscribing the Christian community by constraining proper Christian embodiment: a “docetic” Christian believes in and will become a “bodiless demon,” and will thus lack the required corporeality for proper participation in the “orthodox” Church and its unifying ritual, the Eucharist. Ultimately, Ignatius’ demonological rhetoric and policing of Christian ritual work in tandem to map out and constrain Christian ritual performance, and thus inform a particular “materialization” of the Christian body.

In the two succeeding chapters, I examine early Christian constructions of demonic corporeality that, unlike those traditions in the Gospel of Mark and letters of Ignatius, emphasize demons’ possession of fine-material bodies. In Chapter Four, I explore the function and

interpretation of Paul's exhortation to his readers in 1 Corinthians that they not mix the "body of the Lord" with the "table of demons" by participating in both the Christian Eucharist and traditional Hellenic animal sacrifices. Paul's statement draws on a long line of Jewish condemnation of non-Jewish sacrifice, and implies that the meat offerings of animal sacrifice nourish the demonic body. Later interpreters of 1 Corinthians make this even more explicit by reading Paul's rhetoric in light of Hellenic traditions regarding demonic consumption of sacrificial "vapors." Clement of Alexandria, for example, portrays the demonic body as one that has become grotesquely "fattened" due to its excess consumption of sacrificial fumes. Clement contrasts the demons' corpulence with his construal of the ideal Christian body: chaste, thin, and constantly engaged in contemplative practices that "strip away" the material body. The demonic body, then, informs and undergirds Clement's ritual program by providing a negative stereotype of those bodily attributes that Clement urges his readers to eschew.

In Chapter Five, I examine the intermixture of demonic and Christian bodies in the writings of Tertullian of Carthage. I begin by exploring Tertullian's construction of humanity's dual flesh-and-spirit body in *On the Soul*, wherein he emphasizes the pervasive attachment of demonic spirits to the human soul. This demonic affliction stems, Tertullian claims, from inadvertent participation in demonolatry via Roman "religious" rites. The only method by which Roman citizens can remove their attendant demonic spirit is through Christian baptism, a practice that Tertullian views as essential in the creation of a new, demon-free Christian body. Incorporating insights from cultural theorists Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz, I argue that the demonic body functions within Tertullian's writings as a kind of abject entity – one that is foreclosed as part of the ritualized construction of the Christian body and yet loiters as a threatening epitome of those elements unbecoming of Christian corporeality. The lingering threat

of the abject demon surfaces mostly clearly in Tertullian's *On the Shows*, a treatise that warns Christians of the myriad activities contaminated by demons, which therefore threaten to pollute the body and undo the salvific work of Christian baptism. The only way to ensure the endurance of one's Christian corporeality, Tertullian argues, is by maintaining Christian habits and eschewing all activities infected by Roman demonolatry.

Chapter Six concludes the study by placing its findings in conversation with current explorations in the humanities regarding "nonhumanity." I note there that early Christians depicted the demonic body in widely divergent ways. Whether disembodied or corporeal, fattened or ephemeral, depictions of demonic corporeality were as diverse as the Christians who articulated them. Yet a consistent feature of early Christian demonologies is the way in which demonic bodies are enmeshed with their human counterparts. On the one hand, Christian descriptions of demonic corporeality reflect shifts and differences in early Christian anthropology insofar as they inversely correlate to articulations of the ideal human body. Christian discourses surrounding demonic bodies also reproduce particular forms of embodiment; by aiding in the construction of specific modes of Christian corporeality, demonologies played an important role in fashioning, constraining, and empowering certain Christian bodily performances. Thus, early Christian demonological differences "materialized" in the diverse range of ritual practices they "inspired" or informed.

With its focus on cultural constructions of human corporeality, my research builds upon previous humanities scholarship in fields such as anthropology and gender/sexuality studies. Through sustained attention to nonhuman entities, however, my project decenters and resituates the human body as one entity amidst a complex ecosystem of assorted organisms. In doing so, my research draws on posthumanism, a theoretical position that eschews any *a priori* accordance

of unique superiority to humanity over or disconnection from other entities. For many ancient Christians, the human body did not exist in a discrete realm separate from and superior to “nature.” Rather, there existed only a fluid and permeable boundary between the tenuous materiality of the human body and adjacent nonhuman entities. My project demonstrates that early Christian cosmologies might stimulate alternative theorizations of humanity’s interconnection with nonhuman ecosystems, and thus prove useful in invigorating contemporary discussions of humanity’s complex relationships with its nonhuman environments.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Demons in the Making: Possession, Exorcism, and the Disembodied Demonic in the Early Jesus Movement

The Synoptic Gospels concur in depicting Jesus as one who had the ability to cast out demons. Despite the agreement of our earliest sources on this issue, however, modern biblical scholarship has at times been slow to appreciate the importance of exorcism within the early Jesus movement.<sup>78</sup> The tension between depictions of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and contemporary historical reconstructions is in part a lingering legacy of the Enlightenment-era “rationalization” or “demythologization” of Jesus’ miracles, as part of which the exorcisms of Jesus were discounted in favor of gospel sayings and deeds more palatable to contemporary proclivities.<sup>79</sup> In the last three decades, however, scholars have begun to give attention to exorcism and its importance for the early Jesus movement.<sup>80</sup> Several studies have analyzed

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<sup>78</sup>This is in part due to the interpretive challenges that the demonic presents to modern theologians. Ramsay MacMullen notes, for example, “historians...of the church have declared that such phenomena (of divine confrontations) ‘are more problems of crowd psychology than of Christian piety.’ In so doing, they have declared the study of exorcism, possibly the most highly related activity of the early Christian church, a historiographical ‘no-go’ area” (Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* [New Haven: Yale, 1984], 27, quoting Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980], 107).

<sup>79</sup>Richard H. Hiers has pointed out how exorcism stories have largely been neglected among some of the seminal New Testament studies (Richard H. Hiers, “Satan, Demons, and the Kingdom of God,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27 [1974], 35-47). Graham Twelftree suggests that this reticence is due to the special problems that are raised when attempting to reconcile ancient Christian demonologies with contemporary theological dispositions: “despite the apparent importance of Jesus’ exorcistic activity in the Synoptic tradition, the present state of New Testament research on the life of Jesus appears still to be under the spell of Strauss when it comes this aspect of the reports of Jesus’ ministry. This is probably because the exorcism stories are seen to form part of the miracle tradition in the Gospels. Also, they carry special difficulties in that exorcism stories presuppose a belief in the existence of demons or evils spirits” (Graham Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010 {1993}], 8).

<sup>80</sup>There is, of course, a longstanding tradition of emphasizing Jesus’ miracles as an important aspect of his ministry. On this, see especially James Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles* (London: SPCK, 1961); Hendrick van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Rene Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988); Mary Mills, *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). Among historical Jesus studies, Geza Vermes’ *Jesus the*

exorcism as a type of premodern healing discourse, where demonic “possessions” may in fact be indicative of underlying psychosomatic illnesses.<sup>81</sup> Other treatments have read exorcism narratives as oblique forms of protest against (Roman) colonial forces.<sup>82</sup> While such methods

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*Jew* (London: Collins, 1973) and Morton Smith’s *Jesus the Magician* (London: Gollancz, 1978) also give considerable attention to the role of exorcisms in Jesus’ ministry. For recent works addressing exorcism and the early Jesus movement, see Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1995); Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*; *ibid*, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); Clinton L. Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Amanda Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

<sup>81</sup>On this, see Davies, *Jesus the Healer*. Using insights from cross-cultural anthropology, Davies argues that Jesus should be seen as a healer who believed that through his trance-driven miraculous abilities he was able to render therapeutic treatment to possessed individuals in Jewish society. Davies’ work is but one example of a broader phenomenon in studies of ancient possession: the attempt to use cross-cultural anthropological paradigms, typically informed by ethnographic studies of contemporary “pre-industrial” or “primitive” societies, in order to fill out our knowledge of the background of ancient Mediterranean understandings of spirits, possession, and healing. While those studies may shed light on potential overlaps between ancient and contemporary cultures, I prefer to emphasize the culturally-situated nature of demonologies, and thus will be relying almost exclusively on what ancient evidence can tell us about early Christian exorcism narratives. For similar approaches to that of Davies, see Colleen Ward, “Spirit Possession and Mental Health: A Psycho-anthropological Perspective,” *Human Relations* 33 (1980), 149-163; eadem, *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989); eadem and Michael H. Beaubrun, “Psychodynamics of Demon Possession,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19.2 (1980), 201-7; Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); idem, “The Spirit-Filled Experience of Jesus,” in J.D.G. Dunn and Scot McKnight, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 302-314; J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1993); John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Pieter Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008). For the application of such methodologies to exorcism, see especially the work of Paul W. Hollenbach, who refers to his method as providing a “more indigenous description of Jesus’ exorcisms” (Hollenbach, “Help for Interpreting Jesus’ Exorcisms,” *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers* [1993], 119-128 [126]). The fact that many of these anthropological models are based on contemporary societies severely limits their ability to ascertain the “indigenous” contexts of first century Palestine. Hollenbach’s understanding of demons, following Gerd Theissen, builds upon Franz Fanon’s work on mental illness during the Algerian revolutionary war (Hollenbach, “Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study,” *Journal for the American Academy of Religion* 49 (1981), 567-588 [573]). For a more nuanced treatment of this topic, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The Human Being and Demonic Invasion: Therapeutic Models in Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts,” in Christopher C.H. Cook, ed., *Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 94-123.

<sup>82</sup>As noted by Graham Twelftree: “According to a recurring theme in New Testament scholarship, the demonic is to be interpreted socio-politically, both from Mark’s perspective as well as at a historical level. For example, from Mark’s perspective in the story of the exorcism in the synagogue at Capernaum, the demon is taken to represent the scribal establishment so that the exorcism itself obliquely symbolizes the casting out of the scribal class. At the historical level, the mental - which is to be understood socio-psychologically - is caused, or at least exacerbated, by the social tensions of Roman colonialism, and led to possession functioning as a fix for those who felt politically trapped and unable to cope” (Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 106). For more on this approach, see discussion and notes on the Gerasene demoniac story in Mark 5, below.

have gleaned important insights, they have sometimes approached early Christian demonologies in similar fashion to past “demythologizing” tactics – that is, they have largely ignored questions regarding the origin, nature, and activity of demons themselves, preferring instead to examine how demons point to other, less “fanciful” socio-cultural realities.<sup>83</sup>

In what follows, I fill this scholarly lacuna by giving due attention to the nature of the demonic in the exorcism narratives of the early Jesus movement. In keeping with the broader interests of this project, I do so by focusing on the nature of demonic “corporeality.” Past scholarly treatments have largely neglected this aspect of early Christian demonology, perhaps because the Gospels portray demons as usurping *other* (human, animal) bodies, and therefore imply that demons lack autonomous corporeality. Demons’ ostensible disembodiment, however, obscures a more complex corporeal history – one that includes a past as a fully embodied antediluvian “giant.” I excavate this history through analysis of the Gospel of Mark, our earliest extant gospel and a text that stands as the source for much of the early Jesus movement’s exorcism narratives.<sup>84</sup>

Ultimately, I conclude that the Gospel of Mark portrays demons in a fashion that dovetails with contemporaneous Second Temple Jewish demonologies, particularly those found in Enochic literature. This demonological concomitance does not necessarily expose the literary sources for Mark’s demonology, but does suggest that the early Jesus movement drew upon and participated in demonological discourses analogous to Jewish counterparts. This proposal is

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<sup>83</sup>On this, see Gregory David Wiebe, “The Demonic Phenomena of Mark’s “Legion””: Evaluating Postcolonial Understandings of Demon Possession,” in Anna Runesson, ed., *Exegesis in the Making: The Theoretical Location and Contribution of Postcolonial New Testament Studies: A Reader* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 186-212 [189].

<sup>84</sup>I should stress here that my focus on Mark is not due to its later canonization, but its relatively early date, prominence as a source for later gospel traditions (such as Matthew, Luke, and later gospel harmonies), and the significant place to which it grants stories of demonic possession and exorcism in its retelling of Jesus’ ministry.

modest in its adherence to what has now become a common principle for New Testament scholarship: Second Temple Judaism provides the primary contextual “backdrop” for analyzing the early Jesus movement. Nevertheless, contemporary analyses of New Testament gospel demonologies have been slow to recognize potential overlaps with Second Temple Jewish traditions. This in part due to the retrojection of later Christian understandings of the demonic into the Gospel narratives (e.g., that demons are themselves fallen angels, rather than their offspring).<sup>85</sup> I provide a corrective to this tendency by tracing out the interconnections between the demonologies of Second Temple Jewish literature and the early Jesus movement, both of which diverge in important ways from late antique and medieval Christian demonologies.

As I will show, demons in the Gospel of Mark are disembodied, invasive, “impure” spirits who desire to inhabit the human body and are able to inflict violence on their human hosts with unnatural strength. This portrayal has antecedents in ancient Jewish understandings of demons as the residual “spirits” of the gigantic offspring of fallen angels and mortal women. This mythology appears widely in popular Second Temple Jewish texts such as *I Enoch* and *Jubilees*, and was a commonly accepted demonological system among Second Temple Jews and early Christians.

Beyond exploring ancient Jewish precursors for Christian exorcism narratives, I show how portrayals of demonic corporeality have concurrent ramifications for constructions and performances of Christian embodiment. Specifically, I demonstrate that exorcism narratives underscore a construal of the human body as an entity prone to possession by external nonhuman

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<sup>85</sup>And so F.C. Conybeare, for example, states that “the demons were angels which rebelled and were cast out of heaven” (Conybeare, *Christian Demonology*, 15). This anachronism is in part occasioned by the reading of Gospel narratives through the lens of the Book of Revelation (cf. 12:3-4), where Satan and his minions are portrayed as fallen angels. On this, see Dale Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 194 (2010), 657-677.

entities. Simultaneously, narratives of demonic possession situate exorcism as a foundational Christian ritual, and thus shape the materialization of the early Christian body. In this way, the invasive bodies of demons came to play an important role in both reflecting and reproducing particular Christian ritual discourses, and so contributed to the making of the Christian body.

### **Watchers, Giants, and Demons in Second Temple Jewish Literature**

Second Temple Jewish writers exhibit an “apocalyptic” demonology: an understanding of demons as refracted through Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic expectation.<sup>86</sup> In this view, demons are entirely evil and operate solely to harass, possess, and inflict harm upon humans as part of the broader eschatological battle between good and evil.<sup>87</sup> According to prevailing Second Temple mythologies, demons originated as the evil spirits of primordial giants, who were themselves the offspring of fallen angelic “Watchers” and their female mortal paramours. This tradition forms the foundation for (most) Second Temple Jewish demonologies,<sup>88</sup> including that

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<sup>86</sup>For more on this, see discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>87</sup>It is important to note that this understanding of demons is not necessarily representative of early Israelite or older Jewish demonological paradigms. Rather, in the Septuagint, “demon” most often refers to deities of foreign cults, rather than semi-divine minions of a fallen angel. The Jewish paradigms discussed in this chapter, therefore, are representative only of traditions dating to the Second Temple Period. On demons in early Israelite religion, see Karel van der Toorn, “The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel: Popular Belief and Scholarly Speculation,” in Lange et al., *Dämonen*, 61-83; Blair, *De-demonising the Old Testament*; Kitz, “Demons in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East.” According to Amanda Witmer, “the notion that evil spirits might take possession of human beings appears to have developed during the Second Temple period within Judaism, along with the corresponding shift from monism to dualism” (Witmer, *Jesus*, 34). Frederick Brenk attributes this shift at least partly to the increasing prevalence of Platonic ideas, which connect the demonic to the soul (“In the Light of the Moon,” 2088-91). Some scholars have proposed that broader (non-Jewish) Ancient Near Eastern understandings of the demonic may have influenced Second Temple Jewish demonologies. Eric Sorensen notes that there was a long tradition of demonic possession and exorcism in the Ancient Near East, stretching back as far as the third millennium BCE (Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 18). Zoroastrian traditions, for example, include apotropaic hymns and sayings designed to ward off demons, which suggest potential ties between these and Second Temple Jewish traditions (Ibid, 44-45).

<sup>88</sup>I exclude here discussion of Philo, since his idiosyncratic demonological tenets are not reflective of broader Second Temple Jewish ideas nor seem to have influenced early Christian writers. For more on Philo’s demonology, see Valentin Nikiprowetsky, “Sur une lecture démonologique de Philon d’Alexandrie, *De Gigantibus* 6-18,” in Gerard Nahon and Charles Touati, eds., *Hommage à Georges Vajda: études d’histoire et de pensée juives* (Louvain:

of the early Jesus movement. Genesis provides the earliest source for the story of the Watchers and giants. After the creation of humanity and its multiplication over the earth, Genesis relates the following cryptic account:

When men began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, the divine beings saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took wives from among those that pleased them...It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim [LXX: “giants”] appeared on earth – when the divine beings cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.<sup>89</sup>

Genesis describes the primary characters of this myth vaguely, and so Jewish and Christian interpretations of this passage have varied widely. The Septuagint version of Gen 6, however, identifies “the Nephilim” as “giants” (γίγαντες). This identification suggests that from an early period Jewish exegetes interpreted Gen 6 as a reference to the myth of the “Watchers,” a legend found in several Second Temple texts that narrates the events immediately preceding the great flood of Genesis.

We encounter the earliest extant version of the Watchers myth in *The Book of the Watchers*, a third century BCE text that was eventually included as part of *1 Enoch* (chs. 1-36).<sup>90</sup>

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Peeters, 1980), 43-71 and Andrei Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 100-112.

<sup>89</sup>Gen 6:1-2, 4 (JPS).

<sup>90</sup>If the finds of the Dead Sea Scrolls are any indication, the *Book of the Watchers* was very popular among Second Temple Jewish readers. There at least five separate manuscripts containing fragments of the Aramaic original of the *Book of the Watchers*, dating from the mid-second to the first centuries BCE. The *Book of the Watchers* also survives in two Greek translations; these serve as key pieces of evidence that the text was translated into Greek by the first century BCE. While the *Book of the Watchers* would come to be collected alongside other Enochic writings in *1 Enoch*, it also circulated independently, sometimes as part of manuscripts including both Second Temple Jewish and Christian writings (Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 7). Because of the complicated textual history of the *Book of the Watchers* and *1 Enoch* in general, it is often unclear what versions of these texts were read by Jewish and Christian interpreters. We often encounter references to the “book of Enoch” (*Testament of Simeon* 5:4; *Testament of Levi* 10:5; Origen, *Princ.* 1.3.3, 4.4.8) and to the “scripture of Enoch” (Tert., *Cult. Fem.* 3.1-3), as well as references to the “writings of Enoch” (*Testament of Levi* 14:1) and “booklets called Enoch” (Origen, *Hom. Num.* 28). As seen by the examples of the *Testament of Levi* and Origen of Alexandria, sometimes authors refer to Enochic literature in both the singular and plural, further confusing what we can know about the nature of the manuscript(s) through which they encountered Enochic literature. On this, see the work of Annette Yoshiko Reed, who concludes that in light of this flexible transmission history and muddled reception, “we must thus be willing to adopt a more flexible understanding of the “text” in antiquity, leaving open the possibility that it changed both shape and setting during the course of its transmission” (Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 21). Reed notes that this reception history would become even

According to the *Book of the Watchers*, heavenly angels began to lust after earth-bound mortal women, resulting in their descent to earth and copulation with human partners.<sup>91</sup> Soon thereafter, the wives of the angels

became pregnant and gave birth to great giants whose heights were three hundred cubit. These giants consumed the produce of all the people until the people detested feeding them. So the giants turned against (the people) in order to eat them. And they began to sin against birds, wild beasts, reptiles, and fish. And their flesh was devoured one by the other, and they drank blood.<sup>92</sup>

The giants' unruly behavior seemingly results from their motley composition, as their mortal flesh did not properly mesh with their angelic spirit.<sup>93</sup> This is suggested by the *Book of the Watchers*' identification of the giants as those "who are born from the (union of) the spirits and the flesh."<sup>94</sup> The *Book of the Watchers* explains, moreover, that things from heavenly and earthly realms should not intermingle: "The dwelling of the spiritual beings of heaven is heaven; but the dwelling of the spirits of the earth, which are born upon the earth, is in the earth."<sup>95</sup> Based on

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more complicated by the non-textual means by which the stories circulated: "this lack of fixity also fits well with the performative dimension of texts in antiquity: silent reading by a lone individual was more the exception than the norm, and both the oral dimension of a text's transmission and the aural dimension of its reception facilitated continual reinterpretation and recontextualization" (Ibid, 22). This more complicated textual and oral history can help explain why texts such as the New Testament Gospels and *1 Enoch* share much in common without necessarily signaling a direct literary relationship.

<sup>91</sup>*I En.* 6-7.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid, 7. All translations of *1 Enoch* are from E. Isaac, tr., "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2011 [1983]).

<sup>93</sup>Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 45-6.

<sup>94</sup>*I En.* 15:18. Because of the many layers of storytelling within the *Book of the Watchers*, the text has multiple summaries of the deeds and consequences of the fallen angels. Annette Reed notes that common themes emerge from these various reports. She notes, for example, "that all three summaries of angelic sin in this unit culminate with descriptions of the violence of the Giants against the creatures of the earth (7:3-5; 8:4a; 9:9) and the resulting outcry of either the earth itself (7:6) or humankind (8:4; 9:10). In addition, three themes are highlighted throughout: [1] the dangers of sexual impurity, [2] the corrupting potential of knowledge, and [3] the antediluvian proliferation of violence" (Ibid, 30).

<sup>95</sup>*I En.* 15:10.

these passages, Archie Wright proposes that there might have been “an innate incompatibility between the angelic spirit of the giant and his flesh,” which then brought about the giants’ violent behavior because they were “illegitimate and not properly constituted.”<sup>96</sup>

The unholy union of angels and women, furthermore, leads to the proliferation of human violence, spread of illicit knowledge, and ecological pollution.<sup>97</sup> In response, God commands that the angel Gabriel punish the giants by setting them against one another:

Proceed against *the bastards* and reprobates and against the children of adultery; and destroy the children of adultery and expel the children of the Watchers from among the people. *And send them against one another (so that) they may be destroyed in the fight, for length of days they have not.*<sup>98</sup>

The gigantomachy that ensues leads to the death of several giants. Those that remain do not escape God’s wrath, but perish in the ensuing worldwide deluge. The spirits of the giants, however, exit their drowned fleshly bodies and live on as “evil spirits”:

But now the giants...shall be called evil spirits upon the earth. *Evil spirits have come out of their bodies...* the spirits of the giants oppress each other, they will corrupt, fall, be excited, and fall upon the earth, and cause sorrow. They eat no food, nor become thirsty, nor find obstacles.<sup>99</sup>

It is possible that the giants’ half-angelic composition enables their continued spiritual vitality.

Archie Wright notes, for example, that the Greek Codex Panopolitanus version of *1 Enoch* 15:8 refers to the giants’ residual spirits as πνεύματα ισχύρα (“strong spirits”).<sup>100</sup> The “strong spirits”

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<sup>96</sup>Archie Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 167, here discussing *1 En.* 15:7-12.

<sup>97</sup>*1 En.* 7:6.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 10:9-11. Emphasis mine. The text of this passage in the Greek Codex Panopolitanus includes the term μαζήραιοι (“bastards”), a term that parallels descriptions of the “bastard” evil spirits in the *Songs of the Maskil* of the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the Greek manuscript tradition for this passage, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck “Giant Mythology and Demonology: From the Ancient Near East to the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Lange et al., *Dämonen*, 318-338 [336].

<sup>99</sup>*1 En.* 15:8-12. Emphasis mine.

<sup>100</sup>The excerpts of the *Book of the Watchers* as preserved in George Syncellus’ *Ecloga Chronographica* contain the alternative readings of πνεύματα πονηρά (“evil spirits”) (Archie Wright, “The Demonology of 1 Enoch and the New

of the giants, then, might explain both their postmortem endurance and violent tendencies.<sup>101</sup>

One drawback of this protracted existence, however, is that the giants' spirits are condemned to perpetual misplacement – despite being “spiritual beings,” they must continue to inhabit the earth, though without the “earthly” body necessary to carry out their desired activities.<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps due to displeasure with their newfound disembodied state, the spirits of the giants begin to harass humanity: “And these spirits shall rise up against the children of the people and against the women, because they have proceeded forth (from them).”<sup>103</sup> According to the *Book of the Watchers*, moreover, the evil spirits will continue their adversarial relationship with humanity until the end of the present age: “[The evil spirits] will corrupt until the day of the great conclusion, until the great age is consummated, until everything is concluded (upon) the Watchers and the wicked ones.”<sup>104</sup> Loren Stuckenbruck proposes that the evil spirits' continued affliction of human beings is due to envy, since “humans, and not they, have escaped the

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Testament Gospels,” in Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 215-243 [222]).

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid, 224. Cf. *I En.* 15:10, above.

<sup>103</sup>*I En.* 15:12.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid, 16:1-2. One aspect of the demons' “corruption” of humanity is their inspiration of false worship. According to the *Book of the Watchers*, “the spirits of the angels which have united themselves with women...have defiled the people and will lead them into error so that they will offer sacrifices to the demons as unto gods” (Ibid, 19:1-2, emphasis mine). In this passage, then, the spirits of the giants (“demons”) are in fact the deities of non-Israelite cultic practice, while the spirits of the fallen angels are those that inspire Israelites and others to worship them. This passage diverges from earlier portions of the *Book of the Watchers* in its suggestion that the spirits of the angels themselves, rather than their progeny, delude humanity. On this, see Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 50-51. Philip Alexander also notes this inconsistency: “The Enochic tradition arguably itself is not totally consistent. While it does claim that demons are the spirits of the dead Giants, the Nephilim of Gen 6:4 (*I En.* 15:11-16:1), it sometimes seems to identify them with the spirits of the Watchers themselves (*I En.* 19:1-3), or with the direct offspring of the Watchers and the women (*Jub.* 10:5; cf. *T. Sol* 5:2)” (Philip Alexander, “Contextualizing the Demonology of the Testament of Solomon,” in Lange et al., *Dämonen*, 613-635 [628 n. 38]). Their inconsistency notwithstanding, these passages serve as important witnesses to the connections made in Second Temple Jewish literature between fallen angels, evil spirits, and “demons,” an association made more explicit in other ancient Jewish writings (see discussion below).

destruction with their bodies intact.”<sup>105</sup> *I Enoch* 15:12 (quoted above), however, suggests that the spirits’ primary motivation is to exact revenge for human women’s role in creating their gigantic forebears (“because they have proceeded forth (from them)”). Humanity’s affliction by such spirits, then, is a haunting reminder that the genesis, unruly behavior, and disembodiment of the demonic ultimately stem from the misdeeds of humanity’s primordial ancestors.

The story of the fallen Watchers and the spirits of their monstrous offspring appeared in a wide array of Second Temple Jewish writings,<sup>106</sup> including the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*I En.* 37-71), the *Dream Visions of Enoch* (*I En.* 83-90),<sup>107</sup> the *Epistle of Enoch* (*I En.* 91-107),<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Stuckenbruck, “Giant Mythology,” 336.

<sup>106</sup>The broad use of the Watchers mythology among Jewish readers in this period is attested in its widespread distribution, translation from Aramaic into Greek texts, and quotations of or allusions to the myth in an array of Second Temple Jewish and early Christian writings. The popularity of the story was such that it influenced the textual history of Gen 6; as noted by Annette Reed, some biblical manuscripts include versions of the story where scribes substituted “angels” for the more prevalent “sons of God” phraseology (Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 117). It should be noted that not all Second Temple authors drew upon the Watchers tradition in formulating their demonology. For an exception, see Josephus’ *Jewish War*, where demons are identified as the spirits of wicked humans (7.185), as well as the writings of Philo, where demons are simply understood to be evil souls/angels (*Giants* 6). For more on Second Temple demonology, see Devorah Dimant, “‘The Fallen Angels’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic Books Related to Them” (Ph.D., Harvard, 1974); Esther Eshel, “Demonology in Palestine during the Second Temple Period” (Ph.D., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999); Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in P.W. Flint and J.C. VanderKam, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), II.331-53; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The ‘Angels’ and ‘Giants’ of Genesis 6:1-4 in Second and Third Century BCE Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7.3 (2000), 354-377; idem, “Giant Mythology”; idem, “Plea for Deliverance from the Demonic in Early Jewish Texts,” in Robert Hayward and Brad Embry, eds., *Studies in Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55-73; idem, “Demonic Beings and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” Ch. 9 in J. Harold Ellens, ed., *Explaining Evil, Vol. 1: Definitions and Development* (Denver: Praeger, 2011), 121-144; Hermann Lichteberger, “Spirits and Demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Graham Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker & Stephen C. Barton, eds., *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 14-21; Ida Fröhlich, “Theology and Demonology in Qumran Texts,” *Henoch* 32.1 (2010), 101-129; Bennie H. Reynolds III, “Understanding the Demonologies of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Accomplishments and Directions for the Future,” *Religion Compass* 7.4 (2013), 103-114.

<sup>107</sup>See especially the retelling of the Watchers myth in the “Animal Apocalypse” (*I En.* 85-90), where the various characters are represented by animals. Interestingly, the narrative here does not discuss the survival of the giants’ spirits, seemingly implying their complete destruction.

<sup>108</sup>Within the *Epistle of Enoch*, the so-called ‘Noahic Appendix’ (*I En.* 106ff.) includes a short summary of the Watchers mythology as part of the birth of Noah. Interestingly, the story relates that when Noah was born “his body was white as snow and red as a rose; the hair of his head as white as wool and his *demdema* beautiful; and as for his eyes, when he opened them the whole house glowed like the sun - (rather) the whole house glowed even more exceedingly. And when he arose from the hands of the midwife, he opened his mouth and spoke to the Lord with

*Jubilees, The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, 2 Baruch, Tobit, and the Genesis*

*Apocryphon*.<sup>109</sup> As suggested by this plurality of witnesses, the story of the fallen Watchers and their gigantic offspring served as the primary etiology for the existence of evil spirits. Besides *1 Enoch*, the *Book of Jubilees* is the most important source for the myth of the Watchers and giants. This is in part due to the text's relatively early origin (second century BCE) as well as its witness to important developments in the identification of the evil spirits of the giants with "demons."<sup>110</sup> The narrative of *Jubilees* contains many elements familiar from the *Book of the Watchers*, including the lusting of angels after mortal women, their taking the women as wives, and the eventual birth of gigantic offspring.<sup>111</sup> *Jubilees* relates that injustice and corruption increased upon the earth, such that God punished the angels and their offspring by inspiring

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righteousness" (*1 En.* 106:2-4). Noah's parents Lamech and Bitenosh do not respond with joy at their son's astonishing appearance and eloquence, but with fear. Lamech is afraid that Noah is indeed not his own, but the offspring of an angel. In response, Lamech seeks out the advice of Enoch on the matter, who consoles Lamech that Noah's unique qualities are due to the special role he will play in saving humanity from the flood, not due to any kind of unnatural lineage (106:13-19). As part of his discussion with Lamech, Enoch reveals the transgression of the angels (which has already occurred, 106:13), and relates that the wives of the Watchers "shall give birth to giants, not of the spirit but of the flesh," resulting in mass chaos and violence (106:17-19). Noah, with the appearance of an angel himself, will salvage humanity from the sins of the primordial angels by aiding in humanity's survival of the forthcoming deluge. As noted by Annette Reed, therefore, "this unit hints at a poignant chiasm: just as the world will be destroyed on account of angels who wished to be men, so it will be saved on account of a man with the visage of an angel" (Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 79).

<sup>109</sup>In the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Lamech becomes convinced that "the conception [of Noah] was (the work) of the Watchers, and the pregnancy of the Holy Ones, and it belonged to the Nephil[in]" (1QapGen II 1). Lamech confronts Bitenosh with the accusation that Noah is of angelic origin; Bitenosh responds by imploring that Lamech recall the night of their lovemaking, presumably when they conceived Noah: "Oh my brother and lord! Remember my sexual pleasure...in the heat of intercourse, and the gasping of my breath in my breast. I shall tell you everything accurately...very much my heart within me and I was still upset...[Remember] my sexual pleasure, I swear to you by the Great Holy One, by the King of the hea[ven]s...that this seed comes from you, that this pregnancy comes from you, that the planting of [this] fruit comes from you, [...] and not from any foreigner nor from any of the watchers or sons of heav[en]" (1QapGen II 8-16). All translations of the Dead Sea sectarian documents are from Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997-98). See also *Testament of Reuben* 5.1, 5-6; *Jubilees* 4:22; 5:1; 2 *Baruch* 56:10; *Tobit* 6.:4, 8:3.

<sup>110</sup>On demons in *Jubilees*, see T.R. Hanneken, "Angels and Demons in the Book of Jubilees and Contemporary Apocalypses," *Henoah* 28 (2006), 11-25.

<sup>111</sup>*Jubilees* 5:1-2.

internecine fighting among them, before ultimately wiping out their species with the great flood.<sup>112</sup> *Jubilees* later indicates that after the flood, the giants' spirits harassed humanity as "demonic" beings: "In the third week of that jubilee *the polluted demons* began to lead astray the children of Noah's sons and to lead them to folly and to destroy them."<sup>113</sup> *Jubilees* identifies the Watchers as the "fathers of these spirits," thus indicating that the "polluted demons" are indeed the residual souls of the giants.<sup>114</sup> Noah pleads with God to stymie the demons' pestering of humans, and God initially agrees to bind the spirits. The "chief of the spirits," Mastema, however, appeals to God and secures a limited divine reprieve: God binds 90% of the demons, but allows 10% to remain on earth to tempt and bedevil humans.<sup>115</sup> *Jubilees* marks an important point in the development of ancient Jewish demonology, as it is the earliest extant text to identify the spirits of the giants as "evil spirits," "demons," and "impure spirits," the three terms used for demonic entities in the literature of the early Jesus movement.

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid, 5:7-10; 7:21-25. According to *Jubilees*, "against [the angels'] children a word went forth from before his presence so that he might smite them with the sword and remove them from under heaven...And he sent his sword among them so that each one might kill his fellow and they began to kill one another until they all fell on the sword and they were wiped out from the earth (5:7-10). All translations of *Jubilees* are from O.S. Wintermute, tr., "Jubilees," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011 [1983]). Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness. Later in the narrative, *Jubilees* again narrates the giants' internecine violence and culpability for the subsequent flood: "For it was because of the fornication which the Watchers, apart from the mandate of their authority, fornicated with the daughters of men and took for themselves wives from all whom they chose and made a beginning of impurity. And they begot sons, the Naphidim, and all of them were dissimilar. And each one ate his fellow. The giants killed the Naphil, and the Naphil killed the Elyo, and the Elyo humankind, and man his neighbor. And everyone sold himself in order that he might do injustice and pour out much blood, and the earth was full of injustice. And afterward, they sinned against beasts, and birds and everything which moves or walks upon the earth. And they poured out much blood upon the earth. And all the thoughts and desires of men were always contemplating vanity and evil. And the Lord blotted out everything from the face of the earth on account of the evil of their deeds. And on account of the blood which they poured out in the midst of the land, he blotted out everything" (7:21-25).

<sup>113</sup>Ibid, 10:1-2.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid, 10:5.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid, 10:7-9. It is interesting to note that in *Jubilees* the demons ultimately experience the same fate as humans, insofar as God wipes out a majority of their species while pardoning a select few.

We come across a different perspective on the giant mythology in the *Book of the Giants*, a highly fragmentary text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>116</sup> The *Book of the Giants* narrates the Giants' mischievous behavior and eventual punishment from the perspective of the giants themselves. The work recounts the giants' experience of dream visions, whereby they discover (to their horror) that they will face punishment for their ghastly transgressions.<sup>117</sup> Certain fragments suggest that the giants learn they will lose their fleshly bodies, though it is unclear if the *Book of the Giants* assumes they will loiter as evil spirits.<sup>118</sup>

The giants of Enochic literature appear in several texts as cautionary tales, used to remind readers of the dangers involved in disobeying God's will. The *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Ben Sira*, *3 Maccabees*, and *3 Baruch*, for example, all cite the giants as cases where powerful creatures perished because of their waywardness.<sup>119</sup> The *Damascus Document* of the Dead Sea Scrolls contains a similar warning to its readers, reminding them that the giants, "whose height was like that of cedars and whose bodies were like mountains," nevertheless perished, and thereafter "became as they have never been."<sup>120</sup> Notable here is the emphasis on the largeness of the giants' body and their transformation into what they had "never been" (i.e., evil spirits or demons). Knowledge of this background paints demonic possession in a new light: the usurpation of the human body by demons entails an intermixing with an entity notorious for its iniquity and

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<sup>116</sup>Qumran fragments of the *Book of the Giants* include 1Q23, 1Q24, 2Q26, 4Q203, and 4Q530-532. For more on this text, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1997); idem, "Giant Mythologies"; John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmology: Studies in the Book of Giants Tradition* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992).

<sup>117</sup>Stuckenbruck, "Giant Mythologies," 324.

<sup>118</sup>On this, see 4Q531 19 2-3. Cf. *Ages of Creation* (4QAgessCreat A frag. 1 7-10).

<sup>119</sup>*Wisdom of Solomon* 14:6; *3 Baruch* 4:10; *3 Maccabees* 2:4-8; *Ben Sira* 16:7-9. Cf. *4QExhortation Based on the Flood I* 6 (4Q370).

<sup>120</sup>4Q266 2.17-21.

rebelliousness.

The connection between the giants of Enochic mythology and evil demons persists in Jewish traditions of the later Second Temple period. The *Testament of Solomon*, a text of the first-third centuries CE that contains both Jewish and Christian elements, narrates Solomon's binding and interrogation of various evil demons, whom he ultimately utilizes as manual laborers for building the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, some of Solomon's demonic interlocutors reveal their origins. One of the demons, "Ornias," claims that he is descended from "an archangel of the power of God."<sup>122</sup> Another demon, Asmodeus, is offended that Solomon, a mere mortal, would speak arrogantly to him, a demon of angelic ancestry: "You are the son of a man, but although I was born of a human mother, *I (am the son) of an angel*; it is impossible for one of heavenly origin (to speak) an arrogant word to one of earthly origin."<sup>123</sup> Later in the same text, a "spirit having the shadowy form of a man and gleaming eyes" claims to be "a lecherous spirit of a giant man who died in a massacre in the age of giants."<sup>124</sup> The *Testament of Solomon*, then, speaks to the ongoing association of demons with the spirits of the giants in both the writings of Second Temple Judaism and the early Jesus movement.<sup>125</sup>

The preceding survey demonstrates that the story of the fallen angels and their gigantic

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<sup>121</sup>On this text, see Todd E. Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon: Tradition, Conflict and Identity in a Late Antique Pseudepigraphon* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005); Peter Busch, *Das Testament Salomos: die älteste christliche Dämonologie, kommentiert und in deutscher Erstübersetzung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006).

<sup>122</sup>*Testament of Solomon* 2:4. All translations of the *Testament of Solomon* are from D.C. Duling, tr., "Testament of Solomon," in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. I.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid*, 5:3-4. Emphasis mine. Note that Asmodeus is the name of the demon in Tobit (3:8, 17; 6:13; 8:3).

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid*, 17:1-2.

<sup>125</sup>Not all demons in the *Testament of Solomon* cite fallen angels or primordial giants as their progenitors. A female demon named Onoskelis, for example, claims, "I was generated from an unexpected voice which is called a voice of the echo of a black heaven, emitted in matter" (4:8).

offspring appeared in a wide variety of texts, both in “mainstream” Jewish circles and “factional” offshoots. Annette Reed makes this point with regard to the *Book of the Watchers*:

Despite the scholarly tendency to relegate all noncanonical works to fringe groups, the *Book of the Watchers* appears to have been quite popular and...it seems to have circulated among a variety of groups in Second Temple Judaism, ranging from the “mainline” scribal circle of Ben Sira to more “sectarian” groups like the Qumran community and the Jesus movement.<sup>126</sup>

The widespread popularity of the Watchers tradition, then, forms an important backdrop for our consideration of the demonologies of Second Temple Judaism and the early Jesus movement.

The importance of Enochic demonologies will become even clearer in the succeeding section, where I demonstrate that ancient Jewish stories of possession and exorcism exhibit familiarity with Watchers mythologies while also displaying an understanding of demonic inhabitation and expulsion analogous to that of the early Jesus movement.

### **Possession and Exorcism in Second Temple Jewish Literature**

Second Temple Jewish literature includes narratives of demons inhabiting or afflicting human bodies in ways similar to the early Christian gospels.<sup>127</sup> In the Book of Tobit

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<sup>126</sup>Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 57. Reed cautions, however, that we must keep in mind the complexity of the Watchers tradition and its relationship to broader Enochic mythologies. The widespread appearance of such traditions, therefore, “demonstrates the influence of the Book of the Watchers’ traditions about the fallen angels. Yet it also complexifies our inquiry into the reception-history of this apocalypse. During this period, the Enochic myth of angelic descent was widespread enough that an individual exegete need not have known the *Book of the Watchers* to be familiar with some traditions from *1 En.* 6-16 (BW). The same is true for later Jews and Christians, who could have encountered certain components of its polyvalent narrative in any number of other texts, including but not limited to the Book of Dreams, Epistle of Enoch, and Jubilees” (Ibid, 102).

<sup>127</sup>While the possession or affliction of humans by (semi-)divine entities sometimes appears among non-Jewish Greco-Roman traditions, there are important differences between these and early Christian exorcism narratives that mitigate their utility as precedents for the early gospel traditions. Greco-Roman writers (perhaps reflecting “popular” understandings) sometimes suggested that “demons” (or other deities) could afflict the bodies of humans. As part of such traditions, there were certain rituals and healing practices that were thought to cure such “divine” diseases (Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, esp. 36-50). Notably absent from such rituals, however, is exorcism. That is, as noted by Gerber S. Oegema, within the Greco-Roman tradition there “are hardly any tradition-historical, religious or literary parallels that could be considered serious candidates for...comparison and analysis of the exorcism stories connected with Jesus” (Gerber S. Oegema, “Jesus’ Casting Out of Demons in the Gospel of Mark against its

(third/second century BCE), for example, the angel Raphael instructs Tobit's son Tobias to repel the demon Asmodeus using a fish's heart and liver.<sup>128</sup> We likewise find exorcism accounts in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen), Abram cures Pharaoh of an "evil spirit" through prayer and the laying on of hands.<sup>129</sup> *The Community Rule* (1QS) declares that the end-times will include the "ripping out" of evil spirits from the innermost parts of the human body, ostensibly referring to some sort of exorcistic process.<sup>130</sup> Additionally, *The Apocryphal*

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Greco-Roman Background," in Lange et al., *Dämonen*, 505-518 [516]). I nevertheless disagree with Oegema's conclusion that Jesus' exorcisms "stand at the beginning of a new religious tradition, an originally Jewish Christian tradition, and may indeed have found their inspiration in the words and deeds of the historical Jesus himself" (Ibid). As will be traced shortly, I see possession and exorcism narratives in the early Jesus movement as exhibiting notable parallels with extant Second Temple Jewish mythologies and narratives. For more on potential precedents in pre-Christian Greco-Roman culture, see Wesley D. Smith, "So-called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece," *Transactions and Proceedings of the APA* 96 (1965), 403-426; Barry L. Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Tradition: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretive Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 73-91. Greco-Roman writers do seem to have taken notice of exorcism in the early imperial period, parallel with the growing popularity of Christianity. We see mostly disapproving or satirical discussions of exorcism, for example, in the philosophical writings of Marcus Aurelius (121-180), the satire of Lucian (ca. 120- ca.180), and the legal writings of Ulpian (fl. 212-217). The hagiographical account of the life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus (ca. 170-245 CE) is a rare example where a Greco-Roman writer portrays exorcism in a positive light. For discussion, see Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 7-8, 75-117. There are exorcistic rituals, of course, in the *Greek Magical Papyri*, though Eric Sorensen has noted that all the exorcistic spells date from the third century or later (Ibid, 116). As pointed out by Sorensen, the ambivalence of the divine in the Greek world informed a different healing paradigm for sacred afflictions; healing rites took the form of placation of the spirit or ritual purification, since the spirit was often thought to be acting on behalf of a deity (Ibid, 117). The lack of precedent for Christian exorcism should not be taken to mean that the early Christian exorcism narratives were entirely uninfluenced by their Greco-Roman context. Dennis Ronald MacDonald, for example, has noted the interesting parallels between the story of the Gerasene demoniac and the Homeric narrative of Odysseus and Circe in *Odyssey* 9-10, where Odysseus' companions are turned into swine (*The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000], 63-74).

<sup>128</sup>According to the narrative, "the odor of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot" (8:3). Notable here is that the Book of Tobit does not clarify the way in which the demon was afflicting Sarah. There are no indications that Sarah was displaying self-destructive behaviors, and yet the text does stress that the anti-demonic smoke must be burnt in the presence of the person whom the demon is afflicting. Thus, there seems to be an indication of the affliction of particular human bodies, as well as the notion of certain techniques that will displace the demon.

<sup>129</sup>1QapGen 20:28-29.

<sup>130</sup>According to the *Rule*, God "created man to rule the world and placed within him two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and deceit. From the spring of light stem the generations of truth, and from the source of darkness the generations of deceit. And in the hand of the Prince of Light is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness. From the Angel of Darkness stems the corruption of all the sons of justice, and all their sins, their iniquities, their guilts and their offensive deeds are under his dominion...and all their afflictions and their periods of grief are caused by the dominion of his enmity;

*Psalms* (11Q11) contain adaptations of biblical psalms repurposed for thwarting demonic affliction.<sup>131</sup> The most explicit description of exorcism appears in *4QExorcism* (4Q560), which contains a formula for addressing demons who enter the body:

Evil visitor...[...] [...who] enters the flesh, the male penetrator and the female penetrator [...] ... iniquity and guilt; fever and chills, and heat of the heart [...] in sleep, he who crushes the male and she who passes through the female, those who dig [...w]icked [...].<sup>132</sup>

The second column of the same text includes an apparent thwarting of the demon(s): “and I, O spirit, adjure [...] I enchant you, O spirit [...] [o]n the earth, in clouds[...].”<sup>133</sup> Due to the fragmentary nature of this text, little can be gleaned regarding the nature of the demonic or its affliction of humanity. Nevertheless, it suggests that demons “penetrate” humans and bring about

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*and all the spirits of his lot cause the sons of light to fall*” (1QS III 17-24, emphasis mine). According to the *Rule*, humanity’s possessions or afflictions by the “spirit of deceit” manifest themselves in “greed, sluggishness in the service of justice, wickedness, falsehood, pride, haughtiness of heart, dishonesty, cruelty, much insincerity, impatience, much foolishness, impudent enthusiasm for appalling acts performed in a lustful passion, filthy paths in the service of impurity, blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, hardness of hearing, stiffness of neck, hardness of heart in order to walk in all the paths of darkness and evil cunning” (IV 9-11). However, the affliction of the evil spirits will come to an end as part of an end-time restoration: “God, in the mysteries of his knowledge and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined an end to the existence of injustice and on the appointed time of the visitation he will obliterate it for ever. Then truth shall rise up forever (in) the world, for it has been defiled in paths of wickedness during the dominion of injustice until the time appointed for the judgment decided. *Then God will refine, with his truth, all man’s deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man, ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and (from) the defilement of the unclean spirit*” (IV 18-22, emphasis mine). As seen here, the *Rule* depicts “spirits of deceit” as inhabiting the innermost parts of human flesh, constantly at war with the “spirit of holiness” next to which they reside. This current struggle, however, will come to a definitive end as part of an eschatological “visitation,” where all evil will be stamped out and humanity will be purified of evil corruption.

<sup>131</sup>“Of David. Ag[ainst...An incanta]tion in the name of YHW[H. Invoke at an]y time. The heave[ns. When] he comes upon you in the nig[ht,] you shall [s]ay to him: Who are you, [oh offspring of] man and of the seed of the ho[ly] ones? Your face is a face of [delus]ion, and your horns are horns of illu[si]on. You are darkness and not light, [injus]tice and not justice. [...]the chief of the army. YHWH [will bring] you [down] [to the] deepest [Sheo]l, [he will shut] the two bronze [ga]tes through [which n]o light [penetrates.] [On you shall] not [shine the] sun, whi[ch rises] [upon the] just man to [...] You shall say [...] [...]the ju[st man, to go [...]a de[mon] mistreats him” (11Q11 V 4-12). Because of the fragmentary nature of this text, it is nearly impossible to reconstruct the exact scenario. Nevertheless, this text does attest to the potential for demonic affliction, and perhaps even demonic possession, as well as the possibility that such demons could be thwarted with particular apotropaic techniques.

<sup>132</sup>4Q560 fr. 1, I 2-5.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid, fr. 1, II 5-7.

physical afflictions (chills, heartburn, etc.), but can be expelled through appropriate adjurations.<sup>134</sup>

We find evidence for similar apotropaic techniques in the *Songs of the Maskil* (4Q510-511), where the narrator “sage” provides a message by which humans can keep demons at bay:

And I, a Sage, declare the splendour of his radiance in order to frighten and terr[ify] all the spirits of the ravaging angels *and the bastard spirits, demons*, Lilith, owls and [jackals...] and those who strike unexpectedly to lead astray the spirit of knowledge, to make their hearts forlorn.<sup>135</sup>

In another fragment of the *Songs of the Maskil*, the singer declares: “And as for me, I spread the fear of God in the ages of my generations to exalt the name [...and to terrify] with his power al[l] *spirits of the bastards*, to subjugate them by [his] fear, [not for all] [eternal t]imes, [but for] the time of their dominion.”<sup>136</sup> The association made here between demons and “spirits of the bastards”<sup>137</sup> suggests that the passage has in view the Enochic story of the “bastard” giants who were the offspring of fallen angels and mortal women and now live on as “evil spirits” or “demons.”<sup>138</sup>

Outside of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we also find Jewish accounts of exorcism in the writings of Josephus. In *Jewish War*, for example, Josephus informs the reader that a root known as

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<sup>134</sup>For another potential example from the Dead Sea Scrolls, see 11Q5.

<sup>135</sup>4Q510 I I 4-6. Emphasis mine. As a framing for this apotropaic power, the sage informs the reader/listener of the era in which they are living: “And you have been placed in the era of the rul[e of] wickedness and in the periods of humiliation of the sons of lig[ht], in the guilty periods of /[those] defiled by/iniquities; not for an everlasting destruction [but ra]ther for the era of the humiliation of sin” (4Q510 I I 6-8).

<sup>136</sup>4Q511 35 6-8. Emphasis mine.

<sup>137</sup>This phrase is repeated later in the same text: “And through my mouth he startles [all the spirits of] the bastards, to subjugate [all] impure [sin]ners. For in the innards of my flesh is the foundation of [...and in] my body wars” (4Q511 48, 49, 51 2-4).

<sup>138</sup>See discussion of the Watchers tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls, above. For discussion of the demonology in the *Songs of the Maskil*, see Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch,” 233-34.

“Baaras” “quickly drives away those called demons.”<sup>139</sup> Jews learned to exorcise demons, Josephus claims, from Solomon, and Jewish exorcists continue to use the Israelite King’s techniques in Josephus’ day.<sup>140</sup> As evidence for the continuing potency of Jewish exorcism, Josephus points to the activities of a certain Eleazar, who uses roots, incantations, and the invocation of Solomon’s name in order to drive out demons.<sup>141</sup>

This brief survey demonstrates that for many Second Temple Jews, the demonic body was indeed capable of penetrating human hosts, and required particular ritual activities for its expulsion. These texts establish, therefore, prominent commonalities between Second Temple Jewish demonologies and those of the early Jesus movement, particularly in assumptions regarding the invasiveness of the demonic body and the fact that ritual techniques were required to expel it from human hosts. Notably, some ancient Jewish exorcism stories betray reliance upon the Watchers mythology as attested in Enochic literature. It is possible, then, that the Watchers tradition and its attendant demonology provide a common discursive backdrop for the demonological speculations of Second Temple Judaism and the early Jesus movement. As demonstrated in the section to follow, the connections between these demonologies deepen when we consider the prevailing importance of Enochic mythologies in the writings of Jesus’ earliest

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<sup>139</sup>*Jewish War* 7.180, 185. All translations of Josephus’ writings are from William Whiston, tr., *The New Complete Works of Josephus, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999). On the use of material aids in exorcism, cf. *Testament of Solomon* 1:6-7, 5:3. Note also that Justin Martyr claims that non-Christian exorcists used incantations and fumigations in expelling demons (*Dial* 85.3). For discussion, see Witmer, *Jesus*, 45-46.

<sup>140</sup>*Antiquities* 8.42-46.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid*, 8.46-48: “For I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a ring that had a foot of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he renounced him to return to him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man” (8.46-48).

followers.

### Watchers and Giants in Early Christianity

Since Jesus' original followers constituted a small band of Jewish adherents, it is no surprise to find that some of the earliest writings produced by the Jesus movement – including Jude, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter – contain allusions to the Watchers mythology.<sup>142</sup> Each of these three epistles provides only a brief mention of the Watchers tradition, and yet, as Eric Mason points out, such fleeting references suggest that “familiarity with Watchers traditions may be assumed among many early Christians.”<sup>143</sup> Indeed, R.H. Charles argued over a century ago that the “influence of 1 Enoch on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books taken together.”<sup>144</sup> The area where *1 Enoch's* “influence” is most evident is the appearance of the Watchers fallen angel tradition in the writings of the Jesus movement and early Christianity, particularly as part of interpretations of Genesis 6.<sup>145</sup> Christian writers from a wide variety of geographical and theological contexts

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<sup>142</sup>Jude 13; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 2:4-6.

<sup>143</sup>Eric F. Mason, “Watchers Traditions in the Catholic Epistles,” in Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblenz Bautch, and John C. Endress S.J., eds., *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 69-79 [79].

<sup>144</sup>R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), xcv. For more recent explorations of the influence of Enochic traditions on New Testament texts, see David Sim, “Matthew 22.13a and 1 Enoch 10.4a: A Case of Literary Dependence,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 47 (1992), 3-19; Rick Strelan, “The Fallen Watchers and the Disciples in Mark,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 20 (1999), 73-92; Andrei A. Orlov, “Satan and the Visionary: Apocalyptic Roles of the Adversary in the Temptation Narrative of the Gospel of Matthew,” in idem, *Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Sataneal in Early Jewish Demonology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), 107-112; idem, “The Veneration Motif in the Temptation Narrative of the Gospel of Matthew: Lessons from the Enochic Tradition,” in idem, *Divine Scapegoats: Demonic Mimesis in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015), 153-166; Amy E. Richter, *Enoch and the Gospel of Matthew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012); Scott M. Lewis, “‘Because of the Angels’: Paul and the Enochic Traditions,” in Harkins et al., *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, 81-90; Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

<sup>145</sup>On this, see Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 148-49.

allude to the Watchers narrative. These include “proto-orthodox” authors/works such as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Justin Martyr, Tatian of Syria, Athenagoras of Athens, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Julius Africanus, Origen of Alexandria, Cyprian, Commodian, and Lactantius.<sup>146</sup> The “Jewish-Christian” pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions* also exhibit knowledge of the Watchers tradition.<sup>147</sup> “Gnostic” authors/works likewise refer to Enochic mythology, including Bardaisan, the *Apocryphon of John*, *Acts of Thomas*, *A Valentinian Exposition*, *Untitled Text (On the Origin of the World)*, the *Pistis Sophia*, Zosimus of Panopolis, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Apocalypse of Adam*, *Tripartite Tractate*, and *Testimony of Truth*.<sup>148</sup> Based in part on this widespread popularity, Annette Reed surmises that

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<sup>146</sup>*Epistle of Barnabas* 4.3, 16.1-6; Justin Martyr, *2 Apology* 5; Tatian of Syria, *Address to the Greeks* 8-19; Athenagoras of Athens, *Embassy for the Christians* 24-26; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against All Heresies* 1.10.1, 1.15.6, 4.16.2, 4.36.4, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching* 18; Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae Prophetiae* 2.1-3, 53.4, *Stromata* 3.7.59, 5.1.10, *Paedagogus* 3.2; Tertullian, *Apology* 22, *On Idolatry* 4.1-3, 9.1, *On the Apparel of Women* 1-3, *On Prayer* 20-22, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 7; Julius Africanus, *Chronicle*, ap. George Syncellus *Ecloga Chronographica* 19.24-20.4; Origen of Alexandria, *On First Principles* 1.3.3, 4.4.8, *Commentary on John* 6.25, *Homily on Numbers* 28, *Against Celsus* 5.52-55; Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins* 14; Commodian, *Instructions* 3; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 14. For a detailed overview of the reception of Enochic literature in early Christian literature, see James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in idem and William Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 33-100.

<sup>147</sup>*Homilies* 8.12-18; cf. *Recognitions* 1.29. The pseudo-Clementine literature is a particularly interesting case for the reception of the giants tradition and its relation to demons. In the *Homilies*, the giants are blamed for polluting the earth’s air, for example: “But by the shedding of much blood, the pure air being defiled with impure vapour, and sickening those who breathed it, rendered them liable to diseases, so that thenceforth men died prematurely. But the earth being by these means greatly defiled, these first teemed with poison-darting and deadly creatures. All things, therefore, going from bad to worse, on account of these brutal demons, God wished to cast them away like an evil leaven, lest each generation from a wicked seed, being like to that before it, and equally impious, should empty the world to come of saved men... Since, therefore, the souls of the deceased giants were greater than human souls, inasmuch as they also excelled their bodies, they, as being a new race, were called also by a new name. And to those who survived in the world a law was prescribed of God through an angel, how they should live. For being bastards in race, of the fire of angels and blood of women, and therefore liable to desire a certain race of their own, they were anticipated by a certain righteous law” (*Hom.* 8.17-18; translation from Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994 {1885}], Vol. VIII). For more on the “Jewish-Christian” background of the pseudo-Clementine literature, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, “‘Jewish Christianity’ after the ‘Parting of the Ways’: Approaches to Historiography and Self-definition in the Pseudo-Clementines,” in eadem and Adam Becker, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 188-231.

<sup>148</sup>Bardaisan, *Book of the Laws of Countries*; *Apocryphon of John* 29-30; *Acts of Thomas* 30-32; *A Valentinian Exposition* 36-38; *Untitled Text (On the Origin of the World)* 123; *Pistis Sophia* 1.15; Zosimus of Panopolis, *Imouth*

for many early followers of Jesus, “the “book(s) of Enoch” seem to have functioned as Scripture.”<sup>149</sup> Support for Reed’s proposal surfaces in the manuscript production and preservation practices of early Christians. In several manuscripts, Enochic texts such as the *Book of the Watchers* appear alongside Christian works,<sup>150</sup> a fact that demonstrates the continued importance of the Watchers mythology for Christian reading practices.<sup>151</sup>

Despite their widespread popularity, scholars have often neglected Watcher mythologies as “background” material for the New Testament gospels. This is in part due to the assumption that the early followers of Jesus would have been mostly reading and interpreting a Hebrew Bible that aligns with modern editions. However, as has become apparent by the preceding overview, there was nothing resembling a closed and exclusive “canon” within Second Temple Judaism at the time of the early Jesus movement. Rather, Jewish scriptural production and interpretation was markedly diverse, a fact that should encourage contemporary scholars to account for more flexible notions of Jewish and Christian textual practices in this era. In what follows, I consider how this broader appreciation for the diversity of ancient Jewish textual practices might enable more fruitful investigations of early Christian demonologies.

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9 ap. George Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* 14.1-14; *Gospel of the Egyptians* 61.16-22; *Apocalypse of Adam* 83.14-17; *Tripartite Tractate* 135.1-15; *Testimony of Truth* 41.

<sup>149</sup>Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 155. Earlier in the same work, Reed points out that “the use of the Enochic literature by proto-orthodox Christian authors follows from its popularity in some sectors of the Jesus Movement...which itself reflects the continued cultivation of Enochic texts and traditions in certain Jewish groups in the first century” (Ibid, 152). Reed also notes the extensive evidence for continual use and collection of the *Book of Watchers* up to and through the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE: “We thus have support for the circulation of the Book of the Watchers in that area [Palestine] from the second century BCE (BD, EE, *Jubilees*, BG?) to first century CE (*Sim.*, Jude)” (Ibid, 119).

<sup>150</sup>Codex Panopolitanus, for example, contains two manuscripts of the *Book of the Watchers* as well as apocryphal writings associated with Peter (Ibid, 7). Similarly, the Chester Beatty-Michigan Papyrus XII contains passages from the early Christian writer Melito of Sardis alongside copies of the *Epistle of Enoch* and Pseudo-Ezekielian writings (Ibid).

<sup>151</sup>On this, see Michael Knibb, “Christian Adoption and Transmission of Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of 1 Enoch,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 32 (2001), 396-415.

## Demon(iac)s in the Making: Demonic Bodies in the Gospel of Mark

If the Synoptic Gospels are any indication, Jesus' earliest followers maintained a notable belief that "unclean spirits" or "demons" could usurp the bodies of unsuspecting human hosts.<sup>152</sup> There are 48 references to demonic possession in the New Testament, totaling around 24 unique mentions (i.e., discounting Synoptic doublets or triplets).<sup>153</sup> The Gospel writers use three terms for possessing entities: "unclean spirit" (πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον), "demon" (δαμόνιον, δαίμων), and "evil demon" (πονηρὸν δαμόνιον). Matthew, Mark, and Luke's interchangeable use of these terms suggests that they are functionally equivalent.<sup>154</sup>

Due to its early date and compositional priority among the Gospels, the Gospel of Mark is perhaps our most important witness to demonological discourses of the early Jesus movement. The Second Gospel emphasizes the significance of Jesus' exorcisms, and thus provides considerable demonological material for consideration.<sup>155</sup> As such, it provides a natural starting point for exploring constructions of demonic corporeality among Jesus' early followers.

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<sup>152</sup>On exorcism and the New Testament more broadly, see Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*; Heinrich Schlier, *Principalities and Powers in the New Testament* (New York: Herder, 1961); Samson Eitrem, *Some Notes on the Demonology of the New Testament* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1966); Otto Böcher, *Christus Exorcista* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1972); idem, *Das Neue Testament und die dämonischen Mächte* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1972); Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*.

<sup>153</sup>Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 121-22. This includes both full narratives of and allusions to demonic possession or exorcism.

<sup>154</sup>On this, see Witmer, *Jesus*, 153-4. Clinton Wahlen argues that "unclean spirit" is a pre-Markan term of Palestinian Jewish origin, which has connections to broader Jewish ideas about ritual purity in relation to demonic possession (Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 167, 174).

<sup>155</sup>Exorcism is relatively less prominent in Matthew and Luke, as these two gospels have omitted some of Mark's emphasis on Jesus' exorcistic activity. For instances of exorcism or demonic possession in other canonical gospels, see Matt 4:24; 7:22; 8:2-3, 16, 28-33; 10:1, 8; 12:22, 26, 43, 45; 13:38, 41; 14:26; 15:22; 17:15-18; Luke 4:33-41; 5:12; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 27-30, 33-38; 9:39-49; 11:14-26; 13:11, 16, 32; 22:3; John 7:20; 8:48-52; 10:20-21; 13:27.

## *The Gospel of Mark and the Watchers Tradition*

Despite the Gospel of Mark's rich demonological material, potential parallels with Enochic demonological traditions have largely gone unnoticed. In what follows, therefore, I draw attention to the many ways in which Mark's demonology dovetails with Enochic textual traditions, particularly in depictions of the history and nature of the demonic body. I should stress that my methodological interests here are not source-critical: I do not aim to identify a specific source for Mark's demonology, nor do I suggest that my analysis precludes connections between the Gospel's demonology and other, non-Enochic traditions.<sup>156</sup> Rather, my contention here is that the Gospel of Mark displays certain demonological characteristics that align closely with assumptions in other Second Temple Jewish texts, particularly those associated with Enoch and the fallen angels. A careful juxtaposition of the Gospel with Enochic traditions, therefore, can throw into relief embedded demonological motifs and logics that will have been operative in the earliest communities that read and interpreted the Gospel of Mark. In such a way, my reading of Mark's demonology provides a plausible lens through which to read the Gospels' demonological tenets in a way that renders them comprehensible within Second Temple Jewish and early Christian contexts.

There is evidence internal to the Second Gospel that suggests points of contact with Enochic demonologies.<sup>157</sup> First, both Enochic demonologies and the Gospel of Mark use "unclean spirit" and "demon" interchangeably in reference to evil spiritual beings. Such terminological usage is unparalleled in the Hebrew Bible, and not found in any Greco-Roman

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<sup>156</sup>For more on this issue, see discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>157</sup>Confluences between Enochic and New Testament gospel tradition have been suggested elsewhere by Loren T. Stuckenbruck ("Giant Mythology and Demonology"), Annette Reed (*Fallen Angels*, 187), and Eric Sorensen (*Possession and Exorcism*, 118). See also Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits*.

text prior to the third century CE; thus, this terminology appears unique to late Second Temple Judaism and early Christian writings.<sup>158</sup> Second, as noted previously, the idea of demonic usurpation or possession of the human body surfaces frequently in Second Temple Jewish literature and the Gospels, but rarely in Greco-Roman texts.<sup>159</sup> What is more, healers in Greco-Roman literature typically assuage demonic possession through *appeasement*, rather than combative expulsion, as Eric Sorensen points out:

[W]hen possession appears in earlier Greek society it does so within the context of a single hierarchy of gods and spirits. In this context appeasement rather than confrontation with and domination over the intrusive force is the norm.<sup>160</sup>

Third, within both Enochic traditions and the Gospel of Mark demons are conceptualized as part of an apocalyptic evil front, under the leadership of a chief demon (e.g., Satan, Beelzebul, Mastema), allied against the forces of good. It is within this combative eschatological context that Jesus' dramatic exorcisms become comprehensible.<sup>161</sup> Rather than seeing demons as members of a relatively unified, if capricious, divine order (as would be typical of Greco-Roman traditions), Second Temple Jewish and early Christian writers view demons as wholly evil combatants in an ongoing cosmic battle between good and malevolent forces.

These shared demonological tenets – the impurity of demonic spirits, demonic possession, and apocalyptic belligerency – suggest that Mark participates in broadly similar

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<sup>158</sup>For “unclean spirit” and “demon” in the Gospel of Mark, see discussion below. For such usage in Second Temple Jewish literature, see especially my discussion of *1 Enoch 15*, *Jubilees 7* and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, above.

<sup>159</sup>Wesley Smith notes that in non-Christian Greco-Roman sources demonic affliction is usually conceptualized as an external force, rather than an internal possession (“So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece,” 403-426). For more on this issue, see discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>160</sup>Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 118.

<sup>161</sup>Eric Sorensen notes this distinction: “New Testament writings presuppose the Jewish demonology of the intertestamental period. The New Testament also follows the intertestamental literature in painting a cosmology of two opposing powers, which the Synoptics identify as the kingdom of God and the rule of Satan” (Ibid, 118-119).

demonological discourses to that of late Second Temple Enochic traditions, at least to the extent that they will have distinguished the Second Gospel's demonology (in part) from non-Jewish Greco-Roman traditions.<sup>162</sup> In the section to follow, I use this shared milieu as a foundation for a comparative reading of Enochic traditions and the Gospel of Mark.<sup>163</sup> In doing so, I demonstrate how Enochic mythologies can provide a fruitful interpretive lens for exploring the demonic body "according to Mark."

### *A Man Possessed: Jesus, Demons, and Exorcism in the Gospel of Mark*

The Gospel of Mark highlights Jesus' adroitness at exorcizing evil spirits from afflicted demoniacs. Mark signals exorcism's importance by its priority: the exorcism of an unclean spirit from a demoniac in Capernaum is the first public activity performed by Jesus.<sup>164</sup> In addition to this initial exorcism, Jesus also expels demons from the infamous Gerasene Demoniac, the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and a boy afflicted by muteness.<sup>165</sup> Taken together, these four exorcism narratives encompass the most frequent type of miracle attributed to Jesus by the Second Gospel.<sup>166</sup> Additionally, summaries of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel portray exorcism as

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<sup>162</sup>Eric Sorensen additionally notes that in distinction from earlier Greek literature, "the New Testament does not equate demons with the spirits of the dead, nor does it view them as intermediaries between God and humanity, a position delegated instead to their angelic counterparts" (Ibid, 121). This is not to say, of course, that the early Jesus movement and the Gospel of Mark was wholly uninfluenced by broader Greco-Roman demonological traditions. Nevertheless, in searching for analogous demonological systems, the ancient Jewish Enochic traditions provide the most natural fit in terms of demonological ideation and sociological connections

<sup>163</sup>In Archie Wright's words, "it may be more appropriate to advocate for the broader Watcher/giant traditions of early Jewish literature as the background for New Testament demonology" (Wright, "Demonology of 1 Enoch and the Gospels," 234 n. 70).

<sup>164</sup>Mark 1:21-28.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid, 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29.

<sup>166</sup>Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 3.

one of his most frequent undertakings. Mark claims, for example, that Jesus “cast out many demons” as part of healing activities performed at the house of Simon and Andrew.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, in its summary of Jesus’ preaching tour in Galilee, the Second Gospel states that Jesus went about “proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.”<sup>168</sup> Jesus’ combative relationship with demons and unclean spirits might go as far back as his temptation by Satan in the wilderness, which some scholars interpret as a spiritual preparation for Jesus’ emergence as a prominent healer and exorcist.<sup>169</sup>

The Gospel of Mark clearly prioritizes exorcism as an important aspect of Jesus’ public ministry. But what can this tell us about ideas regarding demonic corporeality? Consideration of ancient Jewish demonologies helps bring into relief some notable aspects of Mark’s construction of the demonic body, including its impurity, invasiveness, violent disposition, unnatural strength, and self-destructiveness. Demonic “impurity” or “uncleanness” is perhaps the most persistent characterization of the demonic in the Gospel of Mark. We encounter this descriptor in Jesus’ first recorded public exorcism, which, as noted previously, occurs in the synagogue at Capernaum, a rural Jewish village in Jesus’ home region of Galilee.<sup>170</sup> According to the Second Gospel, Jesus inaugurates his public ministry by entering the Capernaum synagogue and preaching, “as one having authority,” all the while displaying a teaching aptitude that left crowds there “astounded.”<sup>171</sup> During his instruction, however, a “man with an unclean spirit” (ἄνθρωπος

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<sup>167</sup>Mark 1:32-34. All translations of New Testament texts are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV).

<sup>168</sup>Ibid, 1:39.

<sup>169</sup>On this, see Witmer, *Jesus*, 139.

<sup>170</sup>Mark 1:21-39. On this passage, see also Wahlen, *Jesus and The Impurity of Spirits*, 89-92.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid, 1:22.

ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) interrupts Jesus.<sup>172</sup> This terminology is typical of Mark’s exorcism stories, and elsewhere the Gospel equates “unclean spirit” with “demon.” In the healing of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter in Mark 7, for example, the daughter is described as having “an unclean spirit,” which leads her mother to beg Jesus “to cast the demon out of her daughter.”<sup>173</sup> Likewise, in the narrative of the Gerasene Demoniac, Jesus addresses the possessing entity as an “unclean spirit” and afterwards refers to the possessed man as one (formerly) inhabited by “demons.”<sup>174</sup> As seen here, then, demons and unclean spirits function as equivalent terms for the Second Gospel.<sup>175</sup>

Archie Wright points out that both of these designations are identical to those used within the Enochic tradition for the postdiluvian spirits of the giants.<sup>176</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins has also drawn attention to this connection, concluding that the designation “unclean spirit” is a “Jewish formulation that may be related to the story of the fallen angels.”<sup>177</sup> But why would the giants’ spirits be “impure”? Wright suggests that the identification of demons as unclean is due to the giants’ consumption of blood,<sup>178</sup> which will have rendered their bodies ritually impure.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>172</sup>Ibid, 1:24-25.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid, 7:25-26.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid, 5:8, 18.

<sup>175</sup>Cf. Luke 4:33, 8:28, 9:38-42. See also Luke 8:2, where “evil spirit” is used to clarify the term “demon” with regard to the healing of Mary Magdalene. On this issue, see Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch” and Armin Lange, “Considerations Concerning the ‘Spirit of Impurity’ in Zech 13:2,” in Lange et al., *Dämonen*, 254-68. For an example of the use of “unclean spirit” in later Christian literature, see *Gospel of Philip* 65.1-8, 66.2-4.

<sup>176</sup>Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch,” 235.

<sup>177</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 167.

<sup>178</sup>Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch,” 235.

<sup>179</sup>According to Amanda Witmer, “First-century Palestinian society was a purity society which understood itself as operating within a larger cultural context that was impure. Given this context, it is not surprising that the spirits which were thought to possess people were often described as unclean, and this may suggest a Palestinian background for the term” (Witmer, *Jesus*, 146).

Clinton Wahlen, on the other hand, proposes that the impurity of the spirits relates to their attempts to destroy the “holy seed” of humanity, through both disease and their promotion of idolatrous worship.<sup>180</sup> Loren Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini provide the most compelling interpretation, however: “the spirits coming from the giants as they were disembodied are deemed to have been *products of defilement*, an unholy union of angels and humans (*1 En.* 15:3-4).”<sup>181</sup> The passage cited here by Stuckenbruck and Boccaccini condemns the Watchers (i.e., the spirits’ fathers) for having “defiled” themselves with women and produced “blood and flesh.”<sup>182</sup> In similar fashion, the *Book of Jubilees* condemns the fallen angels as those whose transgressions “made a beginning of impurity.”<sup>183</sup> This impurity apparently infected the Watchers’ progeny, as *Jubilees* later describes the demons as “polluted” and connects their illicit actions with that of their fathers.<sup>184</sup> As noted previously, *Jubilees*’ explicit connection between “demonic” and “unclean” spirits provides a near exact precedent for the terminological proclivities of Mark.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 36.

<sup>181</sup>Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, “Introduction: 1 Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: The Method and Benefits of a Conversation,” in eadem, *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels*, 9. Emphasis mine.

<sup>182</sup>*1 En.* 15:3-4.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 7:21-22.

<sup>184</sup>*Jubilees* 10:1-6. For connections between unclean evil spirits and demons elsewhere in Second Temple Jewish literature, see 11QPs<sup>a</sup> 19:15; 4Q444 1 I 8; possibly also 4Q458 2 I. Archie Wright notes the significance of traditions of demonic impurity in the Scrolls for understanding the Gerasene demoniac narrative: “Through this purity language, the scrolls reflect an image within the demonology of Qumran that equates demonic possession to impurity, but at the same time does not limit impurity to demonic possession...It is in this context that we find the clearest connection of the Watcher tradition to the demoniac story in Mark 5. There is clear language of impurity that defines both the spirit that has afflicted the person (see 5:2, 8) and the individual (5:3)” (Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch,” 236).

<sup>185</sup>Clinton Wahlen points out that the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* likewise uses “unclean spirit” and “demon” interchangeably in the same fashion as *Jubilees* and the Gospel of Mark (Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 52). Wahlen notes that such usage is atypical of Greco-Roman sources: “One of the more puzzling features of early Christian attitudes toward purity is the Gospels’ frequent reference to spirits as impure. The absence of similar language in Graeco-Roman literature up through the second century C.E. is striking” (*Ibid.*, 1). According to Wahlen, “the earliest extant reference to unclean spirits in pagan literature comes from a third century quotation of Mark 5.8 by Porphyry (*Christ.* 49.5)” (*Ibid.*, 1 n. 2).

The Second Gospel's depiction of the demonic body as inherently "unclean" or "impure," therefore, participates in broader Second Temple Jewish discourses that connected the iniquities of primordial fallen angels and giants with their demonic successors.

The link between the antediluvian giants and contemporary demons potentially informs Mark's portrayal of the demons' combative interactions with Jesus. In many cases, the demons immediately recognize Jesus, acknowledge his superiority, and beg for a pardon from punishment. In the story of the Capernaum demoniac, for example, the unclean spirit proclaims, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, Holy One of God."<sup>186</sup> The spirit's recognition underscores Jesus' messianic identity,<sup>187</sup> while also calling to mind the history of the demonic body. Recall that in the *Jubilees* narrative, God spared the lives of 10% of the demons only after an intercession on their behalf by Mastema. This reprieve, however, will only persist until the apocalypse, when the fallen angels and evil spirits will face divine judgment.<sup>188</sup> The unclean spirit's desperate response to Jesus, then, attests to the precarious nature of its existence: it knows that time is short.

For his own part, Jesus wastes no time in dispatching the demon, "Be silent, and come out of him!" Jesus commands the evil spirit.<sup>189</sup> The demon departs at the command, though not

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<sup>186</sup>Mark 1:24-25.

<sup>187</sup>Graham Twelftree points out, furthermore, that the citation of Jesus' name ("Holy One of God") by the demon in this encounter is paralleled in accounts of exorcism where the exorcist utilized the name of the hostile force in order to cast it out (cf. Mark 5:2-15). Thus, the demon here might be attempting an adjuration of Jesus by invoking his (secretive) identity as the "Holy One of God" (Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 68).

<sup>188</sup>On this, see discussion of *I Enoch* 16, above.

<sup>189</sup>Mark 1:25. As noted by Adela Yarbro Collins, Jesus' command here that the demon not speak finds parallel in the exorcistic formulas of the *Greek Magical Papyri* (Collins, *Mark*, 173). In PGM V, for example, the reader is instructed to utter the following formula: "I bind NN with regard to NN [thing]. Let him not speak, not be contrary, not oppose; let him not be able to look me in the face nor speak against me; let him be subjected to me, so long as this ring is buried. I bind his mind and his brains, his desire, his actions, so that he may be slow [in his dealings] with all men (PGM V.320-329; translation from Morton Smith ap. Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992], 106).

without a struggle: “the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him” (καὶ σπαράξαν αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον καὶ φωνῆσαν φωνῆ μεγάλῃ ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ).<sup>190</sup> The crowd is astonished at Jesus’ exorcistic ability: “They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching - with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread through the surrounding region of Galilee.”<sup>191</sup> Jesus’ initial exorcism, therefore, inaugurates his public ministry by providing a first glimpse of his cosmic power.<sup>192</sup>

The story of the Capernaum demoniac, as the first major healing narrative in the Gospel of Mark, draws out some of the major overarching themes of the Gospel’s narratives. Primary among them is the juxtaposition between the exorcistic potency of Jesus and the relative helplessness of the demons in his presence. That does not mean, of course, that the Gospel portrays demons as completely lacking in power. Throughout the Second Gospel, demons exhibit a unique ability to invade and usurp the human body, seemingly at will. The invasive power of the demonic body comes to the fore in the description of Capernaum demoniac as “ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ.” Joel Marcus suggests that in this passage “the man’s personality has been

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<sup>190</sup>Mark 1:26.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid, 1:27-28.

<sup>192</sup>The fact that Mark begins with this narrative is significant. John P. Meier notes that Mark differs in this regard from his canonical counterparts: Matthew inaugurates Jesus’ ministry with the Sermon on the Mount, Luke portrays Jesus as leading off his ministry with a sermon in the Nazareth synagogue, and John narrates the wedding feast at Cana as Jesus’ first major public activity (Matt 5-7; Luke 4:16-30, John 2:1-11; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), I.409, cited ap. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000], 190). Whereas his canonical counterparts accentuate Jesus’ role as teacher (Mathew, Luke) and sign-worker (John), Mark’s emphasis falls on Jesus’ exorcistic powers. In the words of Ernst Käsemann, Jesus’ primary purpose in Mark sometimes seems to be “clearing the earth of demons” (Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969], 58). That purpose, of course, is wrapped up with Jesus’ broader mission in the Gospel of Mark, as noted by Joel Marcus: “[Jesus] comes...as the sign and agent of God’s eschatological reign, in which there will be no room for demonic opposition to God” (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 192; citing H.C. Kee, “The Terminology of Mark’s Exorcism Stories,” *New Testament Studies* 14 [1967-8], 232-246 [243]).

so usurped by the demon that the demon has, as it were, swallowed him up.”<sup>193</sup> The demonic body, then, is able to overtake the body of its human victim to such an extent that their identities and physical nature become wholly intertwined.

We encounter a similar depiction of demonic/human entanglement in the second major exorcism of the Gospel, the episode of the Gerasene Demoniac.<sup>194</sup> After Jesus has stilled the storm and crossed the Sea of Galilee, Jesus immediately encounters “a man...with an unclean spirit” who “lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him anymore, even with a chain.”<sup>195</sup> When the demoniac sees Jesus, he inquires of Jesus’ intentions in similar ways to the Capernaum demoniac: “[He] ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”<sup>196</sup> Thereafter, the demon attempts to thwart Jesus’ advance, “adjuring” Jesus not to harm him.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 192.

<sup>194</sup>Mark 5:1-20. This story is paralleled in Matt 8:28-34/Luke 8:26-39. On this passage, see John F. Craghan, “The Gerasene Demoniac,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 30 (1968), 522-536. For discussion from the perspectives of gender studies, see Warren Carter, “Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark’s Jesus: Legion Enters the Pigs (Mark 5:1-20),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134.1 (2015), 139-155. It is important to note that immediately prior to this episode, Jesus has performed one of his most famous “nature miracles,” the stilling of the sea (4:35-41). Joel Marcus has suggested that the occurrence of an encounter with a demoniac immediately after Jesus’ stilling of the storm is significant; the latter miracle could be interpreted as “Jesus’ godlike conquest of the demonic sea” (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 349). For traditions of the divine rebuking and conquering of the sea, Marcus points to Isa 51:9-10, Ps. 18:15, 104:7, 106:9 and Isa 50:2. On this interpretation, see also Rodney A. Werline, “The Experience of Prayer and Resistance to Demonic Powers in the Gospel of Mark,” in Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A. Werline, eds., *Experientia Vol. 1: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008), 59-74 (64-5).

<sup>195</sup>Mark 5:2-3. For the associations between demons, the spirits of the dead, and tombs, see Douglas W. Geyer, *Fear, Anomaly, and Uncertainty in the Gospel of Mark* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002), 132-135. See also Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>196</sup>Mark 5:6-7. In similar ways to the Capernaum demoniac, the Gerasene demoniac recognizes Jesus, acknowledges his high cosmic standing, and inquires as to what Jesus intends to do. For parallels outside the New Testament, see PGM IV.3020, 3025, 3019-85. Note also the verbal resistance to Solomon by demons in the *Testament of Solomon* (e.g., 5:1-8).

<sup>197</sup>Mark 5:7. Amanda Witmer notes, “The plea for leniency by the demon...has parallels in both Jewish and Greco-Roman texts. It occurs in *I Enoch* 12-14, where the demon Azazel asks Enoch to plead the case of the demons before God, and in *Jubilees* 10:4-5, where Mastema asks that not all of the demons be bound” (*Jesus*, 181). For more on this, see Gerd Theissen, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,

It is notable that the description here of the demoniac (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) is identical to that of Mark 1, and so similarly underscores the complete intermixing of the demonic and demoniac. The motif of demonic invasiveness continues as the exorcism of the Gerasene Demoniac proceeds. In describing the plight of the demoniac, the Gospel uses a series of Greek masculine pronouns whose ostensible antecedents are the masculine nominative ἄνθρωπος, thus presumably referring to the demoniac.<sup>198</sup> Once Jesus enters the scene, however, the narrative begins telling the story of the *unclean spirit's* begging of Jesus for leniency *without indicating a change in subject*. The account of the bodily actions of the demoniac (ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ), for example, is told with the same apparent subject as the “crying out” (κράζας) of the demon. This inter-subjective narration underscores the total intermixing of the demonic and human bodies, so much so that they become indistinguishable. The challenge for the exorcist, then, is not simply the “casting out” of the unclean spirit, but the disentangling of the invasive demon from its afflicted host. The first step in Jesus’ exorcist technique, therefore, involves the verbal differentiation between the possessing demon and the demoniac, showcased by his use of the imperative in addressing the unclean spirit and explicit distinguishing of the demoniac: “Come out of the man you unclean spirit” (Ἐξέλθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ

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1993), 250. See also PGM IV:3038-39, 3041, and 3045. Joel Marcus similarly argues that “there is an element of deliberate parody in the demon’s invocation of god and its usage of exorcistic terminology, as well as in its plea that Jesus not torture it” (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 344). For parallel to a demon begging an exorcist not to torture it, see Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.25. Note also that in Rev. 20:10 this term is used for the eschatological torment of demons (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 344).

<sup>198</sup>“καὶ ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου [εὐθύς] ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, ὃς τὴν κατοίκησιν εἶχεν ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν· καὶ οὐδὲ ἀλύσει οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι, διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἀλύσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπᾶσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀλύσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετριφθαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι· καὶ διὰ παντὸς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἦν κράζων καὶ κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν λίθοις, καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ, καὶ κράζας φωνῇ μεγάλη λέγει, Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μὴ με βασανίσῃς” (5:2-8, emphasis mine).

ἀνθρώπου).<sup>199</sup>

The segregation of the demon and demoniac continues in Jesus' ensuing request that the spirit reveal its name (5:9). As many commentators have noted, it was a common understanding in the ancient Mediterranean that to know the name of an evil spirit was to have the ability to wield some type of power over it.<sup>200</sup> Interestingly, the demon responds, "My name is Legion; for we are many."<sup>201</sup> This response has been the focus of extensive scholarly commentary, with many noting that the term's significance likely extends beyond its reference to a multitude of demons.<sup>202</sup> Several scholars have suggested that "legion" could be a rather unsubtle reference to the Roman military unit of the same name.<sup>203</sup> Whatever the potential socio-political ramifications

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<sup>199</sup>Mark 5:8. We see a similar technique in Jesus' exorcism of the Capernaum demoniac, where he adjures the unclean spirit: "Be silent, and come out of *him!*" (Mark 1:25, emphasis mine).

<sup>200</sup>On this, see Campbell Bonner, "The Technique of Exorcism," *Harvard Theological Review* 36 (1943), 39-49. In her analysis of this passage, Amanda Witmer points to parallels in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM IV.3040-5) and the *Testament of Solomon* (2.1-2, 5:6, 7:3-4) (Witmer, *Jesus*, 48). Heidi Marx-Wolf likewise notes this in her study of later demonological traditions: "In antiquity, to know the name of a spirit was either to have some measure of power over it or to have some share in its power. This view was held in common by religious and ritual personnel across religious boundaries as well as by many philosophers and theologians" (Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority*, 90).

<sup>201</sup>Mark 5:9.

<sup>202</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins points to early evidence for a reading of this name as primarily indicative of the plurality of the demons. She notes that in *Testament of Solomon* there is a "lion-shaped demon" who has under his command "legions" of demons (2; Collins, *Mark*, 269 n. 72). It should be pointed out, however, that another early Christian text, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, interprets the story to mean that there was only one demon within the demoniac (*Epistula Apostolorum* 5).

<sup>203</sup>A "legion" was a unit of the Roman military, which, at full strength, comprised approximately 5,000 soldiers (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 344-45). On "Legion" expressing anti-Roman sentiment, see Eitrem, *Some Notes on the Demonology of the New Testament*, 56; Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 255; Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 191-92; Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 91-94. For a more recent treatment and overview of scholarship, see Warren Carter, "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus," 139-155. Of particular interest is the fact that the *Legio Decima Fretensis* was stationed in Galilee near Gerasa during the Jewish War (i.e., around the time of the composition of the Gospel), thus providing a specific object for this passage's "demonization" of the Roman military (Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 85). If the reader takes "Legion" as a reference to Roman imperial might, then the demon's "kneeling" before Jesus would seem to depict the apparent subduing of the (demonic) Roman Empire by Jesus the exorcist (Witmer, *Jesus*, 178). Warren Carter provides a particularly interesting interpretation of this passage, noting the potential invocation (and contestation) of Roman norms of masculinity. In Carter's words, "the scene inscribes Jesus' hegemonic masculinity even while it mocks Roman power as an out-of-

of this terminology, the narration of multiple demons inhabiting a single human body highlights the intrusive dangers that demonic possession entailed. What is more, Legion's ensuing request and apparent "suicide" might reveal certain aspects of the demonic body:

He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand,<sup>204</sup> rushed down the

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control, demonic, militaristic, and (self-)destructive masculinity and fantasizes Rome's defeat as womanly weakness at Jesus' superior, commanding, masculine hands" (Carter, "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus," 140). Adela Yarbro Collins disputes whether there is any anti-Roman sentiment here, arguing that there is no explicit anti-Roman animus elsewhere in the Gospel, and that the other example of Roman imagery (the Roman centurion, Mark 15:39) is positive (Collins, *Mark*, 269). Gregory David Wiebe has argued that while Roman imperial forces are certainly in view here, interpretations that posit this allusion as the only significant aspect of the story ultimately obscure the important role of demons in the narrative. Against this tendency, Wiebe encourages scholars to recognize that "despite the military vocabulary, Jesus' encounter is not with a Roman army or anyone therefrom, but with a (legion of) demon (Wiebe, "The Demonic Phenomena," 194). In his critique, Wiebe has in view the anthropologically informed readings of exorcism by Richard Horsley and Paul Hollenbach, both of whom draw upon Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963) for their reading of the sociological significance of demonic possession and exorcism. On this, see Richard A. Horsley, "The Struggle Against Roman Rule," in idem, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 121-148; Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs," 567-588. For a critique from a postcolonial perspective, see Laura E. Donaldson, "Gospel Hauntings: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism," in Stephen D. Moore and Fernando Segovia, eds., *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 97-113.

<sup>204</sup>The request of the demons, grant of permission by Jesus, and ultimate drowning of the swine stand as one of the oddest set of scenes in the entire gospel narrative. It could be that this scene was simply intended to indicate the ultimate success of Jesus' exorcistic technique by giving "physical" evidence of the demons' exit from the demoniac's body. Campbell Bonner, for example, suggests that "this is the act of physical violence that bears witness to the reality of the expulsion; and in the source from which Mark drew it is probable that there was no more thought of the ethical or social problems that might arise from the incident than there was in the stories of exorcism as practiced by Eleazar and Apollonius" (Bonner, "Technique of Exorcism," 47-49, cited ap. Collins, *Mark*, 271). In light of this, the function of the "herd" terminology could be to draw attention to the plurality of the swine (and thus, the demons); their ultimate change in behavior and self-destruction, therefore, might indicate that the plurality of demons had exited the Gerasene demoniac and taken over each of the swine's body.

steep bank into the sea,<sup>205</sup> and were drowned in the sea.<sup>206</sup>

The oscillation between plural and singular pronouns (“he begged,” “the unclean spirits begged”) again underscores the absolute intermeshing between the “legion” of demons and their human host. Additionally, the demons’ request to enter another fleshly vessel, the herd of pigs, accentuates the ability and apparent desire of the unclean spirits to inhabit foreign bodies.

In depicting demons as entities prone to bodily intrusion, the Gospel of Mark represents the demonic body in a fashion quite similar to descriptions of the spirits of the giants in Enochic-influenced traditions. As noted previously, Enochic literature claims that the spirits of the giants continue to afflict humanity and “cause sorrow.”<sup>207</sup> What is more, exorcistic spells in the Dead Sea Scrolls equate possessing entities with the “bastard spirits” who had lost their (gigantic) bodies in the flood (see discussion above). Viewed through this lens, then, the demonic act of invading a human (or porcine) body is not simply an act of possession, but an act of *reclaiming* a

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<sup>205</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins notes the symbolic association of the sea with the “abyss” (Collins, *Mark*, 271). As discussed previously regarding *Jubilees*, some Second Temple Jewish traditions held that demons were originally supposed to be restrained in the “abyss,” but were allowed to roam until the Messianic age due to God’s leniency. In this reading, then, Jesus’ sending of the demons into the pigs and into the sea could be a foreshadowing of their ultimate eschatological fate. Amanda Witmer, on the other hand, has pointed out that water is sometimes used as an apotropaic aid or a kind of “trap” for demons. And so many incantation bowls have been discovered, especially in Mesopotamia, a possible indication that these bowls were filled with water and designed to be used as demon traps (Witmer, *Jesus*, 170, citing John Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992]). On this issue, see also Böcher, *Christus Exorcista*, 20-32. The use of water to repel or trap demons could explain the various references to demons inhabiting desert locales (Witmer, *Jesus*, 169-170). On this, see Luke 8:29. For discussion, see Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 75. Some commentators have looked to biblical motifs to help explain the spirits’ watery demise. And so Warren Carter, for example, has noted that the demon-pigs ultimately end up in the same place as Pharaoh’s armies in the Exodus narrative (Exod 14:23-15:5), which might support a “political” reading of this as a critique of the Roman emperor as Pharaoh redivivus, who will ultimately face a similar fate at the hands of Jesus the exorcist (Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000], 213). Joel Marcus argues that through this imagery, the Gospel of Mark “seems to cast Jesus in a Moses-like role as an incomparable conduit of divine power, while at the same time hinting at an extension of the divine sovereignty beyond the Israel that Moses founded” (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 348). The use of an animal as vessel to “steer” the demons into the water may build on broader motifs in the ancient world that depicted animals as vessels for the transference of evil spirits. On this, see Josephus, *Ant.* 8.48, Philostratus *Life* 4.20, *Acts of Peter* 2.4.11.

<sup>206</sup>Mark 5:10-13.

<sup>207</sup>*I En.* 15.

lost existence. The demons' ability to inhabit human bodies, therefore, likely stems from the fact that they *originated* as spirits that occupied a fleshly body.

Archie Wright proposes that the demonic desire to invade humans specifically stems from their inability to transform their own bodies into the shapes of humans, as their angelic fathers were able to do in their affairs with mortal women.<sup>208</sup> John M. Hull, on the other hand, claims that their primary motivation was one of comfort: "When the material demons were in cold and dry places their gaseous but still material bodies thickened and condensed and they wanted to retreat into places of warmth such as inside animals, in hot steaming baths, into the protection of pits and holes in the ground or graves."<sup>209</sup> Loren T. Stuckenbruck, by contrast, ties the demons' invasive proclivities to their bitterness over humans having escaped the flood with bodies intact.<sup>210</sup> Stuckenbruck's proposal aligns most closely with the depiction of demoniacs in the Gospels, as the unclean spirits' "use" of human vessels does not seem directed toward the experiencing of pleasure (as Wright's and Hull's proposals might imply). Rather, the demoniacs' self-destructive behavior and social alienation suggest that the demons' motivations for human inhabitation stemmed largely from revenge, rather than reward.

Even though the demons might have lost their gigantic bodies, there are hints that they have retained their former strength. In the story of the Gerasene demoniac, for instance, Mark informs the reader that "no one could restrain him [i.e., the demoniac] any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched

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<sup>208</sup>Wright, "Demonology of 1 Enoch," 225. Cf. Luke 11:24-26, which claims that demons wander the earth whenever they are not in a body.

<sup>209</sup>John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (Naperville, IL: SCM Press, 1974), 40.

<sup>210</sup>Stuckenbruck, "Human Being and Demonic Invasion," 114-115.

apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him.”<sup>211</sup> The story here suggests that the possessing demon has provided the demoniac unusual strength, which he then uses in violent ways. We see such violent behavior likewise when the unclean spirit violently “convulses” the demoniac’s body in Capernaum, as well as in Mark 9, where the possessing demon is said to “cast [the boy] into the fire and into the water, to destroy him.”<sup>212</sup> Also in Mark 9, the demon begins “convulsing him terribly,” so much so that the crowd believes that the demoniac has perished.<sup>213</sup>

The narration of demoniacs performing violent acts or possessing unnatural strength might be a vestige of broader mythologies that connected demonic spirits to the antediluvian giants.<sup>214</sup> Second Temple Jewish literature consistently depicts the giants as enormous, strong, and violent.<sup>215</sup> As noted previously, one version of the *Book of the Watchers* implies that the giants’ might remained even in their spiritual afterlives, as the text refers to their disembodied souls as “strong spirits.”<sup>216</sup> Based on the enduring “strength” of the giants’ demonic spirits, as

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<sup>211</sup>Mark 5:3-4.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid, 1:26, 9:22. For more on the latter passage, see discussion below.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid, 9:26. Amanda Witmer has noted that *σπαράσσω*, the verb used in Mark 9:26 and Mark 1:26, “implies violent struggle” (Witmer, *Jesus*, 163). These attributes are likewise found in the case of the “sons of Sceva” in Acts 19:13-16.

<sup>214</sup>Contrary to my hypothesis here, Marcus suggests, “the possessed man in our passage derives his supernatural strength from the Strong Man, Satan” (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 343).

<sup>215</sup>The *Book of the Watchers*, for example, emphasizes the incredible status of the giants, “whose heights were three hundred cubit” (*1 En. 7*). The giants’ apparent unnatural size and height likewise draws comment from the *Damascus Document*, which mentions that the giants’ “height was like that of cedars and...bodies were like mountains” (4Q266 2.17-18). The giants utilized their strength and size in service of their wanton habits, wreaking havoc against both humans and themselves. According to the *Book of Watchers*, the giants “consumed the produce of all the people until the people detested feeding them. So the giants turned against (the people) in order to eat them” (*1 En. 7*).

<sup>216</sup>*1 En. 15:8*. As discussed previously, this reading appears in the Greek Codex Panopolitanus version of *1 Enoch* (Wright, “Demonology of 1 Enoch,” 222).

well as their violent past, the belligerent behavior of the demoniacs in Gospel exorcism narratives may reflect connections to the giant mythologies of the Enochic tradition.<sup>217</sup>

Links between the “strong” giants of Enochic lore and contemporary demons, moreover, could help explain other outbreaks of demonic violence in Mark. We encounter this motif again, for example, in the Gospel’s third major exorcism account, the healing of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter.<sup>218</sup> In this narrative, “a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit” seeks out and prostrates before Jesus.<sup>219</sup> Jesus initially responds dismissively, based on the woman’s Gentile background:

Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”<sup>220</sup>

The woman’s response persuades Jesus,<sup>221</sup> and he carries out the exorcism remotely: “Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go — the demon has left your daughter.” So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.”<sup>222</sup> Since the actual exorcism occurs from a distance, we lack details on the condition or behavior of the demoniac.

Nevertheless, Joel Marcus points out that the Greek term used here for the girl’s positioning

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<sup>217</sup>Ibid, 242. Wright notes this connection with specific reference to the Gerasene Demoniac in Mark 5.

<sup>218</sup>For analysis of this story through the lenses of gender and ethnicity, see Sharon Ringe, “A Gentile Woman’s Story, Revisited: Rereading Mark 7.24-31,” and Rajini Wickramaratne Rebera, “The Syrophenician Woman: A South Asian Feminist Perspective,” in Amy-Jill Levine, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 79-100 and 101-110.

<sup>219</sup>Mark 7:25.

<sup>220</sup>Ibid, 7:26-28.

<sup>221</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins notes the woman’s rhetorical adroitness: “The woman overcomes the difficulty posed by Jesus’ refusal by means of wit and self-abasement. The wit consists in her transformation of the scavenging dogs of the street, used metaphorically by Jesus in his refusal, into domestic dogs, which have access to the part of the home in which the family has its table and eats its meals” (Collins, *Mark*, 367).

<sup>222</sup>Mark 7:29-30. On this exorcism narrative, see Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits*, 99-101.

(βεβλημένον) is the perfect passive participle of βάλλω (“throw, cast”), and thus implies that the possessing demon tossed the girl onto the bed “in a departing demonstration of malice.”<sup>223</sup> The possessing demon’s behavior in this episode, therefore, parallels that of evil spirits elsewhere in the Second Gospel, and underscores the thoroughgoing violence and strength of the demonic body.<sup>224</sup>

The giants’ violent past might provide still more clues as to the ferocious proclivities of the demonic body. As discussed previously, both *I Enoch* and *Jubilees* indicate that the giants turned against one another and engaged in self-destructive gigantomachy.<sup>225</sup> Interestingly, the infighting among the giants extends to their afterlife as evil spirits, as noted by the *Book of the Watchers*: “[The spirits of the giants] will become evil upon the earth and shall be called evil spirits...the spirits of the giants oppress each other.”<sup>226</sup> The thoroughgoing characterization of the giants and their spirits as self-destructive might be helpful in explaining some of the odder behaviors exhibited by demoniacs in the Gospel tradition. We have already encountered this in Mark 5, where the Gerasene Demoniac is said to have been “always howling and bruising himself with stones.”<sup>227</sup> Since the reader later learns of the demoniac’s possession by multiple demons, it is possible that his behavior here is a result of infighting among his possessing spirits.

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<sup>223</sup>Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 465, 470.

<sup>224</sup>The way in which demonic possession is publicly legible on the bodies of demoniacs in the Gospel of Mark signals an important difference in demonic possession and exorcism between early Gospel narratives and some later Christian demonologies. Beginning in late antiquity, Christian writers increasingly understood demonic affliction as a phenomenon that was not made immediately manifest on the exterior “body” of the afflicted, but revealed itself through “inner” torments of the soul and/or mind. On this topic, see Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 209-214. For an analysis of the function of demonology within monastic contexts, where this trend is particularly notable, see Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk* and Valantasis, “Demons and the Perfecting of the Monk’s Body.”

<sup>225</sup>*I En.* 7, 10:9-10; *Jubilees* 5:1-10, 7:21-25.

<sup>226</sup>*I En.* 15:8-12. Emphasis mine.

<sup>227</sup>Mark 5:5.

The demoniac's self-harm, therefore, could in fact be the inhabiting demons attempting to harm each other, as they did in their former lives as giants, through the physical vessel of the demoniac's body. This motif appears later in the narrative, where the "legion" of demons request to enter a nearby herd of swine, and thereafter plunge the pigs into the sea.<sup>228</sup> Scholars have often debated whether this narrative represents the ultimate defeat (through destruction) or victory (through bodily release) of the "legion" of demons.<sup>229</sup> When contextualized within the demons' broader history of civil violence, however, the possessed swine's self-destructive plunge into the sea becomes explicable as just another skirmish in the giants' ongoing internecine warfare.

We again encounter the violent and self-destructive nature of the demonic body in the final exorcism narrative of the Gospel of Mark, the healing of a boy with a mute spirit.<sup>230</sup> Immediately after the Transfiguration scene, Jesus and his disciples encounter a "great crowd," members of which are arguing with some scribes.<sup>231</sup> After Jesus inquires of the reason for the argument, someone from the crowd emerges in response: "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they

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<sup>228</sup>Ibid, 5:13.

<sup>229</sup>It is difficult to determine whether Jesus or the demons ultimately "won" this negotiation. On the one hand, the demons are ostensibly destroyed through the pig's drowning (see Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 352). On the other hand, it could be that Jesus is the one getting "tricked" here. Some commentators have suggested, for example, that the demons destroyed the swine in order to gain release from a fleshly body so that they could roam again; in this way, they avoided a harsher punishment or torture at the hands of Jesus. On this possibility, see Otto Bauernfeind, *Die Worte der Dämonen im Markusevangelium* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927), 41-44. Joel Marcus notes additionally that "by destroying the herd of pigs, the demons have caused Jesus to be rejected in Gerasa and have forced him to leave the area" (Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 345). It should be pointed out, however, that Jesus' exorcism is not entirely without success: the cured demoniac is said to proclaim the deeds of Jesus in Decapolis, a region of Greek cities on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, much to the amazement of residents there (5:20). This concluding passage likely reveals the connection drawn between exorcism and missionary work among Jesus' earliest followers.

<sup>230</sup>Mark 9:14-29.

<sup>231</sup>Ibid, 9:14.

could not do so.”<sup>232</sup> Jesus responds with consternation: “You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.”<sup>233</sup> After this repudiation, the boy is brought to Jesus. The possessing spirit, however, sends the boy into a fit and throws him on the ground.<sup>234</sup> When Jesus asks the father how long the spirit had afflicted the boy, the father responds that it “has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him.”<sup>235</sup> In a similar fashion to the Gerasene demoniac, therefore, the demoniac demonstrates self-destructive behavior, in this case through attempted self-immolations and drownings. The father begs Jesus to heal the boy: “...if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.”<sup>236</sup> Jesus is incredulous at the father’s lack of faith in his abilities - “If you are able! — All things can be done for the one who believes.”<sup>237</sup> In response, the father pleads with Jesus: “I believe; help my unbelief!”<sup>238</sup> Jesus engages the spirit and heals the boy:

When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing,<sup>239</sup> I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!” *After crying out and convulsing him*

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<sup>232</sup>Ibid, 9:17-18. Several commentators have suggested that the symptoms of demonic possession as described here are indicative of ancient understandings of epilepsy, which perhaps overlaps with the ancient “sacred disease.” For epilepsy and its connection to demonic possession, see Temkin Owsei, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* (2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 40, and Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 36-50. See also Aulus Cornelius Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.23.1-2, the Hippocratic Treatise *The Sacred Disease*, Apuleius’ *Apology*, where it notes that some people thought the sickness was the result of a “magical” spell (*Apol.* 43-48), and Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 16, which describes an exorcism as a ritual response to the disease (though in incredulous terms). See discussion in Collins, *Mark*, 435-6.

<sup>233</sup>Mark 9:19-20.

<sup>234</sup>Ibid, 9:20.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid, 9:22.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid, 9:23.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid, 9:24.

<sup>239</sup>Graham Twelftree notes that the “dumbness” of the spirit and its healing may have certain eschatological overtones: “One of the hopes of the Messianic Age was the dumb would sing for joy” (Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 103; citing Isa 35.5 and 6).

*terribly*, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand.<sup>240</sup> When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “This kind can come out only through prayer.”<sup>241</sup>

Jesus’ comments here emphasize the importance of proper exorcistic technique (see discussion below), as the disciples’ inability to cast out the demon was apparently due to their ignorance regarding the use of exorcistic prayer. Perplexingly, Jesus himself does not use prayer to expel the demon, but an adjuration formula (“I command you...and from now on, do not enter him”) that closely mirrors the kind used by the Jewish exorcist Eleazar as cited by Josephus.<sup>242</sup> The demoniac’s convulsions, moreover, again underscore the violent tendencies of the demonic and echoes characterizations of the antediluvian giants (and their spirits).

As demonstrated by this overview, portrayals of the demonic body in the Second Gospel display several notable parallels with ancient Jewish narratives regarding antediluvian giants and their residual spirits. This is evident specifically in Mark’s rendering of the demonic body as unclean, invasive, possessive, violent, unnaturally strong, and self-destructive. This exploration, then, provides additional evidence for previous proposals that Second Temple Enochic traditions

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<sup>240</sup>An odd feature of this exorcism story is that Jesus’ success in healing the boy’s primary maladies is never confirmed: the boy neither speaks nor shows the ability to hear, leaving this exorcism story with a slightly anticlimactic conclusion. Jesus’ grasping of the hand and raising up the seemingly deceased boy calls to mind his healing of Jairus’ daughter (5:41-42; Collins, *Mark*, 439; on the parallels between these two narratives, see also Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation and Commentary* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009], 662).

<sup>241</sup>Mark 9:25-29. Emphasis mine. Some have pointed out that Jesus’ comment here appears to be a nonsequitur, since there is no explicit inclusion of prayer in Jesus’ exorcistic technique. Mara Rescio has suggested that the Transfiguration scene, which takes place beforehand, perhaps implied a preemptory time of prayer that would have served Jesus in this situation (Mark Rescio, “Demons and Baptism: Traces of Jesus’ Esoteric Teaching from Mark to Clement of Alexandria,” *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 31.1 [2014], 53-81 [70]). Graham Twelftree proposes that “this kind of demon would have been considered difficult to exorcise because, being mute, the exorcist could not enter into any diagnostic or combative dialogue” (Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 246). Jesus’ indication that this is a particular “kind” (τὸ γένος) of demon hints that demons possess certain distinguishing characteristics. The idea that only certain ritual practices might be efficacious for casting out particular demons finds precedent in the broader ancient Jewish tradition, as seen in particular in the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 4QExorcism) and the *Testament of Solomon*.

<sup>242</sup>Collins, *Mark*, 439, citing Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5.

might serve as an important literary background for New Testament demonologies. In such a way, demonic bodies in the Gospel of Mark reflect the important ways in which the early Jesus movement drew upon and participated within broader Jewish discourses of embodiment.

### **A Body Possessed: Jesus, Spirit Possession, and the Christian Body**

The exorcism narratives in the Gospel of Mark attest to the idea that while the demonic body was unnaturally violent and strong, it was still vulnerable to expulsion by exorcists. Within the Second Gospel, demons are particularly susceptible to the exorcistic abilities of Jesus of Nazareth. Interestingly, the Second Gospel claims that even those outside of Jesus' inner circle recognized his unique ability. In Mark 3, for example, scribes from Jerusalem charge that Jesus is possessed by "Beelzebul" and that it is "by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons."<sup>243</sup> Jesus responds by contesting the idea that the leader of the demons would work against his own minions:

And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered."<sup>244</sup>

Jesus' response here not only distances himself from Beelzebul,<sup>245</sup> but also positions his own

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<sup>243</sup>Mark 3:22.

<sup>244</sup>Ibid, 3:23-27. For the imagery of the "strong man," cf. Isa 49:24-25.

<sup>245</sup>Not all Second Temple Jewish traditions explicitly ascribe to the idea that the demons have a "chief" or "leader," such as Satan or Beelzebul. We do not find this tradition, for example, in the *Book of Watchers*. There are apparent leaders of the demons, nonetheless, in *Jubilees* (10) as well as the sectarian literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls. For more on this, see Wright, "Demonology of 1 Enoch," 233.

exorcistic ministry as a thwarting of the “kingdom” of Satan.<sup>246</sup> Taken together with his comments elsewhere regarding the impending Kingdom of God,<sup>247</sup> Jesus here ostensibly positions exorcism as the initial “binding” of Satan that will enable Jesus to “plunder” the adversary’s kingdom and establish divine rule.

Jesus’ “house divided” rationale is not the only line of argumentation he uses to thwart accusations of possession by Beelzebul. Rather, Jesus implies that he is possessed by a different kind of spirit, as evidenced by the ensuing discussion of the “unforgiveable sin”: “Truly I tell

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<sup>246</sup>The association between the Jewish messiah, the restoration of Israel, and the total defeat of evil has a lengthy pedigree in Jewish literature. This is seen especially in the demonological traditions of the Second Temple period, which often ascribed to demons a “limited reign” of power until the coming of the messiah (or some other restoration figure), who would ultimately undo the iniquities of the Jews’ primordial past and restore the land and people to their former glory. We see just such an emphasis in *1 Enoch* 16:1, which describes the end of the demons’ torturing of humans. What must be stressed is that in the Second Temple period, with the LXX’s representation of foreign gods as “demons,” the destruction of demons is part and parcel with the destruction of foreign deities, foreign religious practice, and, thus, foreign dominion over the land of Israel. The fact that foreign demons had taken over Israel represented a temporary allowance of the reign of evil, which would be ended as part of the restoration of Jewish political and religious dominion. In the *Songs of the Maskil*, for example, the reader is told that “you have been placed in the era of the ru[le of] wickedness and in the periods of humiliations of the sons of ligh[t], in the guilty periods of [those] defiled by iniquities; not for an everlasting destruction but rather for the era of the humiliation of sin” (*Songs of the Maskil*, fr. 1, lines 4-7). Based on this evidence, Amanda Witmer argues that “we can confidently assert that in some of the Jewish literature dated to between the first and second centuries BCE, the defeat of evil in all its forms - including evil spirits - and the restoration of justice to those on the margins were connected with the coming of God’s reign or with the coming of the Messiah” (Witmer, *Jesus*, 40). Witmer notes that while this idea was widespread, the precise of nature of the defeat of evil was heterogeneous: “These portrayals include general images of judgment (*1 En.* 1:4-9; 19:1; 55:3-4), Yahweh shutting the demons in by closing the gates of Sheol (11Q11 5.9-11), or by opening the foundations of the earth and burying the evil spirits with an earthquake (*1 En.* 1:7; 1QH 3.32-3; 4Q511 37, 42, 47), the binding and trampling of evil spirits underfoot (*1 En.* 10:4-5; *Tesetament of Simeon* 6:6; *Testament of Levi* 18:11ff.), the apocalyptic armies of Melchizedek overcoming Beliar and his cohort of spirits, and freeing the people of God from his hand (11QMelch 2.7-13), Beliar being cast into the fire (*Tesetament of Judah* 25:3), and the cleansing of the land of uncleanness (*Jub.* 50:5)” (Witmer, *Jesus*, 39 n. 86). As Adela Yarbro Collins suggests, then, “Jesus’ exorcisms...constitute a struggle with Satan that prefigures and anticipates the final, full manifestation of the kingdom of god that will take place with the coming of the Son of Man” (Collins, *Mark*, 272). This demonological background could help explain the demons’ simultaneous recognition of Jesus as a powerful exorcistic figure and surprise that he is harassing at that time; the demoniacs in Mark 1 and Mark 5 both ask Jesus, “What do you to do with me/us?” In his rendition of his Marcan source material, Matthew makes this point even more explicit: the demoniac of Matt 8:29 shouts, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” According to traditions among Jesus’ earliest followers, the demons understood that their downfall would come soon, but also knew that it had not necessarily arrived. See also Luke 10:18, 11:20; Matt 12:28; Rev 20:10. For more on this issue, see Richard H. Hiers, “Satan, Demons, and the Kingdom of God.”

<sup>247</sup>Cf. Mark 1:14-15; 4:26-29; 9:1; 10:13-14, 23.

you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.”<sup>248</sup>

Mark follows Jesus’ statement with an explanatory note: “for they had said, ‘He has an unclean spirit.’”<sup>249</sup> As noted by Joel Marcus, then, the Beelzebul and “unforgivable sin” narratives show that “in Mark’s view, the true source of Jesus’ exorcistic and miracle working power is not an unclean spirit but the Holy Spirit, the power of God’s new age.”<sup>250</sup> Jesus’ empowerment by the indwelling Holy Spirit likely goes back to his baptism, where the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus “like a dove.”<sup>251</sup> The Beelzebul incident, therefore, highlights the Second Gospel’s claim that Jesus’ special exorcistic abilities stem from his possession by a divine spirit.<sup>252</sup>

The juxtaposition between the (holy) spirit-possessed potency of the body of Jesus and the (evil) spirit-possessed affliction of the demoniacs brings to the light the way in which ideas regarding the demonic body in the Gospel of Mark take shape in tandem with understandings of

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<sup>248</sup>Mark 3:28-29.

<sup>249</sup>Ibid, 3:30.

<sup>250</sup>Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 284.

<sup>251</sup>Mark 1:9-11. On this point, see Collins, *Mark*, 234-5. G.W.H Lampe notes the connection between these dual modes of possession, and even suggests that this might have played a formative role in the development of early Christologies: “The category of Spirit-possession was used to some extent in early Christian thought to interpret not only Christ’s present relationship to believers but also his relationship to God. If believers are sons of God through the indwelling of God’s Spirit, possessing their souls and reshaping their lives according to the pattern of Christ, can Christ’s own sonship be interpreted in the same terms? The gospels suggest this possibility. In the synoptists Spirit-possession and messianic sonship are linked together in the narrative of Christ’s baptism. The Spirit descends upon him and he receives assurance that he is Son of God” (G.W.H. Lampe, “The Holy Spirit and the Person of Christ,” in S.W. Sykes and J.P. Clayton, eds., *Christ, Faith, and History: Cambridge Studies in Christology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 111-130 [117], cited ap. Davies, *Jesus the Healer*, 207-8). See also the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, which more explicitly states that the Holy Spirit “entered into” Jesus at his baptism (ap. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.13).

<sup>252</sup>Eric Sorensen summarizes this point nicely: “for the gospel of Mark the authority to exorcise is not something external to the exorcist, but a spiritual presence which he possesses” (Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 142). For more on Jesus as a “possessed” healer and exorcist, see Davies, *Jesus the Healer*. Clinton Wahlen notes Mark’s juxtaposition of Jesus’ possession-state through baptism and healing “in the holy spirit” with the state of the demoniac in Capernaum (“with an unclean spirit”) (Wahlen, *Jesus and The Impurity of Spirits*, 91).

the human body. The threat of demonic possession, for example, makes clear that for the Second Gospel, the human body is an entity liable to possession by external spirits. What is more, the power required to combat such possession stems from the human body's ability to host a benevolent divine spirit. As an additional point, Mark apparently believes that this predisposition is not unique to demoniacs and Jesus. Later in the Gospel, the author comforts readers who might face persecution: "When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."<sup>253</sup> At every turn in the Gospel of Mark, therefore, the human body is an entity prone to possession by external spirits – whether good or evil. The exorcism stories in the Second Gospel, therefore, reveal much about the bodies that populated the Marcan cosmos, including the invasive and violent bodies of demons as well as the porous human body with which they often mingled.

The Gospel of Mark is not alone in portraying demonic and human bodies in such a fashion. As explored already, ancient Jewish texts speak to the potential for both divine and demonic spirits to inhabit the human body.<sup>254</sup> This construal of the body, moreover, became a prevalent corporeal paradigm within early Christianity, as seen especially in descriptions of the

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<sup>253</sup>Mark 13:11. On the Holy Spirit and inspiring speech, see Num 24:2-; 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Kgs 22:24; Isa 11:1-2, 42:1, 61:1-2; Joel 2:28; Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9-10. Joel Marcus notes that the endowment of the spirit is often connected with eschatological events (Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 883). On the combination of inspired prophecy and eschatology, see especially the role of spirit possession/inspiration in the Book of Revelation (Rev 1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10).

<sup>254</sup>Archie Wright notes the connections between Second Temple Jewish traditions and the Gospels on this issue, pointing out that in the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular one is able "to recognize a developing anthropology that allows for the affliction and possession of humans" (Wright, "Demonology of 1 Enoch," 240). Such anthropologies likely built on Jewish cosmogonic tradition, such as that found in Genesis 2:7, which states that the soul comes from the breath of God, which is imparted to humans in the "breath of life" (*nephesh*). On this idea in ancient Jewish literature, see Gen 6:3; Job 27:3; 34:14-15; Ps. 104:30; Ezek 37:5-6; 4 Ezra 16:61-62; Wis. Sol. 1:4-5; 1 Kings 3:28; Num 27:18-23; Deut 34:9; 1 Chr. 12:19; Dan 6:4; Isa. 11:2-14, 32:15, 42:1; Job 32:8. For spirit possession and its relation to prophecy, see Ezek 2:2-5, 3:22-27; Dan 4:8-9, 18; 5:11-12, 14. For discussion, see Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 51-53.

Christian body as a “temple” for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>255</sup> Steven Davies notes that for many early Christian writers, “receiving the spirit is the sine qua non requirement for membership in the Christian movement.”<sup>256</sup> This becomes evident in the emphases on the potency, indwelling, or general importance of the spirit in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, as well as the Book of Acts and the letters of Paul.<sup>257</sup> We likewise find this theme in some early Christian martyr accounts. In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, for example, a dove, ostensibly representing the Holy Spirit, “came forth” from Polycarp’s body after an executioner attempted to hasten Polycarp’s death by stabbing him.<sup>258</sup>

In similar ways to Jesus in the Gospel of Mark (cf. Mark 3, above), early Christian authors sometimes formulated the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in light of the competing potential for the invasion of evil spirits.<sup>259</sup> The *Epistle of Barnabas*, for example, warns its reader that “Before we believed in God, the dwelling place of our heart was corrupt and feeble, since it really was a temple built by hand; *for it was full of idolatry and was a house of demons*, because

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<sup>255</sup>For the body as a temple in the New Testament, see 1 Cor 3:16-17, 2 Cor 6:16-18, John 2:21, Eph 2:19-22, also *Testament of Isaac* 4.15, *Herm. Vis.* 3.2-7. For benevolent spirits possessing humanity in the New Testament, see Matt 3:16; Acts 1:5; 2:1-41, Acts 10:38, 44-48; 11:15-16, 18:25, 19:1-7; Rom 5:5, 8:9, 12:11, 15:13; 1 Cor 3:16, 12:13; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 3:17-20, 5:18; Col 1:29, 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14, 3:4-7; James 4:5.

<sup>256</sup>Davies, *Jesus the Healer*, 172.

<sup>257</sup>For the Gospel of Mark, see above. Cf. Matt 10:20; Luke 11:24-26; Acts 2:1-4, 8:14-17, 10:44-48, 18:25-28, 19:2-6; Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:6-7.

<sup>258</sup>*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 16.1.

<sup>259</sup>Interestingly, the Gospel of Luke includes a narrative, following immediately upon the Beelzebul controversy (11:14-23), that warns readers regarding the potential reinvasion of demons: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first” (11:24-26). Graham Twelftree suggests that this story functions to encourage Christian exorcists to bring former demoniacs into the fold of early Jesus followers in order to protect them from demonic re-invasion, perhaps by enabling them to take on the Holy Spirit (Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 98). If Twelftree’s reading is correct, then this would provide an additional example of a Christian text articulating the importance of the Holy Spirit in part by presenting it as a bulwark against demonic invasion.

we did everything that was opposed to God.”<sup>260</sup> Taking up the Christian faith has transformed the body, according to Barnabas: “we have become new, created again from the beginning, because we have received the forgiveness of sins and have hoped in the name. *Therefore God truly resides within our place of dwelling - within us.*”<sup>261</sup>

*Barnabas* is not the only Christian text to claim that demonic and holy spirits compete for real estate within the Christian body. In the “Commandments” of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, for example, Hermas learns that the Holy Spirit is in a struggle with an “evil spirit” for the control of the believer:

For if you are patient, the holy spirit that dwells in you will be pure and will not be overshadowed by another, evil spirit...But if any irascibility should enter in, immediately the holy spirit, which is sensitive, feels cramped; and not having a pure place it seeks to leave. For it is suffocated by the evil spirit, not having a place to serve the Lord as it wishes, being polluted by the irascibility...when both spirits dwell in the same place, it is unprofitable and evil for that person in whom they dwell.<sup>262</sup>

The theme of competing good and evil spirits is underscored later in the *Shepherd*, when the Lord cautions Hermas that “when these (evil) spirits dwell in one and the same vessel with the holy spirit, the vessel no longer has sufficient space but is stuffed to the brim.”<sup>263</sup> As noted by F.C. Conybeare, then, Hermas at several points represents the human being as a kind of vessel

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<sup>260</sup>*Epistle of Barnabas* 16.7 (LCL, Ehrman). Emphasis mine.

<sup>261</sup>*Ibid* 16.8 (LCL, Ehrman). Emphasis mine.

<sup>262</sup>*Shepherd of Hermas* 33.1-4 (LCL, Ehrman). In his commentary on Hermas’ emphasis on “irascibility,” F.C. Conybeare wryly suggests that “In Italy, where Hermas wrote, the passionate and vindictive temper of the inhabitants must have been a great obstacle to the progress of Christian love and charity” (Conybeare, *Christian Demonology*, 20).

<sup>263</sup>*Shepherd of Hermas* 34.5-7 (LCL, Ehrman). For this theme in the *Shepherd*, see also the discussions regarding schismatic Christians, where the reader is cautioned that such Christians must “cleanse yourselves from this demon” (100.5; LCL, Ehrman). For discussion, see Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 212-213. Twelftree notes that the appropriate response for Hermas is repentance and belief, and clothing oneself with patience and standing against irascibility and bitterness (Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 213, citing 100.5, cf. 34.1-8), rather than exorcism. Satan and demons are portrayed as relatively weak as compared to other Christian texts (37.2, 39.10; cf. 33.1).

“into which the Holy Spirit and evil spirits may alike enter and dwell.”<sup>264</sup> This becomes even clearer in Hermas’ discussion of true and false prophecy. According the *Shepherd*, false prophets are possessed “earthly” and “empty” spirits that ultimately come “from the devil.”<sup>265</sup> This demonic spirit, however, will take flight if confronted by those with the holy spirit: “But when this [false prophet] comes into a gathering filled with *upright men who have the divine spirit* and a petition comes forth from them, that person becomes empty, and *the earthly spirit flees from him out of fear*; and that person is unable to speak and altogether crushed, not able to say a word.”<sup>266</sup>

The examples of Hermas and Barnabas speak to how some early Christians emphasized the importance of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in part by warning of the simultaneous danger of usurpation by evil spirits. In such a way, Christian discourses of demonic/divine possession construe the human body as a physical “vessel” that is particularly prone to inhabitation by nonhuman spirits (both good and evil). Through this understanding of the human body, early Christian texts reflect their indebtedness to broader corporeal paradigms of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls) and the early Jesus movement (cf. Mark 3, above).

What is more, stories of demonic possession and exorcism will have had a major impact on the performance of Christian corporeality. As traced in this section, exorcism was at times not just a process of extraction, but of replacement – the exchange of the evil spirit for the good, of the demonic for the divine. As such, exorcism will have functioned not simply as one-time cure, but as “a mode of being within a fluid life process,” a state that required continued vigilance and

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<sup>264</sup>Conybeare, *Christian Demonology*, 20.

<sup>265</sup>*Shepherd of Hermas* 43.12, 17.

<sup>266</sup>*Ibid*, 43.14 (LCL, Ehrman). Emphasis mine.

proper ritual practice in order to maintain possession of the divine spirit and keep the evil spirits at bay.<sup>267</sup> In order to thwart the potential reinvasion of such demonic forces, Christians formulated a broader set of ritual practices, including prayer, laying on of hands, and baptism.<sup>268</sup> The construction of the Christian body as prone to possession, then, shaped Christian practice in important ways. This will have become even truer by the end of the second century, when we begin to see evidence for the incorporation of exorcistic practice in the baptismal initiatory rites of some Christian communities.<sup>269</sup> At an early period, therefore, the connection between demonic and divine possession became a central element of the ritual performance of becoming Christian. In the section to follow, I explore how exorcism itself served similar purposes within early Christianity by informing a diverse range of bodily repertoires designed to expel demons and craft the proper Christian body.

### **A Potent Possession: Christian Exorcistic Practice and the Making of the Christian Body**

The practice of exorcism by Jesus' followers appears in the earliest writings of the Jesus movement. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, Jesus is said to have appointed and commissioned the twelve apostles, giving them the power "to cast out demons."<sup>270</sup> The Gospel of

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<sup>267</sup>Stuckenbruck, "The Human Being and Demonic Invasion," 117.

<sup>268</sup>Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 146-7.

<sup>269</sup>On this, see Elizabeth A. Leeper, "From Alexandria to Rome: The Valentinian Connection to the Incorporation of Exorcism as a Prebaptismal Rite," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), 6-24; eadem, *Exorcism in Early Christianity* (Ph.D., Duke University, 1991); Henry A. Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 261; Franz Joseph Dölger, *Der Exorzismus im althristlichen Taufritual: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1909). Dölger argues that the primary reason for incorporating exorcism into baptism rests in the connection made by Christian writers between demons and the "foreign" deities of the Greco-Roman pantheon (Ibid, 4-5, cited ap. Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 15). For early Christian witnesses to this practice, see especially *The Apostolic Tradition* 20.3, 21.6-9, 21.10. See also the discussion of baptism and demons in the work of Tertullian, below, Chapter Four.

<sup>270</sup>Mark 3:15.

Matthew includes a similar directive, where the apostles receive “authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.”<sup>271</sup> The longer ending of the Gospel of Mark, moreover, includes the declaration that one of the signs of those who will believe will be their ability to “cast out demons.”<sup>272</sup> Annette Reed suggests that early texts such as these established Jesus the exorcist as a paradigm for his followers: “Just as Jesus had exorcised demons, so Christians were now commissioned to take up the fight. For many, this meant exposing the machinations of the fallen angels and demons in the world around them, and they explained a startling array of phenomena with reference to the invisible hands of supernatural evil.”<sup>273</sup>

We see depictions of Christians taking up this fight in a wide variety of textual traditions. In Acts, the apostle Paul exorcises a “slave-girl” who was possessed by a “spirit of divination” (πνεῦμα πύθωνα).<sup>274</sup> The apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* and *Acts of John* likewise depict their eponymous characters performing exorcisms.<sup>275</sup> Justin Martyr asserts, “throughout the whole world and in your own city (of Rome) many of us, human beings who are Christians, exorcised many who were possessed by demons in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate.”<sup>276</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, and Theophilus of Antioch, among many others, similarly claim that Christians

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<sup>271</sup>Matt 10:1.

<sup>272</sup>Mark 16:7.

<sup>273</sup>Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 187.

<sup>274</sup>Acts 16:16-18.

<sup>275</sup>*Acts of John* 41-43, *Acts of Andrew* ap. Gregory of Tours, *On the Miracles of the Blessed Apostle Andrew*, 6-7.

<sup>276</sup>*2 Apol.* 6.5-6.

continued to exorcise demons in their own day.<sup>277</sup> It is clear that for many Christians, then, exorcisms were not just stories from the past. Rather, they were ritual practices performed in their very own cities and villages, which spoke to the continuing relevance of exorcism for Christian life.

Many early Christian authors cite exorcism as a major reason for Christianity's evangelistic successes. Irenaeus, for example, asserts that healed demoniacs often join the church.<sup>278</sup> Tertullian avows, furthermore, that public displays of exorcistic prowess often inspire conversions to the Christian faith.<sup>279</sup> Novatian, the future bishop of Rome, became a Christian only after receiving exorcistic treatment for a severe illness.<sup>280</sup> The *Acts of John* depict the "exorcism" of the demon Artemis from the city of Ephesus as the occasion for a mass conversion of the city's inhabitants.<sup>281</sup> Based in part on these witnesses, many contemporary scholars have argued that exorcism was a major evangelistic tool for early Christians. Adolf von Harnack asserts, for example, "*exorcism formed one very powerful method of [the Christians'] mission and propaganda.*"<sup>282</sup> Ramsay MacMullen likewise argues that exorcism was one of the primary public miracles that inspired public Christian conversions.<sup>283</sup> David Frankfurter proposes, moreover, that the "Mediterranean market for exorcism" stands as "the primary context for the

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<sup>277</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *On the Rich Man Who is Saved* 34; Origen of Alexandria, *Against Celsus* 7.4; Tertullian, *Apology* 23; Cyprian, *Ad Donatum* 5; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum* 2.8.

<sup>278</sup>Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against All Heresies*. 2.32.4.

<sup>279</sup>*Apol.* 23.

<sup>280</sup>On this, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.43.14.

<sup>281</sup>*Acts of John* 38-45.

<sup>282</sup>Adolf von Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (2 vols; 1904-5; repr. New York: Arno, 1972), 1:160. Emphasis original.

<sup>283</sup>MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 28-29.

spread of Christianity.”<sup>284</sup> Graham Twelftree goes so far as to state that “in the modern study of early Christianity the prevailing view has been that exorcism played a significant role in the success of early Christianity.”<sup>285</sup>

Exegetes both ancient and modern agree, then, that exorcism formed an important ritual practice for early Christian communities. But what did the ritual of exorcism entail for the Christian body? As traced previously, Jesus exorcises demons in the Gospels largely through an initial confrontation and verbal adjuration. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, Jesus commands that the demons “come out” and “Be quiet.”<sup>286</sup> Jesus sometimes precedes such exorcisms by soliciting information from the demon, as indicated in the Gerasene Démoniac narrative. The exorcism of the mute boy includes a command that the demon “no longer enter into” the démoniac.<sup>287</sup> Jesus’ exorcisms, therefore, primarily consisted of short, agonistic verbal exchanges between Jesus and the possessing demon, which culminated in Jesus’ use of imperative commands to expel the evil spirit.

Some of our earliest examples of Christian exorcism seem to follow this pattern. In the Book of Acts, for example, Paul exorcises the demon of a fortune-telling slave-girl by verbal adjuration: “‘I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour.”<sup>288</sup> In the *Acts of Peter*, the eponymous apostle encounters a man “half laughing,”

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<sup>284</sup>Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 19-20.

<sup>285</sup>Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 26. This brings to light a tension between New Testament and early Christian studies. Whereas the former has largely “de-mythologized” the demonic in New Testament narratives (see discussion above), the latter has often viewed demons as an important aspect of early Christian belief and practice. This underlying incongruity in interpretive practice might stem from the theologically informed desire to “update” Christian scripture, including the New Testament, based on modern sensibilities, a pressure that does not exert as much influence on contemporary interpretations of literature from the post-apostolic period.

<sup>286</sup>For the former phrase, see Mark 1:25, 5:8, 9:25; for the latter, see Mark 1:25.

<sup>287</sup>Ibid, 9:25.

<sup>288</sup>Acts 9:18.

apparently possessed by a demon. Peter then commands the demon to exit his victim: “You too, then, whatever demon you may be, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, come out of the young man and do him no harm; (and) show yourself to all who stand by!”<sup>289</sup> It is notable that the phrase “Jesus Christ” is present in both of these exorcistic formulas from early Christian Acts. This tradition appears likewise in the longer ending of Mark, where the risen Jesus declares, “*in my name* they (the apostles) will drive out demons.”<sup>290</sup>

Interestingly, many early Christian authors claim that two practices distinguished Christian exorcism from its Greco-Roman counterparts: (1) the invocation of the name of Jesus, and (2) the use of short verbal adjurations, rather than elaborate (“magical”) incantation formulas. Tertullian emphasizes, for example, that Christians expel demons “only by the name of Christ.”<sup>291</sup> Origen of Alexandria similarly claims that Christians expel demons “without any curious magical art or sorcerer's device, but with prayer alone and very simple adjurations,” even going so far as to say that this is the reason why the “simplest person” can perform exorcisms.<sup>292</sup> Origen's comments reveal that Christian ascriptions to “simple” verbal exorcisms were part of a larger effort to disassociate Christian ritual practice from Greco-Roman “magical” analogues. We see this likewise in the writings of Justin Martyr, who strongly distinguishes between Christian practice and that of “enchanters and sorcerers,”<sup>293</sup> as well as Irenaeus of Lyons, who

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<sup>289</sup>*Acts of Peter* 11. Translation from Wilhelm Schneemelcher, tr., “The Acts of Peter,” in idem and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. II.

<sup>290</sup>Mark 16:7. Emphasis mine. On the use of the name of Jesus in exorcism formulas, see also Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 2.32.4; *Pistis Sophia* 3.110; Theophilus, *Ad Autolytus* 2.8.

<sup>291</sup>*Apol.* 23.

<sup>292</sup>*Against Celsus* 7.4. All translations of *Against Celsus* are adapted from Henry Chadwick, tr. *Origen: Contra Celsum* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

<sup>293</sup>*Apol.* 6.

argues that “orthodox” Christian exorcism is free of “magical” activities.<sup>294</sup> In light of this widespread characterization, it is tempting to draw a sharp distinction between early Christian exorcistic practices and that of Greco-Roman counterparts.<sup>295</sup> Before doing so, however, it is important to consider some examples of non-Christian exorcism in order to gain a better appreciation for the broader ritual context in which Christians expelled demons.

### *Christian Exorcists and their Greco-Roman Counterparts*

At first glance, Christian exorcistic formulas appear to differ in important ways from prominent analogous practices, especially the more elaborate and lengthy formulas of the fourth century *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM). PGM IV, for example, includes an intricate set of incantations, *voces magicae*, and ritual aids:

Take some oil made from unripe olives together with the plant mastigia and lotus fruit pulp and boil them with colorless marjoram, while saying: “IOEL OS SARTHIOMI EMORI THEOCHIPSOITH SITHEMEOCH SOTHE IOE MIMIPSOTHIOOPH PHERSOTHI AEEIOUO IOE EO CHARI PHTHA, come out of (insert name here).” Do as usual. Inscribe the phylactery on a tin leaf: “IAEO ABRAOTHIOCH PHTHA MESENPSINIAO PHEOCH IAEO CHAROK.” Fasten it around the sufferer. This is a terrifying thing for every demon, and he is frightened of it. Stand the sufferer opposite and perform the exorcism. This is the exorcism: “I adjure you by the god of the Hebrew, Jesus, IABA IAE ABRAOTH AIA THOTH ELE ELO AEO EOU IIIBAECH ABARMAS IABAROU ABELBEL LONA ABRA MAROIA BRAKION, appearing in fire, who is in the middle of land, snow, and mist. TANNETIS. May your angel come down and be deaf to dissuasion. Let him assign to the demon that flits about the shape that God molded in his own holy paradise, because I pray to the holy god, AMMON IPSENTANCHO. (Use the formula). I adjure you LABRIA IAKOUTH ABLANATHANALBA AKRAMM. (Use the formula). AOTH IATHABATHRA CHACHTHABRATHA CHAMUN CHEL ABROOTH OUABRASILOTH HALLELOU

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<sup>294</sup>*Against All Heresies* 2.31.2-3, 2.32.4-5. Cf. *Against All Heresies* 1.23.4. For discussion, see Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 253.

<sup>295</sup>For an example of this type of approach, see especially Tony Costa, “The Exorcisms and Healings of Jesus Within Classical Culture,” in Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 113-144 [127]. Similarly, F.C. Conybeare argues that Jesus’ exorcistic practice is unique in that “he made no use...of magical herbs” (Conybeare, *Christian Demonology*, 11). See also Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2:548, 550, 571 n. 65, who strongly differentiates between Jesus’ exorcisms and those found in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. For discussion, see Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 36-54.

IELOSAN IAEL. I adjure you in the name of the one that was seen by Osrael in a shining column and in a day-time cloud and delivered his people from the Pharaoh and inflicted on Pharaoh the ten plagues because he would not listen to him. I adjure you, every demonic spirit, to give voice and tell of what kind you are, because I adjure you by the seal that Solomon set upon the tongue of Jeremiah, and he gave voice. You too give voice and tell of what kind you are, a demon dwelling in heaven or the air or on the earth or under the earth or in the underworld, or whether you are of the abyss or of the dry land or of the sea, give voice and tell of what sort you are...<sup>296</sup>

In comparison to the short adjurations attested in early Christian texts, this exorcism spell is notable for its length, elaborateness, and use of *voces magicae*. What is more, the use of material aids such as plants and fruits for driving out demons is relatively unattested in Christian literary sources. Elsewhere in the PGM, we again encounter the use of “magical” aids such as sulphur and bitumen to cast out a demon: “If you say the name to a man possessed by a demon while applying sulphur and bitumen to his nose, the demon will give voice at once and depart.”<sup>297</sup> In the fourth century magico-medical work of Cyranides, moreover, we encounter an exorcism spell that suggests the use of a “Nemesis-stone” in warding off demons:

The Nemesis-stone is a stone taken from the altar of Nemesis. Nemesis is engraved on the stone standing with her foot on a wheel. Her form is that of a maiden, brandishing a cubit ruler in her left hand, and a staff in her right. You will enclose under the stone the wing-tip of a duck and a small piece of the plant. If you apply this ring to a possessed man, the demon will at once confess himself and flee. It also cures moonstruck people if work round the neck. It averts manifestations of demons in dreams, the terrors that afflict children and nightmares.<sup>298</sup>

As seen with just these three examples, certain strands of exorcistic practice drawn from Greco-Roman sources emphasize elements – including lengthy incantations, *voces magicae*, and use of material objects – that are relatively lacking from early Christian accounts of their own

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<sup>296</sup>PGM IV.3007-86. All translations of the PGM are from Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*.

<sup>297</sup>PGM XIII.242-4.

<sup>298</sup>Cyranides 1.13.16-29. Translation from Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 268. For more on this, see Maryse Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet: Magical Amulets in the First Book of Cyranides* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1987).

exorcisms. Based on this general differentiation, it might be tempting to concur with the assessment of Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, and others that early Christian practices diverged markedly from those of their Greco-Roman counterparts.

When we take a broader view of exorcism among Greco-Romans and Christians – that is, beyond the contrast between the PGM and early church fathers – the line between these traditions begins to blur. First, it is important to point out that Christians did not have a monopoly on shorter, less elaborate exorcistic adjurations. On Greek amulets from the second and third centuries, for example, we discover several that contain short adjurations designed to protect the amulet bearer from demonic attack: “BOTEZ...EUV...DO...ES. Deliver Juliana from all witchcraft/poisoning [*pharmakia*] and all suffering and all active attack and the manifestation of demons, night and day, now, now quickly, quickly at once, at once, at once.”<sup>299</sup> Another spirit-repelling amulet from the Roman period likewise contains a short adjuration: “Drive off from [R...ia] any spirit that wicked, evil-doing, and destructive. PTA NEBR AN THABIASA.”<sup>300</sup> While both of these amulets contain *voces magicae*, an element uncharacteristic of the Christian tradition, they nonetheless attest to the use of shorter adjuration formulas among non-Christians.

We find additional evidence for such parallel practices in the Greco-Roman literary tradition. In Lucian’s second century treatise *Lover of Lies*, for example, the character Ion describes the exorcistic technique of “the Syrian”:

I need not discuss this: everyone knows about the Syrian from Palestine, the adept in it, how many he takes in hand who fall down in the light of the moon and roll their eyes and fill their mouths with foam; nevertheless, he restores them to health and sends them away normal in mind, delivering them from their straits for a large fee. When he stands beside

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<sup>299</sup>Translation from Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts*, 269. This amulet dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.

<sup>300</sup>*Ibid*, 268.

them as they lie there and asks: ‘Whence came you into his body?’ the patient himself is silent, but the spirit answers in Greek or in the language of whatever foreign country he comes from, telling how and whence he entered into the man; whereupon, by *adjuring the spirit* and if he does not obey, threatening him, he drives him out.<sup>301</sup>

The Syrian’s approach to exorcism, therefore, largely mirrors that of Jesus: a short exchange with the demon, followed by an imperative adjuration that expels the spirit. What is more, in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*, the neo-Pythagorean wonderworker Apollonius of Tyana encounters a demoniac and successfully heals him of his possession: “Apollonius addressed [the demon] with anger...and he ordered him to quit the young man and show by a visible sign that he had done so.”<sup>302</sup> Several witnesses from the Greco-Roman tradition, therefore, suggest that short adjurations were a part of standard exorcistic techniques in the ancient Mediterranean, and thus do not provide a reliable point of differentiation for Christian practice.

As a second point, Christian emphasis on the use of short adjurations might not have distanced them from the charge of “sorcery.” Philip Alexander notes, for example, that the Christians’ favored approach draws on broader ancient theories of the “magical” efficacy of verbal assault: “speech is fundamental to this type of magic [i.e., exorcism], and speech is essentially performative: the right kind of speech causes things to happen. Ritual and *materia magica* are, indeed, at times involved, but they are ancillary to speech.”<sup>303</sup> David Aune has likewise noted the connection between Christian adjurations and ancient “magical” practice, pointing out that

Jesus’ use of the imperative mood in exorcisms is in fact a widely known and used form of adjuration in the ancient world...The great gulf which some New Testament scholars

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<sup>301</sup>*Lover of Lies* 16 (LCL, Harmon). Emphasis mine.

<sup>302</sup>4.20 (LCL, Conybeare). For another instance of Apollonius combatting a demon, see 4.10, where the wonderworker identifies and kills a “plague-demon” that is afflicting the city of Ephesus.

<sup>303</sup>Alexander, “Contextualizing the Demonology of the Testament of Solomon,” 624.

would place between “the powerful word of the Son” and “magical incantations” is simply nonexistent. The short authoritative commands of Jesus to demons in the gospel narratives are formulas of magical adjuration.<sup>304</sup>

Aune’s point finds support in Jesus’ use of the imperative phrase “I command you” as well as his adjuration that demons not return to their host (e.g., Mark 9:25), two stock exorcistic phrases found in other Jewish and Greco-Roman exorcisms.<sup>305</sup> It is in part because of this drawing upon broader “magical” practices that Otto Böcher refers to Jesus’ exorcisms as “Wortzauber.”<sup>306</sup>

Despite the claims of early apologists, then, the Christian use of short adjurations in their exorcistic practice does not signal a complete break from contemporary Greco-Roman practice. Rather, it would be more fruitful to consider the ways in which Christian practice participates in, rather than diverges from, broader ritual traditions of the ancient Mediterranean. The need to consider potential overlaps between Christians and Greco-Roman magical practice intensifies when we consider evidence that suggests Christian participation in so-called magical rites. PGM IV (cited previously), for example, includes both Jewish (“the god of the Hebrews”) and Christian (“Jesus”) incantation terminology. In his collection of amulets and magical spells, moreover, Daniel Ogden has noted the use of traditional Christian names in protection amulets that use magical rituals.<sup>307</sup> David R. Jordan and Roy Kotansky, furthermore, have published

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<sup>304</sup>David Aune, “Magic in early Christianity,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.2 (1990), 1507-1557 [1532]. As an additional point, Aune correctly points out that the supposed difference between Christian and “magical” exorcisms is in part due to differences in chronological context: “The brevity of these exorcistic formulas has led some scholars to contrast them with the long adjurations of the magical papyri. Aside from the not unimportant observation that such a contrast is quantitative, not qualitative, it should be noted that most of the magical papyri come from the third through the fifth centuries A.D. during the great Blutezeit of Graeco-Roman magic; it appears that the older the magical forms, the shorter and more precise are the formulas” (Ibid, 1531).

<sup>305</sup>For a parallel to Jesus’ use of imperative adjurations, see esp. *PGM* I.254, 7.331. For parallels to Jesus’ command that the demon not to return to the victim, see Tob 6:8, 17-18; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46-47; *Acts of Thomas* 77. For discussion, see Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 655.

<sup>306</sup>Böcher, *Das Neue Testament*, 33.

<sup>307</sup>In PGM LXXXIX, for example, an amulet invokes non-Christian divine assistance in protecting “little Sophia” from demonic attack: “SO SO ABRASAX [character] ABRASAX. I am ABRASAX ABRASI CHO OU. Come to

several amulets that betray potential use by Christians.<sup>308</sup>

Due to the nature of our evidence, none of this is definitive proof that Christians were regularly engaging in “magical” exorcisms or the use of protective amulets. Nevertheless, the circumstantial evidence for Christian participation in such rites suggests that the line drawn by early Christian apologists between Christian and “magical” ritual practice is far too bold. It would be more productive to view Christian exorcism as existing on a continuum of ritual practices in the ancient world, which incorporated to varying degrees practices sometimes labeled as “magical” by other ritual experts. Christian exorcists’ emphasis on the efficacy of Jesus’ name will have provided one point of differentiation, though the appearance of Jesus’ name in the adjuration formulas of the PGM calls into question how much this would have differentiated Christian exorcists from their non-Christian counterparts.

The apologists’ collective emphasis on Christian exorcistic idiosyncrasy, then, is not necessarily reflective of the diverse range of Christian ritual practices; nevertheless, it does speak to attempts by these authors to undergird Christian ritual expertise over and against that of other competitors in the ancient ritual “marketplace.” Thus, while such discourses are primarily prescriptive (rather than descriptive), they nonetheless give insight to the ways in which Christian writers utilized exorcism to articulate certain views of the Christian body. In what follows, I examine a sampling of early Christian exorcistic discourses in order to ascertain how

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the aid of little Sophia, a.k.a. Priscilla. Restrain and render ineffectual the attacker of little Sophia, a.k.a. Priscilla, whether it is shivering, restrain it, whether it is a ghost, restrain it, whether it is a demon. Restrain it. SO SO ABRASAX ABRASAX, I am ABRASAX ABRASI CHO OU. Restrain and render ineffectual the things that attack little Sophia, a.k.a Priscilla, on this very day, whether it is shivering, restrain it, whether it is a demon, render it ineffectual” (*Suppl. Mag.* 13 [PGM LXXXIX, 4<sup>th</sup> century CE], ap. Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts*, 268).

<sup>308</sup>On this, see David R. Jordan and Roy D. Kotansky, “A Solomonic Exorcism,” in Michael Gronewald, Klaus Maresch, and Cornelia Römer, eds., *Kölner Papyri 7.8* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997), 53-69; David R. Jordan and Roy Kotansky, “Two Phylacteries from Xanthos,” *Revue Archeologique* (1996), 161-171; Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994), 387; Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 263-4.

these texts construct Christian exorcistic practice, and thus inform the materialization of Christian corporeality.

### *Christian Exorcism and Christian Power*

Some of the earliest commentaries on Christian exorcistic practice highlight the specific power of Christians to perform exorcisms, over and against exorcistic competitors. In the Book of Acts, for example, the sons of the Jewish High Priest Sceva attempt to exorcize a demon using the name of Jesus. Their attempt fails, however, and they fall prey to the attacks of the demoniac:

Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered (κατακυριεύσας) them all, and so overpowered (ἴσχυσεν) them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. When this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, everyone was awestruck; and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised.<sup>309</sup>

Acts underscores the incompetence of the Jewish exorcists by describing how the demon “mastered” and “overpowered” them, so much so that they are forced to flee in the nude. Intriguingly, Acts implies that the sons of Sceva’s failure is not due to improper technique; as discussed previously, in Acts Paul exorcizes a slave girl using the name of Jesus, a technique similar to that of the sons of Sceva.<sup>310</sup> The failure of the Jewish exorcists, therefore, results from their own lack of affiliation with Jesus, as indicated by the demons’ response to their futile adjuration: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”<sup>311</sup> According to the book of Acts, then, the Jewish exorcists fail for one simple reason: they are neither Jesus nor one of his

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<sup>309</sup>Acts 19:16-17.

<sup>310</sup>Ibid, 16:16-18.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid, 19:15.

followers.<sup>312</sup> Through the narrative opposition between futile Jewish exorcism and effective “Christian”<sup>313</sup> exorcism, Acts contrasts the strength of the Christian ritual body with the weakness of its Jewish counterpart.

Acts stands as an early example of what is a widespread trend in the literature of the early Jesus movement and early Christianity: the emphasis on the unique potency of the Christian body in performing effective exorcisms. Tatian of Syria, for example, accentuates the “power” of God’s word that works through Christian exorcists, who are “armed with the ‘breastplate’ (θώρακι) of ‘heavenly spirit.’”<sup>314</sup> Tatian’s use of martial imagery here (“breastplate”) highlights the agonistic context of exorcism as well as the importance of Christian “strength” or “power” in this cosmic battle. Clement of Alexandria likewise stresses the power of Christian exorcism, claiming that through it “the violence of demons is shattered, reduced to impotence by confident commands.”<sup>315</sup> In similar fashion, Tertullian emphasizes the unique supremacy of Christian exorcists over demons, and attributes it to their successful invocation of the name of Jesus:

Yet all this sovereignty and power that we have over [the demons] derives its force only from the naming of Christ, and the reminder of what they expect to come upon them from god at the judgment-seat of Christ... Thus at a touch, a breath from us, they are seized by the thought, by the foretaste of that fire, and they leave the bodies of men at our command, all against their will, in pain, blushing to have you witness it.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>312</sup>This perspective contrasts with that of Mark 9:38, where Jesus tells his disciples not to dissuade non-followers from invoking his name in exorcism.

<sup>313</sup>This of course is an anachronistic term for the book of Acts, but I use it here as convenient shorthand for early followers of Jesus.

<sup>314</sup>*Address to the Greeks* 16.2-3. Translation from Whittaker, *Tatian*, 33.

<sup>315</sup>*On the Rich Man Who is Saved* 34 (LCL Butterworth). For more on Clement’s demonology, see Chapter Four.

<sup>316</sup>*Apol.* 23 (LCL, Glover). Here and throughout I follow the translation of T.R. Glover from the Loeb Classical Library for Tertullian’s Apology. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

Tertullian here centralizes exorcistic efficacy in a ritual technique – the invocation of Jesus’ name – that will have distinguished Christian exorcism from (most of) its Jewish and Greco-Roman counterparts (the sons of Sceva and PGM IV notwithstanding). What is more, Tertullian underlines both the potency of the Christian body (“at a touch, a breath from us”) as well as the relative suffering and embarrassment experienced by the expelled demon (“they are seized,” “in pain,” “blushing”). Cyprian of Carthage likewise emphasizes the agony that the Christian exorcist is able to inflict on its demonic foe, claiming that Christians expel evil spirits “with heavy blows” and “startling threats.”<sup>317</sup> From these witnesses emerges a collective portrayal of the Christian ritual body: confident, powerful, and effective.

In the *Acts of Thomas*, we encounter a particularly interesting attestation to the clout of the Christian exorcist. A beautiful woman visits Thomas, seeking relief from a possessing demon that had afflicted her for several years. The woman declares Thomas’ supremacy over the demons: “But I know and am persuaded that demons and spirits and avengers are subject to you, and become terrified at your prayer.”<sup>318</sup> After Thomas bemoans the woman’s condition, the evil spirit responds, “What do you have to do with us, apostle of the Most High?...Why do you wish to destroy us, before our time has come? Why do you wish to usurp our authority?...Why do you wish to exercise mastery over us, especially since you teach others not to act despotically?”<sup>319</sup> Before departing, the demon underscores the importance of Thomas in thwarting his possessive presence:

I will go to places *where the fame of this man [i.e., Jesus] has not been heard...* I will depart and seek one like you [the woman I just possessed], and if I do not find her, I will

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<sup>317</sup>*Ad Donatum* 5.

<sup>318</sup>*Acts of Thomas* 43. All translations for the *Acts of Thomas* are amended from Hans J.W. Drijvers, tr., “Acts of Thomas,” in Schneemelcher and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. II.

<sup>319</sup>*Ibid* 44-45.

return to you again. *For I know that while you are near to this man [Thomas] you have your safety in him, but when he is gone you will be as you were before he appeared.*<sup>320</sup>

In similar fashion to other Christian texts, then, the *Acts of Thomas* concentrates exorcistic power in the commanding presence of the Christian ritual expert. Whenever that bodily potency is present, the people enjoy protection from evil spirits; in its absence, even the Christian body again becomes vulnerable to demonic attack.

Graham Twelftree has noted the early Christian centering of power on the exorcist rather than particular exorcistic procedures: “the techniques were not the key to a successful exorcism. Success depended on the exorcist – a person filled and empowered by the Spirit.”<sup>321</sup> It is important to point out that such an emphasis is significant not only for constructions of the Christian body, but also the Christian construal of competing ritual experts. We see this especially in Christian denunciations of “sorcerers” and attempts at differentiation between their own exorcisms and “magical” rites. Justin Martyr, for example, claims in his *2 Apology* that Christians have displayed effectiveness in exorcism where others have not:

For throughout the whole world and in your own city many of us, human beings who are Christians, exorcised many who were possessed by demons in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. And they healed them, *though they had not been healed by all the others - exorcists and enchanters and sorcerers*. And still they heal, breaking the power of the demons and chasing them away from human beings who were possessed by them.<sup>322</sup>

Justin’s comments here highlight a dual emphasis found often in early Christian accounts of exorcism: Christians’ unique ability to perform them, and their differentiation from the (ineffectual) practices of Greco-Roman “enchanters and sorcerers.” In Justin’s context, his

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<sup>320</sup>Ibid 46. Emphasis mine.

<sup>321</sup>Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 155.

<sup>322</sup>*Apol.* 6.5-6. Emphasis mine. Translation from Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also *Dialogue with Trypho* 30.3.

emphases aid in his broader attempt to make Christianity more palatable to its cultured despisers. Seen in this way, Christian claims regarding exorcistic efficacy and “simplicity” are an attempt to reorganize Greco-Roman religious/magical discourses to encourage acceptance of Christian practices and denunciation of Greco-Roman “magical” competitors.<sup>323</sup>

Irenaeus of Lyons engages in similar utilization of exorcistic discourses, though his opponents are fellow Christians. In his *Against All Heresies*, Irenaeus attempts to counter “heretical” claims to miraculous healing powers by arguing that heterodox Christians are unable to expel demons, “except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they even do so much as this.”<sup>324</sup> This depiction of ineffectual healing powers appears as part of a broader contrast between the “orthodox” church and heretical offshoots, which Irenaeus differentiates in part based on relative use of “magical” rites:

Since...there exist among them error and misleading influences, and *magical illusions are impiously wrought* in the sight of men; but in the Church, sympathy, and compassion, and steadfastness, and truth, for the aid and encouragement of people, are not only displayed without fee or reward, but we ourselves lay out for the benefit of others our own means.<sup>325</sup>

Later in the same treatise, Irenaeus again emphasizes that heretical Christians can only effect cures “by means of magic” and “deceitfully,” “since they confer no real benefit or blessing on

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<sup>323</sup>This will have been especially important for Justin’s apologetic program, as one of the purported recipients of Justin’s address, Marcus Aurelius, later wrote of his disdain for exorcism (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 1.6). Embedded within Justin’s claim to Christian exorcistic superiority, nonetheless, is a latent anti-imperial critique; elsewhere in his writings, Justin claims that the demons are behind the Roman emperor’s persecution of Christians (*1 Apol.* 5, 12; *2 Apol.* 1, 5, 12). The Christians’ defeat of the demons, therefore, is in part a sign of their cosmic potency even over their imperial overlords, a point accentuated by Justin’s mention of Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion. For more on this motif in Justin’s writings, see Elaine Pagels, “Christian Apologists and the ‘Fall of the Angels’”; Annette Yoshiko Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels”; Jennifer Wright Knust, “Enslaved to Demons.”

<sup>324</sup>*Against All Heresies* 2.31.2. All translations of *Against All Heresies* amended from Roberts et al., eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I.

<sup>325</sup>*Ibid*, 2.31.3. Emphasis mine.

those over whom they declare that they have supernatural power.”<sup>326</sup> Irenaeus claims, by contrast, that Jesus’ “true disciples” “*do certainly and truly drive out demons*, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe and join themselves to the Church.”<sup>327</sup> Irenaeus stresses, moreover, that (orthodox) Christians do not accomplish such tasks through any “magical” practices:

Nor does she [the church] perform anything by means of angelic invocations, or by incantations, or by any other wicked curious art; but, directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of humans, and not to lead them into error.<sup>328</sup>

In concluding this section, Irenaeus emphasizes that such miracles are only conferred to those who call on the name of Jesus, “not that of Simon, or Menander, or Carpocrates, or any other man whatever.”<sup>329</sup> Through prescriptions regarding exorcism, therefore, Irenaeus pronounces a broader vision and division of the Christian body – between the “modest” orthodox rites of his own community and the “magical” heteropraxy of his opponents.<sup>330</sup>

The examples of Justin and Irenaeus highlight how early Christians utilized prescriptive paradigms of exorcistic practice to construct particular understandings of Christian ritual. By localizing exorcistic potency in the spirit-filled Christian body and emphasizing the procedural minimalism of their brand of exorcism, Justin and Irenaeus craft a particular vision of the

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<sup>326</sup>Ibid, 2.31.2.

<sup>327</sup>Ibid, 2.32.4.

<sup>328</sup>Ibid, 2.32.5.

<sup>329</sup>Ibid.

<sup>330</sup>We encounter a similar differentiation in Irenaeus’ discussion of Simon Magus and his followers in Book One of *Against All Heresies*. There, Irenaeus claims that the “mystic priests” of Simon’s sect “lead profligate lives and practice magical arts” (1.23.4). This includes the practice of exorcism, which Irenaeus includes along other “magical” activities such as “incantations,” “Love-potions,” “charms,” as well as the use of “Paredri” (“familiar”) and “Oniropompi” (“dream-senders”) (1.23.4).

Christian ritual body that aimed at distinguishing its ritual potency from the ineffective “magical” practices of “pagans” and “heretics.” While Christian texts emphasize the indwelling spirit as the source for such power, the public performative dimensions of exorcism will have ensured that the Christian body “materialized” within the Greco-Roman world as one having a particularly powerful authority over evil spirits. David Frankfurter emphasizes the importance of performance in ancient exorcism:

It is up to the exorcist...or the ritual expert claiming the capacity to exorcise demons, first to interpret demonic presence, then to project a general expertise in demons, perhaps to set this innovative demonology within a wider cosmic framework..., and finally to stage an effective ritual for the demon’s expulsion – all tasks requiring the full involvement of audiences. *While texts – lists, manuals, amulets – will inevitably aid claims to expertise, the overall process obviously revolves around dramatic performance.*<sup>331</sup>

Frankfurter’s accentuation of exorcistic *performance* underscores the way in which the body of the Christian exorcist will have served as an inscriptive site where differences or commonalities between Christians and other ritual experts will have been implemented and ritualized.<sup>332</sup> An appreciation for this performative dimension underscores the importance of broader debates regarding Christian exorcism. Christian claims about the “lack” of magic in their exorcisms invested a certain type of ritual power in the Christian performance of “simple” (i.e., “non-magical”) exorcism. This discourse created a ritual taxonomy whereby ritual bodies were organized, interpreted, and inscribed with certain types of meaning. As Christian exorcists enacted or contested this ritual taxonomy through public exorcisms, the Christian body will have taken shape amid the complex interplay of varying ritual discourses and practices. This process of exorcistic ritualization will have only increased in the late second and third centuries, when

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<sup>331</sup>Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 20. Emphasis mine.

<sup>332</sup>On this, see MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 28 and Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61.1 (1971), 80-101.

we find evidence for exorcist as an official position within the church and the incorporation of exorcistic rites into catechetical and baptismal rituals.<sup>333</sup> Ultimately, the practice of exorcism in early Christianity demonstrates that even when Christians claimed to have superior power in expelling spirits, they articulated and performed visions of Christian corporeality that attested to the ongoing entanglement of the Christian body with its demonic foes.

### **Conclusion**

As traced in this chapter, ideas regarding the demonic body in the earliest writings of the Jesus movement testify to the interimplication of demonic and human bodies. Early Christian exorcism narratives portray demons as disembodied entities who repeatedly and violently usurp human bodies, a behavior that echoes the activities of the residual spirits of the antediluvian giants. As showcased in the Gospel of Mark, this understanding of the demonic reflects the early Jesus movement's demonological commonalities with contemporaneous Jewish traditions, as well as the movement's ascription to ancient Jewish ideas regarding spirit possession (whether for good or ill). Simultaneously, the demonic contributed to the reproduction of certain Christian corporeal paradigms, primarily in its informing of particular ritual taxonomies. In serving as both exorcistic foil and corporeal counterpart, the demonic body aided in the public performance of a Christian body that had been cleansed of the demonic and intermingled with the spirit of the divine. This spiritual potency manifested itself in the Christian body's exceptional ability to cast out demons, a power claimed by early Christians to be uniquely demonstrative of the Christian's higher calling and grasping of cosmic truths. This ritual discourse took shape amid Christian

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<sup>333</sup>On the office of the exorcist, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.43.11. For more on exorcism and baptism, see note 269, above.

exorcists' competition with other ritual experts of the ancient Mediterranean, a fact borne out by some authors' emphasis on the supposed "simplicity" that distinguished Christian exorcism from its "pagan" or "heretical" counterparts. Due attention to exorcism narratives in early Christianity, therefore, can aid in tracing the complex ways that Christians constructed the bodies that populated their world, described how their own body fit within this larger cosmos, and posited their own forms of power within a diverse religious context. As we move to the next chapter, however, we will come to see that despite the best efforts of Christian exorcists, the demonic body remained intermixed with its human counterpart at every turn.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Of Demons and Docetists: Ignatius of Antioch, Docetism, and the Making of the Body of Jesus

Exorcism narratives are not the only place where we encounter incorporeal demons in early Christian literature. Ignatius of Antioch twice refers to demons as “bodiless” entities. In the first instance, as part of his letter to the church at Smyrna, Ignatius levels a sharp critique at his so-called “docetic” opponents:<sup>334</sup> “[It is] not as certain unbelievers claim, that he only seemed to suffer. They are the ones who are only an appearance; and it will happen to them just as they think: *they will be without bodies – and demonic!*”<sup>335</sup> Ignatius reinforces this censure through an apocryphal tradition concerning the appearance of the risen Jesus to Simon Peter and his companions:

And when [Jesus] came to those around Peter, he said to them, “Grasp, touch me and *see that I am not a bodiless demon.*” And immediately they touched and believed, having intermingled with his flesh and spirit...And after his resurrection he ate and drank together with them as a fleshly being, even though having been spiritually united with the Father.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup>On this issue, see below, “Excursus.”

<sup>335</sup>*Smyrn.* 2. “οὐχ ὡσπερ ἄπιστοὶ τινες λέγουσιν, τὸ δοκεῖν αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι, αὐτοὶ τὸ δοκεῖν ὄντες· καὶ καθὼς φρονοῦσιν, καὶ συμβήσεται αὐτοῖς, οὐσιν ἀσώματοις καὶ δαιμονικοῖς.” Emphasis mine. Greek text and translation adapted from Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), I.296. My amended translation here differs slightly from that offered by Ehrman. I interpret the “καὶ δαιμονικοῖς” as a copulative conjunctive expressing a particular instance (demonic) of a more general attribute (bodiless), which has an intensifying or heightening force. For discussion, see H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920 [1984]), 650-651.

<sup>336</sup>*Smyrn.* 3.2-3. “Καὶ ὅτε πρὸς τοὺς περὶ Πέτρον ἦλθεν, ἔφη αὐτοῖς· Λάβετε, ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον. Καὶ εὐθὺς αὐτοῦ ἤψαντο καὶ ἐπίστευσαν, κραθέντες τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι... Μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάστασιν συνέφαγεν αὐτοῖς καὶ συνέπιεν ὡς σαρκικός, καίπερ πνευματικῶς ἠνωμένος τῷ πατρὶ.” Emphasis mine. Translation and Greek text adapted from Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, I.299.

Ignatius' comments here regarding "bodiless demons" are interesting for what they can reveal about the broader corporeal logics that undergird Ignatius' discussion of the bodies that populate his imagined cosmos. In what follows, I examine the textual and cultural contexts for Ignatius' citation of bodiless demons, paying particular attention to how demonic (in)corporeality relates to concomitant claims about the bodies of Christians and their savior, Jesus of Nazareth. As is often noted by scholarly commentators, Ignatius' letters ostensibly combat aberrant Christological positions. This chapter will demonstrate that the construction of demons as "bodiless" is reflective of the anthropological and Christological disputes within which Ignatius and his community were embedded. What is more, Ignatius' linking of bodiless demons with competing Christian claims about the body of Jesus serves as a foundation for an exclusivist ritual ideology where those who disagree with Ignatius on Christological matters are disqualified from full participation in the Christian community. In such a way, the incorporeality of demons not only reflects Christian bodily ideals, but also aids in the performance and (re)production of particular modes of Christian corporeality.

### **Ignatius of Antioch: Life, Letters, and Adversaries**

According to early Christian tradition, Ignatius of Antioch was the second (or third) bishop of Antioch, having replaced Peter (and perhaps his successor Euodius).<sup>337</sup> Ignatius refers to himself as "bishop of Syria," a statement that seemingly corroborates the witness of later Christian authors that Ignatius was a prominent leader in the Syrian Christian community.<sup>338</sup> Despite this apparent high rank, we as contemporary readers encounter Ignatius at perhaps his

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<sup>337</sup>My discussion here builds largely on the introductory comments of Ehrman (LCL).

<sup>338</sup>*Letter to the Romans* 2.2. On this, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.36.

lowest point, while he is in the custody of Roman soldiers (or ten “leopards,” as Ignatius refers to them in *Rom.* 5.1) and en route to his ostensible martyrdom in Rome. We know nothing of the charges that precipitated Ignatius’ arrest, nor do we ever learn his ultimate fate.<sup>339</sup> Instead, we are left with seven letters, composed during his journey. Five letters are addressed to various Christian communities in Asia Minor, including the churches in Smyrna, Philadelphia, Magnesia, Ephesus, and Tralles; two additional letters are addressed to Christians in Rome and Ignatius’ ecclesial ally Polycarp in Smyrna, respectively.<sup>340</sup> Most of the Ignatian epistles share

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<sup>339</sup>That is, our earliest and best sources do not provide unambiguous evidence for Ignatius’ arrival in Rome and (potential) martyrdom. Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians* seemingly contradicts itself in simultaneously assuming Ignatius’ death (9.1) and inquiring of the Philippians if they have learned of Ignatius’ ultimate fate (13.2). Eusebius assumes that Ignatius ultimately underwent martyrdom at the hands of animals in the arena, though he only cites two sources for this information; the first, Irenaeus, assumes Ignatius’ martyrdom simply based on Ignatius’ letters, while the second, Polycarp, does not provide unambiguous evidence for Ignatius’ martyrdom (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.36). Martyr accounts of Ignatius, despite their self-presentation as narratives composed by Ignatius’ travel companion, date from the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century, and thus are not reliable accounts of Ignatius’ demise. As noted by David Eastman, there are two primary forms of the Martyrdom of Ignatius, labelled by J.B. Lightfoot as the “Roman Acts” and “Antiochene Acts.” As could be surmised by Lightfoot’s titles, the former emphasizes the connection with Rome by placing Ignatius’ trial there and identifying Rome as the final resting place for Ignatius’ martyr relics. The Antiochene Acts place the trial and relics in Antioch. David Eastman points out that the Antiochene version shapes Ignatius’ life in light of Pauline models of travel and martyrdom (David L. Eastman, “Ignatius, Pseudo-Ignatius, and the Art of Pauline Reception,” *Early Christianity* 7.2 (2016), 213-229). On the manuscript traditions of the martyrdom account and their importance for the circulation of Ignatius’ *Letter to the Romans*, see discussion in Cyril Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 83-84. The most thorough treatment of the dating and authenticity of the martyr acts associated with Ignatius remains that of J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1890), II.135–273.

<sup>340</sup>Here I consider only those letters included as part of the “Middle Recension.” During the Medieval period, Ignatius’ letters circulated in an enlarged corpus alongside obviously spurious letters, such as ones to Mary of Cassabola, to Hero (Ignatius’ purported successor as Antiochene bishop), and to churches at Tarsus, Antioch, and Philippi. Additionally, the familiar “original” seven letters of Ignatius appear in an expanded form, with textual additions that seem to reflect theological concerns of later centuries. This so-called ‘Long Recension’ was the only form by which Ignatius’ letters were known through the Middle Ages. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, the redaction- and text-critical work of scholars such as James Ussher, Isaac Voss, and Theodore Ruinart brought to light manuscript evidence for the so-called ‘Middle Recension,’ a collection of the seven letters first mentioned by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.36), but without the passages that were suspected as later interpolations. Since the pioneering work of Ussher, Voss, and Ruinart, the Middle Recension has long commanded the dominant place in Ignatian scholarship as representative of Ignatius’ authentic work. In 1845, however, William Cureton discovered a truncated version of the Ignatian corpus in a Syriac manuscript, containing only shortened versions of the letters to Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans. This discovery called into the question the priority of the Middle Recension, and some scholars have proposed alternative reconstructions of the original Ignatian corpus. The majority of scholars today, however, have accepted the arguments of Theodor Zahn and J.B. Lightfoot, who argue for the authenticity of the Middle Recension, in part by establishing that the Short Recension is an abridgment of its lengthier counterpart. For the foundational works that led to the formulation of the so-called Middle Recension, see James Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii Epistolae: Una cum vetere vulgata Interpretatione Latina* (Oxford: Excudebat Henry Hall and Leonardus Lichfield Academiae Typographus, 1644), 13–123; Isaac Voss, *Epistolae genuinae S.*

similar themes, including calls for Christian unity, the importance of maintaining doctrinal and ritual purity, the significance of obedience to church leadership, and Ignatius' desire to serve as a martyr for Christ upon his arrival in Rome. Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* mentions a collection of writings from Ignatius that he will be sending along with his own correspondence.<sup>341</sup> It is possible that this collection served as the foundation for the extant Ignatian corpus.

The generally held view among contemporary scholars is that Ignatius' letters date from the early second century, sometime during the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan (r. 98-117 CE).<sup>342</sup> This consensus relies largely on the witness of Eusebius of Caesarea, whose *Ecclesiastical History* dates Ignatius' apparent martyrdom to this period.<sup>343</sup> Such a date might help explain the circumstances for Ignatius' arrest, as the correspondence of Trajan with Pliny the Younger, the governor of Bithynia-Pontus, discusses the seizure, questioning, and execution

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*Ignatii Martyris; quae nunc primum lucem vident ex bibliotheca Florentina* (Amsterdam: Ioannem Blaeu, 1646), 1–62; Theodore Ruinart, *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta* (Paris: Franciscus Muguet, 1689). For more on Cureton's Short Recension, see William Cureton, *The Ancient Syriac Versions of the Epistles of St. Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians and the Romans* (London: Rivingtons, 1845). For other alternative reconstructions of the Ignatian corpus, see R. Weijenborg, *Les lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche. Étude de critique littéraire et de théologie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969); Robert Joly, *Le Dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche*. Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres 69 (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1979); Josep Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius of Antioch the Martyr. A Critical Study Based on Anomalies Contained in the Textus Receptus* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1979); Thomas Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos? Chronologische und theologieggeschichtliche Studien zu den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochen*. *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). For the standard defenses of the authenticity of the Middle Recension, see Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Perthes, 1873) and Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, II.70–430.

<sup>341</sup>Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* 13.2.

<sup>342</sup> On this, see Leslie W. Barnard, "The Background of St. Ignatius of Antioch," *Vigiliae Christianae* 17 (1963), 193-206; Reinhard M. Hübner, "Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 1.1 (1997), 44-72; Andreas Lindemann, "Antwort auf die Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 1.2 (1997), 185-194; C.P. Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 33 (1982), 62-97; T.D. Barnes, "The Date of Ignatius," *The Expository Times* 120.3 (2008), 119-130.

<sup>343</sup>Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.36.

of Christians in other regions of Asia Minor.<sup>344</sup> The citation of or allusion to Ignatius by second and third-century authors likewise suggests an early date.<sup>345</sup>

While the basic details of Ignatius' situation – that of an arrest, travel to Rome, and impending martyrdom – are relatively clear, the lack of reliable information regarding the surrounding context continues to frustrate contemporary exegetes. Perhaps one of the most vexing questions regarding the Ignatian corpus has to do with his disputes with fellow Christians. As becomes clear by even a cursory reading of his letters, Ignatius was very concerned with what he perceived as heretical influences on the Christian communities in Antioch and Asia Minor. He devotes a significant amount of time in his letters to addressing these concerns and laying out his vision for proper Christian belief and practice. Contemporary scholars have understandably found this intra-Christian dispute to be of great interest, and have attempted to mirror-read his letters in order to determine the precise identity of Ignatius' opponents.<sup>346</sup> For my purposes, it

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<sup>344</sup> See esp. Pliny, *Letters* 10.96-97. The literature on early Christian martyrs, including Ignatius, is vast. The classic treatment of the topic can be found in W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967 [1965]). See also the recent reassessments by G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrs and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Candida Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

<sup>345</sup> Polycarp (*Letter to the Philipppians* 9.1, 13.2), Irenaeus (*Against All Heresies* 5.28.4), and Origen (*Hom. 6 in Luke*) provide our earliest witnesses to Ignatius or the Ignatian corpus.

<sup>346</sup> Scholars have long noted that Ignatius seems to be grappling with three major issues in his letters: (1) "Judaizing" Christians – that is, followers of Jesus who place emphasis on certain elements of ancient Jewish practice (e.g., circumcision, Sabbath observance, adherence to kosher dietary guidelines, festivals based on the Jewish lunar calendar), something Ignatius opposed, (2) the assertions of some Christians that Jesus did not possess a fleshly body at some point in his life or ministry, commonly referred to as "Docetism," and (3) Christians who do not recognize the authority of Ignatius' favored ecclesial leaders (including himself), and thus have arranged alternative meetings or communities. Based on this constellation of issues, scholars have proposed a variety of socio-historical groups that could have occasioned Ignatius' ire. Several interpreters have suggested that Ignatius was opposing a single group that had infiltrated several communities, characterized by a kind of Jewish-Christian Gnosticism. Others have noted that the problem of Judaizing is only addressed in Ignatius' letters to the *Philadelphians* and *Magnesians*, and further that "docetic" Christology is dealt with only in *Smyrnaeans* and *Trallians*. Hence, they have proposed that Ignatius is actually dealing with two different heretical groups, located in distinct Christian communities, characterized alternately by "Judaizing" and "Gnostic" or "docetic" heretical tendencies. More recently, Christine Trevett has proposed that Ignatius is combatting a third group, one that opposes Ignatius' preference for monoepiscopal governance of Christian communities (Christine Trevett, "Prophecy and Anti-

will not be necessary to determine the precise nature of the heresies Ignatius was combatting in his letters. Nonetheless, as my analysis focuses primarily on the role of demons in Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, it will be important to consider the kinds of contexts that might have occasioned Ignatius' citation of demons in discussing Jesus' bodily constitution and resurrection. In that light, it should be noted that scholars stand in relative agreement that Ignatius' primary concern in *Smyrnaeans* is to combat what he perceives as aberrant Christological positions that have potentially influenced Smyranean Christians. Scholars have often described such alternative Christologies as "docetic" in nature, a term that will be explored in more detail shortly. At the present moment, it is important to provide a brief overview of the *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* alongside a close reading and contextualization of Ignatius' emphases on Jesus' fleshly corporeality. As we will see, *Smyrnaeans* is notable for its stress on the continued fleshly nature of Jesus' post-resurrection body, as well as for its incorporation of demonic terminology in attempting to refute alternative Christologies. A closer exploration of this letter's textual logic will help to underscore how "bodiless" demons are an important part of Ignatius' countering of alternative approaches to the corporeality of Christ.

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Episcopal Activity: A Third Error Combated by Ignatius?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34.1 [1983], 1-18). For a summary of scholarship on Ignatius' opponents, see Charles Munier, "Où en est la question d'Ignace d'Antioche? Bilan d'un siècle de recherches 1870-1988," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.27.1 (1993), 359-484. On issues of "Jewish-Christianity," see especially Thomas A. Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009); Michael D. Goulder, "Ignatius' "Docetists,"" *Vigiliae Christianae* 53.1 (1999), 16-30; Paul J. Donahue, "Jewish Christianity in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch" *Vigiliae Christianae* 32.2 (1978), 81-93. See also Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien*; Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*; Cyril Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 81-5; Einar Molland, "The Heretics Combated by Ignatius of Antioch," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 5.1 (1954), 1-6; L.W. Barnard, "Background of St. Ignatius of Antioch," *Vigiliae Christianae* 17.4 (1963), 193-206; Virginia Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); Jerry L. Sumney, "Those Who 'Ignorantly Deny Him': The Opponents of Ignatius of Antioch," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1.4 (Winter 1993), 345-365; Wolfram Uebele, *Viele Verführer sind in die Welt ausgegangen': die Gegner in den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochien und in den Johannesbriefen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001); John Marshall. "The Objects of Ignatius' Wrath and Jewish Angelic Mediators," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56.1 (2005), 1-23.

## The Letter to the Smyrnaeans: An Overview

According to traditional accounts of Ignatius' travels and letter writing, Ignatius composed the *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* as part of his stay in Troas, an ancient city located in the northwest region of the west coast of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).<sup>347</sup> From Troas, Ignatius dispatched a letter to fellow Christians in Smyrna, an ancient Ionian Greek city, re-founded under Alexander the Great, which Romans had colonized by the time of Ignatius' visit. The city was located on the west coast of Asia Minor, at the site of present-day Izmir, Turkey. Ignatius had apparently visited Smyrna en route to Rome, and thus had become acquainted with some of the Christians there, including the Smyrnaean bishop Polycarp.<sup>348</sup>

In his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius stresses the need for cultivating harmony among Smyrnaean Christians, with an emphasis on unifying around their bishop, Polycarp (though he is never named), and adhering to the central tenets of Ignatius' version of Christian orthodoxy. For the most part, Ignatius heaps great praise on the Smyrnaeans, lauding them for their "faith that cannot be moved," and their continued agreement with Ignatius on doctrinal matters.<sup>349</sup> Nevertheless, Ignatius does seem concerned about certain issues that might be facing Smyrnaean Christians. He urges his readers to "follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father," as well as to obey the presbytery and the deacons.<sup>350</sup> Ignatius asserts that only activities performed

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<sup>347</sup>Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, I.204.

<sup>348</sup>Because of the apparent intimacy between Ignatius and Polycarp, it has long perplexed commentators that Ignatius does not mention the bishop by name in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*.

<sup>349</sup>*Smyrn.* 1.1, 4.1. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of *Smyrnaeans* are from Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I.

<sup>350</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.1.

in concert with the bishop are legitimate, with particular emphasis on the overseer's role in administering the Eucharist, baptism, and "love feasts."<sup>351</sup>

The primary issue with which Ignatius is concerned, and which relates to his call for obedience to the bishop, is that of Christological orthodoxy. According to Ignatius, the Smyrnaeans were still in agreement with his preferred views on Christ, but he warns them against "wild beasts in human form" who preach aberrant doctrines.<sup>352</sup> Ignatius claims that these Christians "deny [Jesus] out of ignorance," apparently by "not confessing that [Christ] bore flesh."<sup>353</sup> In Ignatius' view, this amounts to a comprehensive denial of Christ's identity: "The one who refuses to say this denies him completely, as one who bears a corpse."<sup>354</sup> Such Christians, according to Ignatius, will face dire consequences for their Christological heterodoxy: "Let no one be deceived. Judgment is prepared even for the heavenly beings, for the glory of the angels, and for the rulers both visible and invisible, if they do not believe in the blood of Christ."<sup>355</sup>

In order to counter his opponents' apparent denial of Christ's flesh-and-blood corporeality, Ignatius emphasizes these aspects of Jesus' body throughout his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. Ignatius opens the letter by praising the Smyrnaeans through a metaphor of the crucifixion: "For I know that you have been made complete in a faith that cannot be moved – as if you were nailed to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ *in both flesh and spirit* – and that you

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<sup>351</sup>Ibid, 8.1-2.

<sup>352</sup>Ibid, 4.1.

<sup>353</sup>Ibid, 5.2.

<sup>354</sup>Ibid.

<sup>355</sup>Ibid, 6.1.

have been established in love *by the blood of Christ*.<sup>356</sup> This anchoring of Christian faith in the flesh-and-blood crucifixion reverberates in Ignatius' emphasis on the fleshly body that Jesus utilized to carry out his ministry: "For you are fully convinced about our Lord, that he was truly from the family of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born from a virgin, and baptized by John that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him."<sup>357</sup> Ignatius continues this emphasis on the "true" nature of Jesus' bodily activities in his summary of the crucifixion, stating, "In the time of Pontius Pilate and the tetrarch Herod, he was truly nailed for us *in the flesh*."<sup>358</sup> As evidence for Christ's authentic fleshly nature, Ignatius paradoxically cites his own suffering:

For if these things were accomplished by our Lord only in appearance, I also am in chains only in appearance. But why then have I handed myself over to death, to fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? But to be near the sword is to be near God, to be in the presence of the wild beasts is to be in the presence of God – so long as it is in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>359</sup>

According to this inversion of the typical logic provided for Christian martyrdom, Ignatius' own suffering provides meaning to and substantiates the reality of Jesus' sacrificial crucifixion.

Ignatius' persistent emphasis on the reality of Jesus' suffering and concomitant fleshly corporeality provides an important backdrop to the citation of "bodiless" demons in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. As noted previously, Ignatius transforms this affirmation of Jesus' nature into a condemnation of his opponents' future corporeal state:

For he suffered all these things for our sake, that we might be saved; and he truly suffered, just as he also truly raised himself. [It is] not as certain unbelievers claim, that

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<sup>356</sup>Ibid, 1.1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>357</sup>Ibid.

<sup>358</sup>Ibid, 2.2. Emphasis mine.

<sup>359</sup>Ibid, 4.2.

he only seemed to suffer. They are the ones who are only an appearance; and it will happen to them just as they think: *they will be without bodies – and demonic!*<sup>360</sup>

With this passage, Ignatius constructs an explicit contrast between Jesus' authentic (fleshly) suffering and the incorporeal, demonic existence to which Ignatius' opponents are apparently doomed. In doing so, Ignatius implies that his opponents attribute to Jesus a kind of "demonic" corporeality, a point that will be important for my investigation going forward. This insinuation comes to the fore in the next section of Ignatius' letter, where he reports an apocryphal tradition regarding Jesus' resurrection:

For I know and believe that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection. And when he came to those who were with Peter, he said to them, "Reach out, touch me and see that I am not a bodiless demon." And immediately they touched him and believed, having been intermixed with his flesh and spirit...and after his resurrection he ate and drank with them as a fleshly being, even though he was spiritually united with the Father.<sup>361</sup>

Here again we encounter the explicit contrast between "bodiless demon," a corporeal status that Jesus denies in his conversation with the disciples, and Jesus' bodily composition of "flesh and spirit," confirmed by the disciples touching of his body and his consumption of food and drink.

Some scholars have suggested that Ignatius' terminology here is simply representative of the (non-Christian) Greek use of "demon" as a general identifier of the divine.<sup>362</sup> That is, Jesus in

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<sup>360</sup>Ibid, 2. Translation adapted from Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I. See note 335, above.

<sup>361</sup>Ibid, 3.1-3. Translation adapted from Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I.

<sup>362</sup>This contrasts strongly with my own view, which, as will be explored at length in this chapter, sees this passage as building on broader Christian malevolent views of demons. We find examples for the more neutral translation of this term with regard to Ignatius in Kirsopp Lake's translation of *Smyrn. 2*: "they shall be without bodies and phantasmal" (Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912-1913], I.255. Emphasis mine). Lake here interprets the Ignatian phrase as repetitious and merely emphasizing the future bodiless state of Ignatius' opponents, while obscuring the original Greek's demonic undertones. Lake translates *Smyrn. 3.2* similarly: "I am not a phantom without a body" (Ibid, 255. Emphasis mine). More recently, M.W. Mitchell has expressed his preference for Lake's translation: "There is no doubt that the term "demon" is less accurate for Ignatius' time than "phantom," however irresistible it is for us modern scholars" (M.W. Mitchell, "Bodiless Demons and Written Gospels: Reflections on "The Gospel According to the Hebrews' in the Apostolic Fathers", *Novum Testamentum* 52 (2010), 221-240 [224 n.11]). Gregory Riley similarly argues for a more ambivalent rendering of "demon" in Ignatius' *Smyrnaeans*: "The word daimon in this usage is the general descriptive term for spiritual being, and was used for any and all of the gods; even Zeus was a daimon. In other words, according to these Christians, Jesus had a body not like ours, but like one of the gods" (Gregory J. Riley, "I Was Thought to Be What I

the Ignatian resurrection tradition is simply denying that he was a “bodiless spirit.” In this reading, Ignatius’ demonic language reflects that of his opponents, who apparently think of Jesus as possessing a divine (or “demonic”) body. This proposal is unlikely on several fronts. First, Ignatius is ostensibly quoting from an apocryphal resurrection tradition, perhaps taken from a literary source; thus, we should be cautious before reading Ignatius’ language as indicative of his opponents’ terminology, when it could be reflective primarily of the sources from which he is drawing this tradition. Second, the use of “demon” among Christians in a positive sense is unattested in this period. While it is true that the Greek literary tradition often used “demon” as a stand-in for various kinds of divine beings (whether good, evil, or ambivalent), this usage does not appear among the writings of early Christians.<sup>363</sup> Rather, as covered at length in Chapter Two, early Christians’ terminological use of “demon” is largely informed by the Septuagint’s use of “demon” in reference to false gods and later Second Temple Jewish literature’s use of this term for the offspring of fallen angels. Indeed, even within the Gnostic literary tradition, which is often cited as potentially representing the Christological positions that Ignatius aimed to thwart, “demon” finds use almost exclusively as an identifier for evil spirits.<sup>364</sup> Third, and finally, if

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Am Not: Docetic Jesus and the Johannine Tradition," *Occasional Papers for the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity Occasional Series* 31 (1994), 1-24 [9]). Lake, Mitchell, and Riley collectively err in dismissing the significant demonological subtext that lurks behind Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. Christian writers such as Ignatius typically exhibited an ‘apocalyptic’ demonology, where demons were understood as part of a pervasive onslaught of evil powers, especially against the human soul, and thought to have arisen from the unholy union of angels and humans as described in Genesis 6 and the *Book of Watchers*. Demons carried a more ambiguous valence among non-Christian Greco-Roman authors, and were thought to carry the potential for both good and bad behavior in a manner similar to the broader traditional pantheon (Brenk, “In the Light of the Moon”; Martin, *Inventing Superstition*). Nonetheless, it is perplexing that commentators such as Mitchel and Riley have sought to interpret Ignatius in light of this non-Christian Greco-Roman tradition, rather than through the lens of 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian demonologies, which ostensibly provide the more immediate intellectual context for Ignatius’ commentary. For more on this, see discussion in Chapters One and Two.

<sup>363</sup>For more on this, see discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>364</sup>One possible exception is the identification of Judas as the “thirteenth demon” in *The Gospel of Judas* (44.20-23). If, as some scholars argue, *The Gospel of Judas* portrays its namesake positively, then this would be one instance in early Christian literature where ‘demon’ is used in a positive sense. On this topic, see Silke Peterson, “Warum und inwiefern ist Judas ein "Daimon"? Überlegungen zum Evangelium des Judas (Codex Tchacos 44,21)” *Zeitschrift für*

Ignatius' opponents were attributing to Jesus a divine body through demonic terminology, then it would make little sense for Ignatius to condemn those same opponents to a "demonic" afterlife, as he does in *Smyrn. 2*. Ignatius' use of demon within this condemnatory context alerts us to the likelihood that this language is Ignatius' own (and/or that of his source material), and is actually part of an effort to *foil* his opponents' Christological claims by associating them with demons, an entity that Christians viewed as evil. Philipp Vielhauer has suggested just such a scenario, arguing that "demon" in these passages is a "polemical distortion" of the more positive language used by Ignatius' opponents to describe Christ's corporeality (e.g., "pneumatic").<sup>365</sup>

Whatever the ultimate origins for Ignatius' terminology, the function of demonic corporeality as a site of dispute within this broader Christological debate serves as the point of departure for the discussion to follow. My interests lie in examining Ignatius' contrast between the incorporeality of demons and the fleshly body of (the resurrected) Jesus, not only for discerning what types of corporeal systems undergird this juxtaposition, but also for what types of bodies it serves to produce. In what follows, I begin by contextualizing *Smyrn. 3*, the report of Jesus' fleshly appearance to his disciples after his resurrection, within broader resurrection traditions in early Christian literature. As will become clear, Ignatius' account is notable both for

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*antikes Christentum* 13.1 (2009), 108-126. We should not, however, take the *Gospel of Judas* as representative of a 'Gnostic' reinterpretation of the apocalyptic nature of demons. Rather, in the encratic Gnostic text *The Testimony of Truth* we see similar demonologies to those found in non-Gnostic literature. In this text, demons are said to have been imprisoned by Solomon (cf. the *Testament of Solomon*) within the Jerusalem Temple, then released by the Romans at the destruction of the Temple. The author states that since the Roman destruction the demons "live with people who are in ignorance, and have remained on earth" (70.24, translation from Birger A. Pearson, tr., "The Testimony of Truth," in Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007], 626). For other instances of evil demons within Gnostic literature, see my discussion of the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, below.

<sup>365</sup>Vielhauer goes on to suggest, in fact, that Ignatius' polemical use of "demon" in *Smyrn. 2* is actually the reason for the appearance of "demon" terminology in the resurrection tradition of *Smyrn. 3*. "The characterization of the Docetics in *Smyrn. 2* and the logion in *Smyrn. 3.2* harmonize terminologically the one with the other, and this they do in using and distorting the gnostic terminology" (Philipp Vielhauer, "Jewish-Christian Gospels" in Schneemelcher and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, I.134-152 [144-45]).

its explicit attribution of flesh to Jesus' bodily constitution as well as his contrasting of this corporeal nature with that of demons. Using this investigation as a launching point, the remainder of the chapter examines how Ignatius' anthropological, Christological, and demonological views work in concert to construct and produce a particular materialization of the Christian body.

### **The Resurrected Body of Jesus in Early Christian Literature**

Scholars have long viewed belief in the resurrection of Jesus as one of the foundational religious tenets of early Christianity.<sup>366</sup> In perhaps our earliest extant piece of literature from early Jesus followers, the apostle Paul assuages the lingering doubts of his recipients in Thessalonica regarding the resurrection of the dead: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died."<sup>367</sup> Elsewhere, Paul similarly connects the resurrection of Jesus with his belief in the eventual resurrection of the dead, as part of a teaching that Paul claims is "of first importance":

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>366</sup>On this, see especially Geza Vermes, *The Resurrection* (New York: Doubleday, 2008) and N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2003). It should be pointed out, however, that the centrality of the resurrection should not be overstated. Many scholars have noted that this tradition does not seem to be a central concern to many early Christian writers, and early church practice (as seen especially in festivals and ritual) often focused on the death and suffering of Jesus, rather than the resurrection (Markus Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity* [Surrey: Ashgate, 2013], 17-19).

<sup>367</sup>1 Thess 4:13-15.

<sup>368</sup>1 Cor 15:3-8.

Immediately thereafter, Paul builds upon this evidence to explain how God will raise Jesus' followers from their graves in imitation of their savior.<sup>369</sup> As seen here with the letters of Paul, therefore, from the very beginning of the Jesus movement stories of Jesus' (resurrected) body often carried implications for the bodies of early Christian readers.<sup>370</sup>

In light of this significance, it is unsurprising that several texts produced by Jesus' early followers narrate Jesus' post-resurrection interaction with his disciples. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, the risen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary," both of whom have just visited the tomb and been informed by an angel of Jesus' resurrection. Thereafter, "Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'"<sup>371</sup> Later in the same Gospel, Jesus appears to all the disciples in Galilee:

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore

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<sup>369</sup>See also Romans 1:1-4, where Paul asserts that Jesus was "declared to be Son of God...by resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4). All of these passages demonstrate the extent to which narratives regarding the resurrection of Jesus were important for articulating beliefs in the broader resurrection of his followers. In Romans 8:11, Paul again points to this connection, stating that "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom 8:11). Likewise, in his Letter to the Philippians, Paul states that Jesus "will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself" (Phil 3:21). On the corporeality of the resurrection, see also 2 Cor 4:16, where Paul speaks to the "outer nature" wasting away, seemingly in reference to the material body.

<sup>370</sup>This connection can be seen likewise in the deutero-Pauline tradition, where "Paul" states that "In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it" (Col 2:9-15).

<sup>371</sup>Matt 28:9-10.

and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’<sup>372</sup>

Mark and Luke, Matthew’s Synoptic counterparts, do not contain the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples in Galilee. Nonetheless, the Third Gospel does include stories of Jesus’ appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus as well as to the disciples in Jerusalem, which precedes Jesus’ ascension to heaven.<sup>373</sup> The so-called “Longer Ending” of Mark, moreover, claims that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to two traveling disciples, and finally to the eleven apostles.<sup>374</sup> Similarly, the final chapters of the Fourth Gospel narrate Jesus’ appearance to Mary Magdalene near the tomb as well as two appearances to the disciples in a house and by the Sea of Tiberias, respectively.<sup>375</sup>

Interestingly, many of these traditions attest to the apparent corporeal ambivalence of the risen Jesus. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus, for example, are unable to recognize Jesus, despite their lengthy exchange and travel together.<sup>376</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, Mary Magdalene likewise misapprehends Jesus’ identity, mistaking him for the gardener tending to Jesus’ tomb.<sup>377</sup> Later in the same gospel, Jesus enters a locked room in order to appear to his disciples, ostensibly indicating Jesus’ transcendence of typical human corporeal abilities.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>372</sup>Ibid, 28:16-20.

<sup>373</sup>Luke 24:13-53.

<sup>374</sup>Mark 16:9-20.

<sup>375</sup>John 20:11-29, 21:1-25. For a more detailed analysis of the post-resurrection appearances in the canonical gospels, see John E. Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1975). See also C.H. Dodd, “The Appearances of the Risen Christ,” in idem, *More New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 102-33.

<sup>376</sup>Luke 24:13-35.

<sup>377</sup>John 20:11-18.

<sup>378</sup>Ibid, 20:19-23.

Some of these same Gospel traditions, however, include accounts that underscore the corporeal continuity of Jesus' body. In the Gospel of John, for example, the risen Jesus assuages the doubts of Thomas the Twin (i.e., "Doubting Thomas") by directing him to touch his hands and his side, the areas of his body where he was wounded during the passion.<sup>379</sup> Similarly, the Gospel of Matthew claims that Jesus' disciples "took hold of his feet" during his post-resurrection appearance.<sup>380</sup> To cite a final example from the canonical gospels, Jesus in the Gospel of Luke encourages the disciples to confirm his bodily resurrection by touching his wounded body: "Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost (Gr. *pneuma*) does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."<sup>381</sup>

As explored previously, Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* also includes a resurrection appearance of Jesus, in this case to Peter "and those who were with [him]," where his corporeal continuity is confirmed through the physical handling of his body.<sup>382</sup> Ancient and modern exegete alike have struggled, however, to determine the precise relationship between this passage and comparable literary traditions (such as those found in the canonical gospels). Jerome, in his discussion of Ignatius in *De Viribus Illustribus*, attributes this apocryphal tradition to the "Gospel which has been translated by me (Jerome)," ostensibly referring to the 'Gospel of the Hebrews' that Jerome had translated from Aramaic into Greek and Latin.<sup>383</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea states that in reporting this resurrection tradition, Ignatius quotes "words from I know not what

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<sup>379</sup>Ibid, 20:26-29.

<sup>380</sup>Matt 28:9.

<sup>381</sup>Luke 24:36. On this passage and its apparent apologetic purposes, see Daniel A. Smith, "Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body): The Apologetic Interests of Luke 24:36-43," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010), 752-772.

<sup>382</sup>*Smyrn.* 3.

<sup>383</sup>*De Vir.* 16. Cf. *De Vir.* 2; *In Esaiam* prol. 65.

source.”<sup>384</sup> Confusing matters even further, Origen of Alexandria claims that the attribution of the phrase “I am not a bodiless demon” to Jesus can be found in the *Petri Doctrina*, an apocryphal work extant only in fragmentary quotations by early Christian writers.<sup>385</sup> Interestingly, Origen does not explicitly note that this phrase appears in the Ignatian corpus, despite exhibiting familiarity with Ignatius’ letters elsewhere.<sup>386</sup> The collective witness of Jerome, Eusebius, and Origen, then, provides little clarity regarding the provenance for Ignatius’ resurrection tradition, though they do jointly suggest that the Ignatian passage is dependent on an external written source.

In league with their ancient counterparts, contemporary interpreters have struggled to agree on the source (or inspiration) for Ignatius’ apocryphal resurrection tradition. Some scholars have put forward that Ignatius here uses an altered version of the resurrection appearance in Luke 24:39.<sup>387</sup> Hermann Josef Vogt, for example, asserts that here Ignatius provides “eine verknappte Neuformulierung des lukanischen Wortes.”<sup>388</sup> In a similar vein, and as mentioned previously, Philipp Vielhauer argues that *Smyrn.* 3 is a distorted rendition of Luke 24:36, whose

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<sup>384</sup>*Ecclesiastical History* 3.36.11-12 (LCL, Oulton).

<sup>385</sup>*On First Principles*, Praef.8. The most extensive and earliest quotations of the *Petri Doctrina* (if Ignatius’ potential usage is discounted) come from Clement of Alexandria, who cites the text approvingly in his *Strometeis* on five separate occasions (1.29.182; 6.5.39-41; 6.5.43; 6.6.48; 6.15.128). We find quotations also in John of Damascus (*Parallel.* A 12), Gregory Nazianzen (*ep.* 16 and 20), and elsewhere in Origen’s writings (*Commentary on John* 435-36 [Preuschen]).

<sup>386</sup>This might be because Origen is condemning the usage of this phrase, without necessarily wanting to impugn Ignatius directly.

<sup>387</sup>For a discussion of the parallels, see below. For an overview of the various proposals in this vein, see Pier Franco Beatrice, “The “Gospel According to the Hebrews” in the Apostolic Fathers,” *Novum Testamentum* 48.2 (2006), 147-195 [148 n. 3].

<sup>388</sup>Hermann Josef Vogt, “Sind die Ignatius-Briefe antimarkionitsch beeinflusst?” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 181 (2001), 1-19 [17]. See also Robert M. Grant, *After the New Testament: Studies in Early Christian Literature and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 43-44.

amended form was prompted by Ignatius' polemical agenda.<sup>389</sup> Counting against Vogt's and Vielhauer's respective proposals is that nowhere in his epistles does Ignatius quote from or acknowledge the existence of the Third Gospel.<sup>390</sup> What is more, Ignatius' "bodiless demon" phraseology here more closely parallels otherwise-attested external sources (at least according to the witnesses of Jerome and Origen), making an "alteration" of Luke's account unnecessary. In light of this lack of explicit support for canonical sources, some scholars have looked to 2<sup>nd</sup> century apocryphal sources for the possible origins of this tradition. Pier Franco Beatrice, for example, attributes the saying to the now-lost *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, a text Beatrice concludes is commensurate with the other so-called Jewish-Christian gospels as well as various Petrine writings.<sup>391</sup> Other scholars are not so sure, and many seem to fall in line with the assessment of J.B. Lightfoot, who concludes, "It is impossible to say whether he got it from oral tradition or from some written source."<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>389</sup>Vielhauer, "Jewish-Christian Gospels," 134-152.

<sup>390</sup>The consensus among scholars is that Ignatius' letters show signs of influence (if not direct use) of the Old Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and the letters of Paul, but not the Gospel of Luke. On the New Testament and scripture in the letters of Ignatius, see W.J. Burghardt, "Did Saint Ignatius of Antioch know the Fourth Gospel?" *Theological Studies* 1 (1940), 1-26; Christian Mauer, *Ignatius von Antiochien und das Johannesevangelium* (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1949); J. Smit Sibinga, "Ignatius and Matthew," *Novum Testamentum* 8 (1966), 263-83; Heinrich Rathke, *Ignatius von Antiochien und die Paulusbrieve* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967); Robert M. Grant, "Scripture and tradition in Ignatius of Antioch," in idem, *After the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 37-54; Christine Trevett, "Approaching Matthew from the Second Century: The Under-used Ignatian Correspondence" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20 (1984), 59-67; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 43-49; Charles T. Brown, *The Gospel and Ignatius of Antioch* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); Charles E. Hill, "Ignatius and the Apostolate: The Witness of Ignatius to the Emergence of Christian Scripture," *Studia Patristica* 36 (2001), 226-48; idem, "Ignatius, 'the Gospel', and the Gospels," in Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, eds., *Trajectories through the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 267-285; Paul Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament," in Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett, eds., *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-186.

<sup>391</sup>Beatrice, "The Gospel According to the Hebrews."

<sup>392</sup>Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., II.296.

Whether or not Ignatius' resurrection tradition stems from an external source, the connections drawn by ancient and contemporary interpreters between this passage and corresponding traditions in early Christian discourses demonstrates the degree to which the account participates in broader intertextual narrations of Jesus' resurrection appearances. We can see this especially in the comparable emphases on the tactility of Jesus' fleshly body in Ignatius, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of John (see above). If we broaden the scope of our inquiry, we find additional Christian retellings of Jesus' resurrection that accentuate his fleshly corporeality. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, for instance, the Sybil reports concerning Jesus: "First, then, the Lord was seen clearly by his own incarnate ["in flesh"] as he was before, and he will show in hands and feet four marks fixed in his own limbs."<sup>393</sup> Likewise, the pseudonymous Apostolic council in the *Epistula Apostolorum* claims that they "heard and felt him after he had risen from the dead."<sup>394</sup> In its recounting of Jesus' resurrection, the *Epistula Apostolorum* claims that the disciples misperceived that Jesus was a ghost, a delusion that Jesus quickly corrected:

[Jesus said,] That you may know that it is I, put your finger, Peter, in the nailprints of my hands, and you, Thomas put your finger in the spear-wounds of my side; but you, Andrew look at my feet and see if they do not touch the ground. For it is written in the prophet, 'The foot of a ghost or a demon does not join to the ground.'<sup>395</sup>

As with the canonical gospels, Ignatius, and the *Sibylline Oracles*, therefore, the *Epistula Apostolorum* underscores the tactility of Jesus' fleshly body through his disciples' touching of his wounds, and supplements this evidence by citing the physical impact of Jesus' footsteps.<sup>396</sup> In

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<sup>393</sup>*Syb. Or.* VIII. 318-320. Translation from J.J. Collins, tr., "Sibylline Oracles," in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I.425.

<sup>394</sup>*Epistula Apostolorum* 2. All translations of the *Epistula Apostolorum* are from C. Detlef G. Muller, tr., "Epistula Apostolorum," in Schneemelcher and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. I.

<sup>395</sup>*Ibid.*, 11. Cf. Commodian, *Carmen Apologeticum* V.564.

<sup>396</sup>Such a theme is likewise found in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, where the Neo-Pythagorean holy man, after an apparent resurrection from the dead, tells one of his followers: "Take hold of me, and if I evade you, then I am

similar fashion to these sources, moreover, the *Epistula Apostolorum* claims that this confirms for the disciples “that he had truly risen in the flesh.”<sup>397</sup>

Beyond footprints in the proverbial sand, Christian writers cite other pieces of evidence for Jesus’ post-resurrection corporeality. One of the most prevalent is that of Jesus’ purported post-resurrection meals. In the resurrection tradition in *Smyrnaeans*, for example, Ignatius claims that “after his resurrection [Jesus] ate and drank with them as a fleshly being.”<sup>398</sup> This claim is similar to the one made in the Gospel of John, where it is implied that Jesus shared breakfast with his disciples after a miraculous catch of fish.<sup>399</sup> In Acts, moreover, Peter claims that the disciples “ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.”<sup>400</sup> Justin Martyr likewise asserts that Jesus ate and drank with his disciples when he appeared in Jerusalem.<sup>401</sup> The recounting of Jesus’ post-resurrection meal(s) underscores the way in which Jesus’ body necessitated normal human sustenance and attests to how early Christians related Jesus’ fleshly corporeality in a variety of ways.

### *Alternative Resurrection Traditions*

Despite the witness of the textual traditions surveyed thus far, there remained vibrant disputes among Jesus’ followers regarding the corporeal constitution of the risen Jesus. We find

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indeed a ghost come to you from the realm of Persephone...But if I resist your touch, then you shall persuade Damis also that I am both alive and that I have not abandoned my body” (8.12; LCL, Conybeare). As is often the case with Jesus’ resurrection appearances, Apollonius’ affirmation of his bodily constitution leads to intensified belief among his followers.

<sup>397</sup>*Epistula Apostolorum* 12.

<sup>398</sup>*Smyrn.* 3.3.

<sup>399</sup>John 21:14.

<sup>400</sup>Acts 10:41.

<sup>401</sup>*Dial.* 51.2.

evidence for such disputes, for example, in Origen's *Against Celsus*, where the pagan Celsus claims that "some Christians" see the resurrection of the mortal body as "revolting and impossible."<sup>402</sup> Such alternative understandings of the resurrection would have been understandable, as some of the earliest Christian literature provides rather ambiguous portrayals of Jesus' post-resurrection body. As detailed earlier, certain accounts in the canonical gospels highlight the way in which Jesus' body enjoyed a transient potency that made him unrecognizable to his followers. These include his appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Mary Magdalene's mistaken identification of Jesus as the gardener, and Jesus' ability to enter a locked room to speak with the disciples.<sup>403</sup>

In 1 Cor 15, Paul hints that some in Corinth denied the possibility for the (bodily) resurrection of the dead, which, in his view, implicitly disclaimed Jesus' own resurrection.<sup>404</sup> Paul implies, moreover, that some have called into question what type of "body" could experience such a resurrection. Paul responds by emphasizing that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and that instead the resurrected bodies of Jesus' followers will be

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<sup>402</sup>5.14. Celsus shows a thorough familiarity with Christian resurrection narratives. In Book II of *Against Celsus* Origen reports the following critique, which Celsus attributes to a Jewish interlocutor: "But we must examine this question whether anyone who really died ever rose again with the same body. Or do you think that the stories of these others really are the legends which they appear to be, and yet that the ending of your tragedy is to be regarded as noble and convincing – his cry from the cross when he expired, and the earthquake and the darkness? While he was alive he did not help himself, but after death he rose again and showed the marks of his punishment and how his hands had been pierced. But who was this? A hysterical female, as you say, and perhaps some other one of those who were deluded by the same sorcery, who either dreamt in a certain state of mind and through wishful thinking had a hallucination due to some mistaken notion (an experience which has happened to thousands), or, which is more likely, wanted to impress the others by telling this fantastic tale, and so by this cock-and-bull story to provide a chance for other beggars" (*Against Celsus* 2.55). Against these traditions, Celsus argued that "Jesus used to produce only a mental impression of the wounds he received on the cross, and did not really appear wounded in this way" (2.61).

<sup>403</sup>Luke 24:13-35; John 20:11-23.

<sup>404</sup>1 Cor 15:12-34.

glorified, imperishable, immortal, powerful, and, most interesting of all, “spiritual.”<sup>405</sup> When we turn to discussions of Jesus’ resurrection in early Christian literature, we find several examples that seem to have followed within the tradition of Paul in stressing that “spiritual” bodies, rather than those of flesh and blood, will be raised for their divine inheritance.<sup>406</sup> Irenaeus alleges that the “Gnostic” Christian sect of “Ophites,” for example, denied that the risen Jesus could possess flesh at all:

When his disciples saw that he had risen, they did not recognize him...And they assert that this very great error prevailed among his disciples, that they imagined he had risen in a mundane body, not knowing that “flesh and blood do not attain to the kingdom of God.”<sup>407</sup>

In the purported Christological reflections of the Ophites, therefore, we can see how the Pauline denial of resurrection to “flesh and blood” bodies had important ramifications for Christian reflections on the resurrection of Jesus. Another prominent interpreter of Paul, Marcion of Sinope, is likewise said to have taught that the risen Jesus appeared without flesh, though Marcion did attribute to Jesus some form of tangible corporeality.<sup>408</sup> In similar ways to both the

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<sup>405</sup>1 Cor 15:35-58. Daniel A. Smith notes that “Paul’s description of resurrection bodies (1 Cor 15:35-57) distinguishes between the σῶμα ψυχικόν (the natural body, animated by the human ψυχή) and σῶμα πνευματικόν (the transformed resurrection body, enlivened by the divine πνεῦμα). Paul uses paired opposites (vv. 42-44) to compare “what is sown” (perishable, sown in dishonor and weakness, ψυχικός) with “what is raised” (imperishable, raised in glory and power, πνευματικός)” (Smith, “Seeing a Pneuma(tic body),” 767). Smith notes, however, that “[f]or Luke, as for later commentators, “resurrection of the body” makes no sense without “resurrection of the flesh” (and bones)” (Ibid, 769). For further discussion of this passage, see Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 104-136; Jeffrey R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: A Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 146-205; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology & Self in the Apostle Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>406</sup>On this, cf. 1 Cor 15:50: “What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

<sup>407</sup>*Against All Heresies* 1.30.13.

<sup>408</sup>Cf. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.8; Epiphanius *Pan.* 42.11, *Elench.* 14. For Marcion, Christ’s body was tangible but only apparently fleshly (for the importance of Phil 2:7, see Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.20.3). For discussion of the resurrected body of Jesus in the thought of Marcion, see Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), esp. pp. 218-221, 264-67, and 375-380.

Ophites and Marcion, Valentinian Christians drew upon the Pauline tradition in order to articulate an alternative corporeality for the risen Jesus and his followers. The Valentinian *Treatise on the Resurrection*, for example, details that while the “Son of God” was composed of both “humanity and divinity” during his earthly sojourn, his resurrection entailed his laying aside of the “perishable” world in exchange for the “incorruptible eternal realm.”<sup>409</sup> According to the *Treatise*, Jesus’ true followers will experience the “resurrection of the spirit, which swallows the resurrection of the soul and the resurrection of the flesh.”<sup>410</sup> The *Treatise* goes on to argue that believers will abandon the flesh upon their heavenly ascent, since the flesh is a material garment that came into existence only because of its animating spirit.<sup>411</sup> The collective witness of the Ophites, Marcion, and Valentinians, then, showcases the striking diversity of Christological positions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The fact that such Christological variants build upon common intellectual edifices (esp. the *Corpus Paulinum*) attests to the interpretive multiplicity that characterized Christian reading practices in this period.

The diversity of early Christian resurrection traditions becomes all the more apparent when one considers the *Gospel of Peter*, the only extant text that narrates the actual moments of Jesus’ resurrection (rather than simply its aftermath).<sup>412</sup> This text, a second century gospel extant in fragmentary form, narrates a resurrection story wherein Jesus does not emerge from the tomb in his normal body, but in a glorified form, accompanied by heavenly figures:

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<sup>409</sup>*Treatise on the Resurrection* 45. All translations of the *Treatise of the Resurrection* are from Marvin Meyer, tr., “The Treatise on the Resurrection,” in idem, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*.

<sup>410</sup>*Ibid*, 45-6.

<sup>411</sup>*Ibid*, 47.

<sup>412</sup>For more on the resurrection tradition in the Gospel of Peter, see Jeremiah J. Johnston, *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of Peter: A Tradition-Historical Study of the Akhmîm Gospel Fragment* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

But during the night on which the Lord's Day dawned, while the soldiers stood guard two by two on their watch, a great voice came from the sky. They saw the skies open and two men descend from there; they were very bright and drew near to the tomb. That stone which had been cast before the entrance rolled away by itself and moved to one side; the tomb was open and both young men entered. When the soldiers saw these things, they woke up the centurion and the elders – for they were also there on guard. As they were explaining what they had seen, they saw three men emerge from the tomb, two of them supporting the other, with a cross following behind them. The heads of the two reached up to the sky, but the head of the one they were leading went up above the skies.<sup>413</sup>

The risen Jesus (presumably here “the one they were leading”) is represented as having a head that reached above the skies, even higher than the divine beings lending him assistance. The *Gospel of Peter* does not specify what this entails for Jesus' corporeal nature, but leaves no doubt that Jesus' risen body existed in a form that diverged from “normal” human corporeality.

We continue to encounter a wide range of portrayals of the risen Jesus when we consider other early Christian textual traditions, especially so when we turn to fuller consideration of so-called “Gnostic” writings. There we find several descriptions of resurrection appearances that portray Jesus' corporeality in ambivalently material terms. In the *Letter of Peter to Philip*,<sup>414</sup> for example, the apostles encounter Jesus in the form of a “great light” and a voice that transmits to them esoteric teachings regarding the cosmos and its denizens. The treatise contrasts this manifestation of Jesus with his former state “when he was in the body.”<sup>415</sup> According to this treatise, Jesus took on this mortal body so that he could save “the seed that had fallen away,” but his incarnation resulted in confusion among his human followers, who mistook his fleshly body

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<sup>413</sup>*Gospel of Peter* 35-40. Translations of the *Gospel of Peter* are from Bart D. Ehrman, tr., “The Gospel of Peter,” in idem and Zlatko Pleše, eds., *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>414</sup>*The Letter of Peter to Philip* is the second tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex VIII, and is found in an alternative format in Codex Tchacos. The text was likely composed in Greek in the late second or early third century. Scholars often associate it with Sethian Gnostic traditions.

<sup>415</sup>*Letter of Peter to Philip* 133. All translations of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* are from Marvin Meyer, tr., “The Letter of Peter to Philip,” in idem, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 585-593.

for his true nature.<sup>416</sup> The separation of Jesus from a mortal vessel is closely connected with the text's understanding of human salvation; when Jesus explains why his followers must suffer, he proclaims, "it is because you are mind. When you strip yourselves of what is corruptible, you will become luminaries in the midst of mortal people."<sup>417</sup> The "corruptible" aspect of the human body, according to *The Letter*, appears to be the outer material vessel, whereas the "inner person" is the center of human identity against which the forces of evil wage spiritual warfare.<sup>418</sup>

In ways similar to *The Letter of Peter to Philip*, another Nag Hammadi treatise, *The Wisdom of Jesus Christ*,<sup>419</sup> claims that Jesus' followers encountered the risen Jesus in a non-fleshly, glorified form:

After he rose from the dead, his twelve disciples and seven women continued to be his followers. They went to Galilee, up on the mountain called "Prophecy and Joy." As they gathered together, they were confused about the true nature of the universe, and the plan of salvation, and divine forethought, and the strength of the authorities, and everything the Savior was doing with them in the secret plan of salvation. Then the Savior appeared, not in his previous form but in invisible spirit. He looked like a great angel of light, but I must not describe his appearance. Mortal flesh could not bear it, but only pure and perfect flesh, like what he taught us about, in Galilee, on the mountain called Olivet.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>416</sup>Ibid, 136. The distancing of Jesus from his fleshly vessel is underscored elsewhere in the narrative. Interestingly, the risen Jesus speaks in the past tense of "when our Lord Jesus was in the body," seemingly indicating that the risen Jesus no longer possesses (human) corporeality (138-139). In the same vein, the apostle Peter, as part of a visionary prophecy, proclaims that "Jesus is a stranger" to the suffering of the passion narrative (139-140).

<sup>417</sup>Ibid, 137.

<sup>418</sup>Ibid.

<sup>419</sup>*The Wisdom of Jesus Christ* is the fourth tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex III and also preserved in the Berlin Gnostic Codex. Divergent extant versions provide evidence that the treatise enjoyed wide diffusion, at least by the fourth century. The date of original composition has been variously dated, from the late first century to the middle of the third. The text is often associated with Sethian and Ophite Gnostic traditions, with possible Valentinian and Thomasine influences. For more on this treatise, see Madeleine Scopello, "The Wisdom of Jesus Christ," in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 283-286, whose overview provides the foundation for the discussion here.

<sup>420</sup>*Wisdom of Jesus Christ* 90-92. Translation from Marvin Meyer, tr., "The Wisdom of Jesus Christ," in idem, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 287.

According to this treatise, therefore, Jesus arose as an “invisible spirit...like a great angel of light,” a form which is ultimately inexplicable to the author. The treatise contrasts this (in)corporeal status with Jesus’ “previous form,” presumably a reference to his fleshly body; the text explicitly notes that “mortal flesh” could not have served as a conduit for such a glorious appearance. The emphasis here, then, lies on the glorious potency of Jesus’ risen state, a power that transcended the bounds of mortal flesh.

In similar fashion the *Gospel of Mary*, a second century Gnostic treatise, features the appearance of the risen Jesus to one of his disciples. In this case, Jesus appears to his most famous female disciple, Mary Magdalene.<sup>421</sup> The narrative explains that Mary did not experience her vision with physical senses, however, but with “the mind,” the part of the ancient soul that was most often charged with grasping higher “spiritual” realities.<sup>422</sup> This articulation of a “spiritual” resurrection appearance is in accord with the text’s broader subordination of the material to the spiritual. Elsewhere in the *Gospel of Mary*, for example, Mary argues that the true self is to be found in the soul, rather than in the “garment” of flesh, which the text identifies as a source of “foolish wisdom.”<sup>423</sup> As seen elsewhere in early Christian literature, therefore, the Christological assumptions that inform Jesus’ resurrection appearance are entangled with allied ideas regarding materiality, spirituality, and the true nature of proper (human) embodiment.

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<sup>421</sup>For a close analysis of the role of Mary as a prophetess in the *Gospel of Mary*, see Karen King, “Prophetic Power and Women’s Authority: The Case of the *Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)*,” in Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker, eds., *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21-41.

<sup>422</sup>*Gospel of Mary* 10. For more on this, see Laura Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>423</sup>*Gospel of Mary* 15-17. Translation from Karen King, tr., “The Gospel of Mary,” in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 743-744.

In ways analogous to the *Gospel of Mary*, the apocryphal *Acts of John* positions the true appearance of Jesus outside his physical form.<sup>424</sup> In the so-called “Gospel Section” of the *Acts*, the disciple Drusiana tells the Apostle John that “the Lord appeared to me in the tomb like John and as a young man.”<sup>425</sup> While the others present are perplexed by this report, the Apostle John goes on to explain that Jesus had in fact appeared in several different forms throughout his ministry: as a child, a handsome man, and a bald-headed, thick-bearded man.<sup>426</sup> John explains that Jesus’ corporeal indeterminacy was a constant feature of the disciples’ interaction with him:

I tried to see him as he was, and I never saw his eyes closing, but always open. But he sometimes appeared to me as a small man with no good looks,<sup>427</sup> and also as wholly looking up to heaven. And he had another strange (property); when I reclined at table he would take me to his breast, and I held <him> to me; and sometimes his breast felt to me smooth and soft, but sometimes hard like a rock; so that I was perplexed in my (mind) and said: “What does <\*> this mean?”<sup>428</sup>

Later in the same treatise, John claims to have seen Jesus, as part of an apparent transfiguration scene, without a fleshly “garment”: “I saw him not dressed in clothes at all, but stripped of those

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<sup>424</sup>On the polymorphic Christology of the *Acts of John*, see T.J. Farmer, “Christ as Cosmic Priest: A Sociorhetorical Examination of the Crucifixion Scenes in the Gospel of John and Acts of John,” in Vernon K. Robbins and Jonathan M. Potter, eds., *Jesus and Mary Reimagined in Early Christian Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 223-250; David R. Cartlidge, “Transfigurations of Metamorphoses Traditions in the Acts of John, Thomas and Peter,” *Semeia* 38 (1986), 67-80. For more general treatments of polymorphy in early Christologies, including that of the *Acts of John*, see Paul Foster, “Polymorphic Christology: Its Origins and Development in Early Christianity,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 58.1 (April 2007), 66-99; Pieter J. Lalleman, “Polymorphy of Christ,” in Jan Bremmer, ed., *Apocryphal Acts of John* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1995), 97-118. On the textual tradition and general issues having to do with the *Acts of John*, see Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *L’histoire des Actes apocryphes des apôtres du IIIe au IXe siècle: le cas des Actes de Jean* (Genève: Revue de théologie et de philosophie, 1982); Gerlinde Sirker-Wicklaus, “Untersuchungen zur Struktur, zur theologischen Tendenz und zum kirchengeschichtlichen Hintergrund der Acta Johannis,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bonn, 1988).

<sup>425</sup>*Acts of John* 87. All translations of the *Acts of John* are from Knut Schäferdieck, tr., “The Acts of John,” in Schneemelcher and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. II.

<sup>426</sup>*Ibid*, 88-89. Interestingly, John provides a kind of performance of Jesus’ polymorphic adaptability in his teaching, claiming that “I must adapt myself to your hearing and according to each man’s capacity I will impart to you those things of which you can be hearers, that you may see the glory which surrounds him, which was and is both now and evermore” (*Ibid*, 88).

<sup>427</sup>Cf. the comments of Celsus, who claims that Jesus was short and ugly (ap. Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI.75).

<sup>428</sup>*Acts of John* 89.

<which> we (usually) saw (upon him), and not like a man at all. (And I saw that) his feet [.] were whiter than snow, so that the ground there was lit up by his feet; and that his head stretched up to heaven.”<sup>429</sup> John goes on to claim that

sometimes when I meant to touch him I encountered a material, solid body; but at the other times again when I felt him, his substance was immaterial and incorporeal, and as if it did not exist at all...And I often wished, as I walked with him, to see if his footprint appeared on the ground – for I saw him raising himself from the earth – and I never saw it.<sup>430</sup>

Interestingly, the narrator of the *Acts of John* interprets Jesus’ multiplicity as indicative not of Jesus’ true nature, but of the mundane materiality through which he appeared to his followers. We can see this, for example, in the text’s emphasis on the unity of Jesus’ nature: “when I considered his abundant grace and his unity within many faces and his unceasing wisdom that looks after us.”<sup>431</sup> Note here the emphasis on the “unity” and “unceasing” nature of Jesus, articulated in light of the “many faces” that he takes to look after his disciples. This solidity-within-multiplicity surfaces later in the *Acts of John*, when the disciple John learns of the “mystery of the Cross.” As part of this revelation, Jesus tells John that he did not in fact suffer during the crucifixion. The cross, therefore, does not represent suffering, but “the delimitation of all things and the strong uplifting of *what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable*, and harmony of wisdom.”<sup>432</sup> Jesus indicates that his sufferings on the cross were illusory, and that his followers must first come to understand the “Logos” in order to comprehend Jesus’ mission. Thereafter,

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<sup>429</sup>Ibid, 90.

<sup>430</sup>Ibid, 93. This passage seems to be a direct counter to claims made by other texts, such as the *Epistula Apostolorum* discussed previously, that the touching of Jesus’ feet to the ground served as evidence of his fleshly corporeality.

<sup>431</sup>Ibid, 91.

<sup>432</sup>Ibid, 98. Emphasis mine.

Jesus ascends to heaven “without any of the multitude seeing him.”<sup>433</sup> In the *Acts of John*, therefore, the alternative (polymorphic) corporeality of Jesus is not necessarily directed at branding Jesus’ body as “illusory” or “seeming” (as the term “docetic” might imply), but an effort to articulate the unity and solidity of Jesus’ nature in direct contrast to the multiplicity and instability of the lower material realm.

As indicated by this brief survey, there exists within early Christian literature vibrant “alternative” resurrection traditions that call into question Jesus’ corporeal solidity and/or continuity. An important observation that arises from this comparative overview is that while some early Christian authors certainly did articulate a Christology where Jesus “lacks” the normal flesh of humanity, this is not necessarily the primary emphasis of these traditions. That is, the fact that Jesus lacked flesh is not always the chief point of concern, despite the fact that this element dominates proto-orthodox heresiological descriptions of so-called “docetic” Christological narratives. What is more, the texts surveyed here typically present claims regarding Jesus’ (lack of) flesh in tandem with related, positive statements about the nature of Jesus’ resurrected body – including its potency, transient adaptability, and ability to merge with the divine. As such, it is clear that these alternative Christian traditions were not merely articulating a Christology of lack (as certain heresiologists would have it), but making affirmative declarations regarding the potency and ability of Jesus’ post-resurrection body. This observation will become all the more relevant as we turn to a reconsideration of the Christology and resurrection tradition of Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*.

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<sup>433</sup>Ibid, 102. For other post-resurrection visions of Jesus and/or dialogues between Jesus and his followers, see the *Dialogue of the Redeemer*, *Two Books of Jeu*, *The Gospel of the Twelve Disciples*, and *The Preaching of Peter* (ap. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI.6.48).

*Ignatius' Letter to the Smyrnaeans and the Body of the Risen Jesus*

This survey of post-resurrection appearances of the risen Jesus highlights the great diversity of early Christian views on Jesus' corporeality. Whereas some traditions emphasized the corporeal continuity of the risen Jesus, as seen especially in his continued possession of his previous (fleshly) form, other traditions accentuated Jesus' transcendent potency through his possession of special powers that existed beyond the ability of the fleshly human body. We see here, then, that there existed a wide-ranging debate within first and second century Christianity regarding the nature of Jesus' body after his resurrection, with a particular focus on how this post-resurrection corporeality related to its former state.

Even a cursory reading of Ignatius' letters lays bare where he stands within this broader debate: the body of the risen Jesus possessed the same human corporeality as it did before his death. Yet, there are important emphases in the Ignatian account that bear mentioning. In *Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius accentuates the affirmation of Jesus' corporeality by explicitly claiming that these events implicate Jesus' possession of flesh. In his recounting of Jesus' post-resurrection meal, for example, Ignatius points out that he did so "as a fleshly being."<sup>434</sup> Likewise, in the disciples' handling of Jesus' body, Ignatius claims that they were "intermixed" with his "flesh and spirit."<sup>435</sup> These affirmations of Jesus' fleshly corporeality undergird Ignatius' Christological assertion that "I know and believe that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection."<sup>436</sup> Ignatius' emphasis on enumerating the precise physiological substance of Jesus'

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<sup>434</sup>*Smyrn.* 3.3.

<sup>435</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.2.

<sup>436</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.1.

body is distinctive, finding parallel only in the *Epistula Apostolorum* and the Gospel of Luke (see above). Other resurrection traditions, such as those found in the Fourth Gospel and Justin Martyr, ostensibly affirm Jesus' corporeal solidity without clarifying the actual substance that constituted Jesus' body. In this light, why might Ignatius find it important to emphasize the fleshly constitution of Jesus? In the past, scholars have regularly answered this query by positing that Ignatius is combatting a heterodox Christology often labeled as "docetic" – that is, a Christology that claims that Jesus only "seemed" to have a solid, fleshly body (before and/or after his resurrection). In the excursus to follow, however, I argue that it would be beneficial to rethink this Christological category so as to appreciate more fully the alternative Christologies that appear in ancient Christian texts, as well as the writings and authors, such as Ignatius of Antioch, who condemn them.

### **Excursus: Early Christian "Docetism"**

Scholars have long argued that Ignatius' strident emphasis on the enduring flesh of Jesus' body is part of an ongoing battle against Christians who do not affirm Jesus' fleshly constitution, before and/or after his resurrection. Thus, Ignatius is thought to have condemned Christians who held to alternative understandings of Jesus' corporeality, perhaps similar to those surveyed in the previous section. Scholars have typically referred to these opponents as "docetists," a scholarly term that has a lengthy pedigree in biblical scholarship, going back at least to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>437</sup> In contemporary scholarship, Docetism and its cognates variously refer to a set of

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<sup>437</sup>The *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the origins of the term to the 1840s. Precedents for its use, however, stretch back at least to the 1780s, as seen in the transliteration of "Docetae" in Nathaniel Lardner's *History of Heretics* (originally published in 1780; Nathaniel Lardner, "History of Heretics," ap. Andrew Kippis, ed., *The Works of Nathaniel Lardner in Five Volumes* [London: Thomas Hamilton, 1815], 512, 628-638, 682). Lardner argues that early Christian heretical groups can be classified under two basic rubrics: Ebionites and "Docetae" (ibid, 512); regarding the latter, he remarks that "all the Docetae denied the resurrection of the body, or of the flesh. This was a consequence of their believing that Christ had not really a body, but only appeared to have one" (ibid, 628).

heretical groups in the first three centuries of Christian history, which appear most often in discussions of the opponents of the Johannine and Ignatian epistles, followers of Marcion, early Christian Gnostics, and various other groups associated with these trajectories. Due to the diverse nature of the groups that are often collected under this term, scholars have often struggled to provide Docetism a coherent definition. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines Docetism as a “tendency” among certain early Christians “which considered the humanity and sufferings of the earthly Christ as apparent rather than real.”<sup>438</sup> In his landmark study on early Christian doctrines, J.N.D. Kelly defines Docetism as “the distinctive thesis...that Christ’s manhood, and hence His sufferings, were unreal, phantasmal.”<sup>439</sup> According to Kelly, “Docetism was not a simple heresy on its own; it was *an attitude which infected* a number of heresies, particularly Marcionism and Gnosticism.”<sup>440</sup>

Despite this term’s pervasive use in scholarly analyses of the pre-Nicene period, there remain several problems with its utility as a Christological category. First, the term appears only in secondary, heresiological contexts.<sup>441</sup> Our earliest witness to forms of “docetic” or “Docetism” are in Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* and Serapion’s *Letter to Rhossus*, both of which occur as part of polemical condemnations by a proto-orthodox author of an alternative Christology.

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Versions of the “docetists” moniker likewise appear in French and German scholarship as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The term seems to have become more prominent by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps due to its use by prominent scholars such as D.F. Strauss (*Das Leben Jesu* [Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1835], 283) and especially Ferdinand Christian Baur, whose 1835 work *Die christliche Gnosis: oder, die christliche Religions-philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* used the term to characterize the Christologies of Marcion and early Christian Gnostics (Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis* [Tübingen: C.F. Osiander, 1835], 258-259, 267).

<sup>438</sup>s.v. “Docetism,” F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>439</sup>J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1978), 141.

<sup>440</sup>*Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

<sup>441</sup>On early Christian heresiology, see Todd Berzon, *Classifying Christians: Ethnography, Heresiology, and the Limits of Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016).

Serapion's report takes place in the context of his analysis of the *Gospel of Peter*, where he claims that the Gospel had been interpolated with heretical materials by those "whom we call Docetae."<sup>442</sup> The earliest instance of "Docetism" proper likewise occurs in a polemical-heresiological context; in Book Three of the *Stromateis*, Clement of Alexandria delivers a scathing critique of so-called "docetists":

If birth is an evil, then the blasphemers must place the Lord who went through birth and the virgin who gave him birth in the category of evil. Abominable people! In attacking birth they are maligning the will of God and the mystery of creation. This is the basis of Cassian's Docetism, Marcion's too, yes, and Valentinus' "semi-spiritual body" [Gr. *psychikos*].<sup>443</sup>

As seen here, Clement's use of "Docetism" functions primarily to conflate and condemn a diverse range of alternative Christological systems, a usage which finds parallel in later Christian heresiologists such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius.<sup>444</sup> The heresiological history of the term, therefore, should caution us against utilizing "docetic" in a fashion that assumes its straightforward mapping onto the early Christian context.

As a corollary to this initial point, it warrants emphasis that the texts and Christological systems often categorized as docetic do not utilize "docetic" terminology as often as might be supposed. Rather, many of these alternative Christological systems emphasize other aspects of Jesus' corporeality, such as his ability to transmute, his transcendence of the material realm, or

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<sup>442</sup>Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12 (LCL, Oulton).

<sup>443</sup>*Strom.* 3.17.102. Translation from John Ferguson, tr., *Clement of Alexandria: Stromateis Books One to Three* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

<sup>444</sup>See Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, 6.13-15, 7.16-19, 9.5, 10.15; Tertullian, *Against Marcion* esp. 1.24.5, 3.8.2-7; Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.23.1-4, 1.24.1-7; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 41.1.6-9. The only possible exception would be Hippolytus' reference to a group of "Docetae" (Hippolytus, *Refutations* 8.8-13, 10, 16). Ironically, in describing this group, Hippolytus describes Christological positions that are more often characterized by contemporary scholars as "separationist" (rather than aligning with "Docetism" proper). It is important to note here that Irenaeus attacks this same group, and yet does not distinguish a separate heresy called "Docetism" (on this point, see Urban C. Von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms of the First Century* [London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2015], 63).

his possession of semi-divine corporeal substance. This is evident especially in light of my previous discussion of texts such as the *Acts of John*, *Wisdom of Jesus Christ*, and the *Gospel of Peter*, where I noted that these texts place emphasis not on what Jesus *lacked*, as is implied by the “docetic” moniker, but on the positive attributes possessed by Jesus: divinity, potency, transcendence, and stability. Thus, even if these treatises’ alternative Christologies ultimately subvert the fleshly continuity of Jesus, this is not necessarily their primary objective. Put simply, the heresiological label of “Docetism” caricatures these texts by portraying them as exhibiting a Christology of lack; that is, Christian heresiologists depict these alternative Christologies as deficient in those elements specifically deemed important by proto-orthodox writers. Thus, despite their rich and varied claims regarding the nature of Christ, “docetic” texts are rendered as aberrant inversions of their proto-orthodox counterparts.

This point severely undermines the term’s utility as a historical classification, especially when we consider Docetism alongside another controversial scholarly category, “Gnosticism.” The latter term lies at the center of an ongoing and fervent debate about its utility in describing certain sets of “heterodox” Christian groups and texts in the second and third centuries. It is important to note that among those who have contended for the continued use of “Gnostic,” one of their main lines of argumentation is that the term finds positive second-order usage among certain Christian writings or groups.<sup>445</sup> Such self-labeling by some Christians is likewise suggested by Irenaeus’ repeated stress that Gnostics are “falsely so-called,” ostensibly indicating that some Christians have (wrongly, in his view) identified themselves as “Gnostics.”<sup>446</sup> Thus,

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<sup>445</sup>The two best examples can be found in Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromateis* and the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, two texts that, ironically, are not typically included in contemporary anthologies of Gnostic literature. For more on the use of this term as a self-identifier among Christians, see David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), esp. 29-35.

<sup>446</sup>E.g., Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.11.1. For discussion, see Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 31-32. Irenaeus’ usage is also corroborated by non-Christian testimony, as seen especially in Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus* (16).

we have solid ancient evidence for “Gnostic” (and its cognates) being used as a self-identifier by certain followers of Jesus, a fact that could be cited as support for adapting the term for use as a scholarly category. In the case of “Docetism,” we find a striking lack of evidence for such usage, and instead largely find instances of the term’s use by outsiders.<sup>447</sup>

Of course, scholars are theoretically free to formulate their own retroactive, third-order categories that may help them better understand antiquity, even if unprompted by ancient terminology. Yet, the dearth of ancient evidence for the use of this term as a second-order label places a special burden on those who would argue for the use of “docetic” as a Christological category. Namely, they must validate the use of the term based on its potential as a classification that helps to illuminate the historical, social, cultural, or religious contexts that stand behind these texts and Christological systems. Because scholars have long assumed, rather than proven, the term’s utility (or historical reality), justifications for its use have not been forthcoming. By using the term without explanation, scholars run the risk of perpetuating ancient heresiological caricatures, and therefore distorting and obscuring the Christological systems that they aim to elucidate. Peter Weigandt has noted this shortcoming of the term “Docetism,” claiming that it is “ungeeignet” as a category for encompassing the broad range of Christologies to which it often refers.<sup>448</sup> A.K.M. Adam has similarly argued that scholars’ simultaneous broad and inconsistent use of Docetism betrays the term’s ineffectiveness.<sup>449</sup> These two features of Docetism – its wide

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<sup>447</sup>On this, cf. the testimony of Serapion (above). There, Serapion emphasizes the fact that these are Christians “whom we call Docetae” (οὓς Δοκητὰς καλοῦμεν), ostensibly indicating that is an “outsider label” used by Serapion and likeminded Christians for a group they view as heretical.

<sup>448</sup>Peter Weigandt, “Der Doketismus im Urchristentum und in der theologischen Entwicklung des zweiten Jahrhunderts” (Ph.D Dissertation, Heidelberg, 1961), 18.

<sup>449</sup>A.K.M. Adam, “Docetism, Käsemann, and Christology - Why Historical Criticism Can't Protect Christological Orthodoxy,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49.4 (1996), 391-410.

and imprecise applicability – stem from the term’s use among early Christian heresiologists (and later, biblical scholars) as an umbrella term for deviant Christologies. The term’s frustrating lack of coherence, therefore, is no accident: its origins and functions serve better to conflate and condemn, rather than illuminate, the Christologies that served as alternatives to proto-orthodox understandings of Jesus. The heresiological history of the term should discourage us from looking for Docetism “out there” in the Christian past; the term does not easily map on to any one Christian group or text, and emerges instead as a Christological caricature used primarily in the theological sparring between divergent Christian groups. This should lead us away from conducting the types of studies that have been all too common in contemporary scholarship – determining whether a text (or adversary of a text) is docetic, based on its apparent alignment with heresiological reports on docetic beliefs.<sup>450</sup>

In analyzing the rich diversity of Christological positions in second and third century Christian, we would do well to avoid the use of “docetic” altogether. In its place, we might be better served by more “localized,” specific classificatory categories that avoid the taxonomic generalizations that accompany broadly applied terms such as Docetism. For Valentinus and his followers, for example, we might note that they are not necessarily emphasizing Jesus’ lack of corporeality, but his possession of more subtle forms of bodily substance, consisting primarily of “pneumatic” or “psychic” material.<sup>451</sup> In other instances, we might come to a better appreciation

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<sup>450</sup>This has been especially prominent in studies of Gnostic texts, which, rather than questioning the category itself, have primarily sought to “defend” Gnostic texts from the “charge” of Docetism. For a more recent example of this, see Lance Jenott’s discussion of the Gospel of Judas and “Docetism” in his *The Gospel of Judas* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). See also Jerry W. McCant, “The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered,” *New Testament Studies* 30.2 (1984), 258-273; Darrell D. Hannah, “The Ascension of Isaiah and Docetic Christology,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 (1999), 165-196.

<sup>451</sup>See, for example, the Valentinian treatise the *Gospel of Truth*. For discussion of Valentinian “Docetism,” see J.G. Davies, “The Origins of Docetism,” *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962), 13-35 [22-23]. For ancient discussion of Valentinian views on the body of Jesus, see, Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 26, *De Carne Christi* 16-20; Ps-Tertullian 4, Hippolytus, *Refutation* 6.35.7. Discussion of Valentinian Christologies is complicated by the apparent split in

of the nuanced divergences in early Christologies by giving due attention to the different types of divine (and human) beings to which Jesus was being compared, with special consideration of the corporeal consequences of such comparisons. John Marshall notes, for instance, that several early Christian writings, including the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and the *Gospel of the Ebionites* (ap. Epiphanius) promote an angelic Christology.<sup>452</sup> This would have major ramifications for understandings of Jesus' body, as Jewish and Christian discourses often attributed to angels a body distinct in substance and potency from its human counterpart.<sup>453</sup> The alternative corporeality ascribed to angels (and thus, perhaps, to Jesus) could help explain the condemnation of Marcion's Christology as "docetic," since the arch-heretic from Pontus apparently referred to Jesus as an *angelos*.<sup>454</sup> We might be able to conduct more productive

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Valentinian theology between "Eastern" and "Western" schools, which had differing views on the precise nature of Jesus' corporeality. For Bardesanes and Axionicus (representatives of the Oriental Valentinian school), see Hippolytus, *Refutations* 6.35.7; Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 4; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.30.3; Jerome, *De Vir ill.* 33; Adamantius, *Dialog. De recta in Deum fide* 3. For the Western school (i.e. Ptolemy, Heracleon and their followers), see Hippolytus, *Refutations* 6.35.6; Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.6.1, 1.7.2, 1.9.3; *Extra.* 43.2, 62.2.3, 62.1; Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 27. See also the fragments of Heracleon preserved by Origen (J.A. Robinson, *The Fragments of Heracleon* [Cambridge, 1891]). Central to considerations of Valentinian Docetism is their division of humankind into three natures: pneumatic, psychic, and hylic/material (Davies, "The Origins of Docetism," 26; cf. Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.5.6, 1.6.1, 5.2.2; *Extr.* 50.53-55).

<sup>452</sup>Marshall, "Objects of Ignatius' Wrath," 12-18. On this, see also Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

<sup>453</sup>In Tobit 12:18-19, for example, the angel Raphael explains that he only appeared to consume food when dining with humans: "Although you were watching me, I really did not eat or drink anything - but what you saw was a vision" (NRSV). On this text, cf. Marshall, "Objects of Ignatius' Wrath," 11. We see a similar instance in Christian literature in the *Acts of John*, where the pseudonymous author states that during a meal with the Pharisees, the disciples each "received one appointed loaf from those who invited us, and he [Jesus] also would take one; but he would bless his and divide it among us; and every man was satisfied by that little piece" (93; emphasis mine).

<sup>454</sup>Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.9; cf. *Carn Chr.* 3. Cf. William Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 226. If Tertullian's witness is to be trusted, the more typical terminology for Marcion in reference to Christ was *phantasmos*. See Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 1, 2; *Against Marcion* 3.8.1, 3.10-11, 4.1.1-5, 5.8.3, 5.20.3; *On The Soul* 17; *Prescription Against Heretics* 33.11. For other witnesses to Marcion's Christology, see Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.53; Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.27, 4.8, 4.34; Clement, *Strom.* 3.3-4, 3.12, 3.102; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.11, 4.29; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.

comparative analyses of such Christological systems if we were to take up a category such as “angelic” Christology in lieu of “Docetism.”

As an additional example, several early Christian texts emphasize Jesus’ ability to transmute, sometimes simultaneously, into different bodily forms. Examples include the *Acts of John*, *Acts of Thomas*, and *Acts of Peter*, among others, as well as the Christological systems of Simon the Samaritan and Basilides. While scholars have typically classified these texts and authors as “docetic,” we might better account for the nuances of their Christological systems through the lens of “polymorphy” or “metamorphosis,” two terms that better approximate the claims forwarded in these texts.<sup>455</sup>

It should be stressed that I am not proposing that these alternative terms are mutually exclusive; indeed, there might be instances in early Christian literature where “angelic” or “polymorphic” embodiment emerges through the lens of “pneumatic” corporeality, for example. Thus, these more localized terminologies will indeed overlap and intersect, and should be seen as mutually informative descriptors rather than boundary-setting labels. Indeed, if the rich diversity of early Christian Christologies is any indication, Christian understandings of Jesus’ body were very much fluid in the first few centuries after his death; our scholarly categories must be adaptable enough to grapple with that variability. In examining these Christologies through more flexible, specific, and localized categories, we can come closer to an accurate understanding of their claims about Christological corporeality, while appropriately accounting for the sliding

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<sup>455</sup>The second century Christian exegete Basilides, for example, taught that Jesus was “incorporeal” and thus had the power to transform his appearance at will, an ability which he utilized to escape crucifixion (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.24.3-7). Irenaeus likewise claims that Simon the Samaritan believed that Jesus had “descended, transfigured and assimilated to powers and principalities and angels, so that he might appear among men to be a man, while yet he was not a man” (Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies* 1.23.3). See also *Acts of Peter* 21; *Acts of Thomas* 143, 153-4.

scales of materiality and embodiment that often characterized ancient debates about human and divine bodies.<sup>456</sup>

For my purposes, the most important ramification of this reframing of alternative Christological systems is that it presents an opportunity for a fresh reading of Ignatius' involvement in the history of "Docetism." First, I suggest that we read Ignatius' letters not as transparent reflections of the historical reality of "Docetism" in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, but as one example in the broader construction of Docetism as a heresiological category. Put simply, "Docetism" is not an external, already-extant Christological system to which Ignatius' letters give access, but a polemical category that Ignatius plays an important role in creating. Second, by deemphasizing the Christological binary (i.e., proto-orthodox vs. docetic) through which Ignatius' letters have typically been interpreted, we are able to resituate Ignatius' Christological positions (as well as those of his opponents, real or imagined) as but one view of Christ among many, with each possessing idiosyncratic histories, ideologies, and viewpoints. Such a broadening of the Christological scope of our inquiry has the potential to inspire more fruitful comparative work that elucidates the nuanced complexities of early Christian views of Jesus.

In the remainder of this chapter, I carry out just such a comparative exercise by juxtaposing the respective Christologies of Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* and the *Coptic*

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<sup>456</sup>It could be argued that these more specific Christological categories run the risk of "atomizing" early Christian understandings of Jesus and discouraging important comparative work. While that fear is warranted, it should nonetheless be noted that the comparative work done under the name of "Docetism" has largely led to hasty conflation, rather than illuminative comparison. Using more specific categories enables us to continue to compare these texts, but in ways that more carefully delineate the Christological tenets entailed. Second, these more specific categories need not preclude comparative work. The "polymorphic" designation of certain texts, for example, could readily be compared with so-called "Separationist" or "Possessionist" Christological systems, such as those found in the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, as well as that of Cerinthus and the so-called Ophites. In both the Polymorphic and Separationist positions, Jesus' miraculous ability to transform underscores the divine potency of his body, though this power is put to use in divergent ways. These alternative Christological categories, therefore, provide a potential path forward in better understanding the ongoing debates about Jesus' ministry and body among his early followers.

*Apocalypse of Peter*. As will become clear, these two texts are appropriate comparanda in how they simultaneously exhibit narrative similarities, such as the mention of demonic bodies, while diverging markedly on issues of Jesus' post-resurrection corporeality. By examining these two texts through the dual lenses of corporeality and demonology, I demonstrate how they simultaneously merge and diverge in their respective Christologies, anthropologies, and demonologies.

### **The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and the “Abode of Demons”**

The *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* (hereafter, *CAP*) is a treatise found in Codex VII of the Nag Hammadi library, the famous trove of fourth century codices discovered in the Egyptian desert. The *CAP* contains a narrative where the apostle Peter receives a revelation from a figure called “the Savior” regarding the true meaning of Jesus' crucifixion and real nature of authentic Christianity. The text's use of several first-person singular pronouns suggests its supposed authorship by the apostle Peter,<sup>457</sup> making it just one of the many examples of early Christian forgeries in this period.<sup>458</sup> The treatise was likely written in the second or third century, in Greek and later translated into Coptic. Syria, Palestine and Egypt have been suggested as possible places of origin.<sup>459</sup> The narrative of the *CAP* is framed as a post-resurrection dialogue between

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<sup>457</sup>See, for example, the beginning of the treatise, where the narrator states, “He said to me, Peter, blessed are those...” (*CAP* 70). Translation of the *CAP* is that of Marvin Meyer, tr., “The Revelation of Peter,” in idem, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 491-497.

<sup>458</sup>For more on the *CAP* as forgery, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 401-404, 407-412.

<sup>459</sup>On this, see the introduction in Meyer, tr., “The Revelation of Peter,” in idem, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, as well as the comments by Andreas Wener, “The Coptic Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter,” in Schneemelcher and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, II.700-705 [702], and Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 73.

the Savior and his disciple Peter. The treatise opens with a scene shortly before Peter's famous threefold denial, which takes place, according to the *CAP*, "in the three hundredth <year> since (the Temple's foundation)."<sup>460</sup> Peter experiences a vision of the Savior, where the Savior directs Peter to communicate what he learns to "the remnant whom I called to knowledge."<sup>461</sup> Peter thereafter receives a series of esoteric teachings, which the Savior directs Peter to withhold from "the children of this age."<sup>462</sup>

One of the first teachings communicated to Peter is the differentiation between mortal and immortal souls. According to the Savior, "souls of this present aeon" are doomed to death because they seek after their own desires. There exists another kind of soul, however, called "immortal," which "contemplates immortality, and has faith, and desires to renounce these mortal souls."<sup>463</sup> The Savior lays out a deterministic plan of salvation, arguing that mortal souls will inevitably experience destruction, while their immortal counterparts will experience divine illumination and salvation.<sup>464</sup> The Savior goes on to critique mortal souls who mistakenly believe they have a monopoly on salvific truth, as well as Christians who place excess weight on the salvific value of suffering.<sup>465</sup> Interestingly, the Savior censures "those outside our number who call themselves bishops and deacons," but which, are, in fact, "dry canals."<sup>466</sup> Such Christians,

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<sup>460</sup>*CAP* 70.

<sup>461</sup>*Ibid*, 71. Cf. Matt 16:17-19.

<sup>462</sup>*CAP* 73.

<sup>463</sup>*Ibid*, 75-6.

<sup>464</sup>*Ibid*, 76.

<sup>465</sup>*Ibid*, 78-79.

<sup>466</sup>*Ibid*, 79. On the language of "dry canals," cf. 2 Peter 2:17.

claims the Savior, will rule for a time, but are destined to be overthrown and exposed as usurpers.<sup>467</sup>

The most striking teaching of the *CAP* is the Savior's alternative explanation of the reality and significance of the crucifixion. According to the *CAP*, the person who was arrested, detained, and crucified by the Romans was not "the Savior", but the "man of Elohim," an apparent reference to Jesus' fleshly vessel that, according to the *CAP*, was created by hostile "archons" of the "middle regions" of the cosmos.<sup>468</sup> During Jesus' ministry, this fleshly vessel was inhabited by the so-called "living Jesus," who escaped the suffering of the crucifixion and appears in Peter's vision laughing above the cross.<sup>469</sup> The "living Jesus" is distinguished still from "the Savior," whom the *CAP* describes as "the spirit of thought filled with radiant light" and "intertwined with the holy spirit."<sup>470</sup>

This tri-fold Christology ("man of Elohim"/living Jesus/the Savior) and alternative understanding of the crucifixion serve as the foundation for the *CAP*'s disparagement of fellow

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<sup>467</sup>*CAP* 79-80.

<sup>468</sup>*Ibid*, 82.

<sup>469</sup>The escape of the "living Jesus" from the crucifixion is emphasized elsewhere in the text, where Peter is told that the living Jesus is he who "the principalities sought but did not find." Later, "the Savior" indicates that he is speaking to Peter so that his followers "might understand him properly with regard to the distinction between the sinews of his hand and feet and the crowning by those of the middle region over against his radiant body" (71-72). On the Christology of the *CAP*, see Elaine Pagels, "Gnostic and Orthodox Views of Christ's Passion: Paradigms for the Christian's Response to Persecution?" in Bentley Layton, ed., *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 262-283; K.W. Tröger, "Die Passion Jesu Christi in der Gnosis nach den Schriften von Nag Hammadi," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, 1978), 218-234; *ibid*, "Doketische Christologie in Nag Hammadi Texten," *Kairos* (1977), 45-52; Gerard P. Luitkhuizen, "The Suffering Jesus and the Invulnerable Christ in the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 187-99. For a similar take on the crucifixion, see the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, 55,30-56,20. For discussion, see K.W. Tröger, "Der zweite Logos des Grossen Seth. Gedanken zur Christologie in der zweiten Schrift des Codex VII (p.49.10-70.12)," in M. Krause, ed., *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts: In Honor of Pahor Labib (NHS vol. 6)* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 268-276.

<sup>470</sup>*CAP* 82-83.

Christians. Specifically, the CAP critiques Christians who “hold on to the name of a dead man” (i.e. the fleshly, crucified Jesus).<sup>471</sup> The CAP claims that such Christians are part of a “sisterhood” that has fallen prey to “heresy,” and are to be distinguished from the persecuted “brotherhood,” presumably the Christians that the CAP considers part of its own community. This denunciation appears as part of the CAP’s strident criticisms of Christian bishops and deacons, perhaps indicating that the CAP’s author and sympathizers were at odds with Christian leadership over issues of Christology. After its explanation of the crucifixion, the Savior encourages Peter to “be courageous and fear nothing,” and “be strong.” After this, Peter “comes to his senses” and the conclusion of the vision ends the treatise.<sup>472</sup>

The Christology of the CAP differs at several points from Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, most notably on the significance of Jesus’ flesh and the events of the crucifixion. Yet, what is most interesting for my purposes is that at several points the CAP shares narrative elements with *Smyrnaeans*. Both texts (1) include discussion regarding the nature of true Christian embodiment, (2) forward interpretations of the significance of Jesus’ crucifixion, (3) feature Peter as the primary disciple with whom Jesus interacts, (4) display entrenched positions regarding the relative value of suffering for Christian salvation, and (5) lay out strong views regarding the importance of (proto-orthodox) church leaders, and, most importantly. What is more, both Ignatius and the CAP cite the nature of the demonic as part of their articulation of proper embodiment.<sup>473</sup> The CAP, of course, puts these narrative elements to use in strikingly different ways than does Ignatius, as part of a radical rearticulation of the nature of the Christian

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<sup>471</sup>Ibid, 60.

<sup>472</sup>Ibid, 84.

<sup>473</sup>Ibid, 82. See discussion below.

body and the significance of Jesus' earthly ministry. Hereafter, I provide a brief survey of the major elements of the *CAP*'s anthropology and Christology as an initial step in comparing this text to Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*.

In the realm of anthropology, the *CAP* defines proper Christian embodiment as the eschewal of the material body in favor of a "spiritual" corporeality that would allow re-ascension to humanity's former heavenly abode. The Savior tells Peter that "blessed are those who belong to the Father, for they are above the heavens. It is he who through me revealed life to people from life."<sup>474</sup> These true believers possess an immortal soul, which originates not from this material realm, but from the heavens above. The Savior contrasts this psychic corporeality with that of the material "aeons": "In our opinion, every soul of these present aeons is assigned to death and is always enslaved, since this soul is created to serve its own desires. These souls are destined for eternal destruction, in which they are and from which they are, for they love the creatures of matter that came into being with them."<sup>475</sup> The differences between these immortal souls and their mortal counterparts are invisible for the moment, claims the Savior, but result in differing relations with the divine: "as long as the hour has not yet come, an immortal soul resembles mortal souls. It will not reveal its true nature: it alone is immortal and contemplates immortality, and has faith, and desires to renounce these mortal souls."<sup>476</sup> The souls of Peter's followers will have a special connection with the "eternal one," whom the text calls the "source of life and immortality of life," because these souls will "resemble" the eternal one in their

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<sup>474</sup>Ibid, 70-72.

<sup>475</sup>Ibid, 75.

<sup>476</sup>Ibid, 76.

bodies' vitality and immortality.<sup>477</sup> Peter is called to witness to this remnant, to share his knowledge of the divine realm and its connection with the immortal souls currently residing in the mundane world. The Savior directs Peter, "You are to present what you have seen to those who are strangers, who are not of this age. For there will be no grace among those who are not immortal, but only among those chosen because of their immortal nature, which has shown it can receive the one who gives in abundance."<sup>478</sup> While the immortal souls will commune with the divine and experience eternal life, the others will only experience "nothingness," since, according to the Apocalypse, "something always stays in that state in which it exists."<sup>479</sup>

The Savior tells Peter, furthermore, "those who are deaf and blind associate only with people like them."<sup>480</sup> Here the *CAP* hints at the importance of the senses in the text's epistemology. Whereas Ignatius' Jesus implored his followers to reach out and touch him in order to verify his fleshly constitution, the Savior in the *CAP* directs Peter to *turn away* from his bodily senses in order to grasp true knowledge: "If you want to know their blindness, put your hands on the eyes of your garment and tell me what you see."<sup>481</sup> Here "garment" ostensibly refers to the fleshly body, which some early Christian traditions viewed as mere adornment for the true body, the inner soul. Peter follows the Savior's directive by covering his eyes, but sees nothing. The Savior encourages Peter to cover his eyes again, resulting in Peter's experiencing of a revelatory vision: "Fear and joy arose in me," claims Peter, "for I saw a new light brighter than

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<sup>477</sup>Ibid.

<sup>478</sup>Ibid, 83.

<sup>479</sup>Ibid, 76.

<sup>480</sup>Ibid.

<sup>481</sup>Ibid, 71.

the light of day, and it came down on the Savior.”<sup>482</sup> Note here how it is Peter’s foreclosure of the senses, rather than his experience of them, that reveals to Peter the true nature of the Savior. In the analysis of Bart Ehrman, the *CAP* is asserting that “[w]hat seems to be happening in the physical world of sensation in fact masks what is really happening, as can be detected not through the physical senses, which need to be obliterated, but through spiritual insight, which comes only when one turns from the outward and physical.”<sup>483</sup> In this way, the *CAP* articulates an epistemology based on psychic contemplation and illumination, rather than fleshly sensory input, which reveals true knowledge about the nature of Jesus and the divine.<sup>484</sup>

Because of this vision, Peter comes to see how the nature of the true Christian closely relates to the true identity of Jesus. Peter learns from the Savior that he is to distinguish between the physical appearance of the earthly Jesus and the immortal corporeality of “the living Jesus”: “He called you so that you might understand him properly with regard to the distinction between the sinews of his hands and feet and the crowning by those of the middle region over against his radiant body.”<sup>485</sup> The fleshly physiology of the earthly Jesus, therefore, is not to be confused with the “radiant body” of the living Jesus. This distinction has been made known to the

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<sup>482</sup>Ibid, 73.

<sup>483</sup>Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 408.

<sup>484</sup>On the eschewal of the fleshly body as the route to discerning the nature of Jesus, see *Gospel of Thomas* logion 37: “His disciples said, “When will you appear to us and when shall we see you?” Jesus said, “When you strip naked without being ashamed and take your clothes and place them under your feet like little children and stamp on them, then you will see the Son of the Living One, and you will not be afraid” (translation from Zlatko Pleše, tr., “The Gospel of Thomas,” in idem and Ehrman, eds., *The Apocryphal Gospels*). See also my discussion of Clement of Alexandria and divine contemplation as ritual practice in Chapter Four.

<sup>485</sup>*CAP* 71.

immortal souls through the Savior's appearance as "Son of Humanity, exalted above the heavens."<sup>486</sup>

The principalities of the lower realm, however, were apparently unable to make this distinction, as they sought to capture the living Jesus by detaining his fleshly body. In doing so, the Savior claims, the principalities "have put to shame the son of their own glory instead of the one who serves me."<sup>487</sup> The difference between the "son of their own glory" and "the one who serves me" is between that of the fleshly and the living Jesus, a distinction explained to Peter as part of his witnessing of Jesus' crucifixion. Peter inquires of his heavenly interlocutor, "Who is the one smiling and laughing above the cross?"<sup>488</sup> Is it someone else whose feet and hands they are hammering?" The Savior responds: "The one you see smiling and laughing above the cross is the living Jesus. The one into whose hands and feet they are driving nails is his fleshly part, the substitute for him. They are putting to shame the one who came into being in the likeness of the living Jesus."<sup>489</sup> The *CAP* contrasts the fleshly "likeness" of Jesus with not only the spiritual, "living Jesus," but also the transcendent Savior, as reported in Peter's vision: "Then I saw someone about to approach us who looked like the one laughing above the cross, but this one was intertwined with holy spirit, and he was the Savior. And there was an unspeakably bright

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<sup>486</sup>Ibid.

<sup>487</sup>Ibid, 81.

<sup>488</sup>This is similar to *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (55,30-56,20), where Christ stands apart of the scene of the crucifixion, laughing at the ignorant archontic powers who are crucifying "their man" of flesh. See also Irenaeus' discussion of Basilides' "laughing Jesus" in *Against All Heresies* 1.24.4. On the laughing Jesus in early Christian traditions, see Marius Johannes Nel, "He Who Laughs Last: Jesus and Laughter in the Synoptic and Gnostic Traditions," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 70.1 (2014), 1-8; Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, "Why did Jesus Laugh? Laughing in Biblical-Demiurgical Texts," in Hans Geybels and Walter Van Herck, eds., *Humour and Religion: Challenges and Ambiguities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 123-140; G.G. Stroumsa, "Christ's Laughter: Docetic Origins Reconsidered," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12.3 (2004), 267-288.

<sup>489</sup>*CAP* 81-82.

light surrounding them and a multitude of ineffable and invisible angels praising them.”<sup>490</sup> Here, the living Jesus appears to be distinct from, and a servant of, the Savior.

Most importantly for my purposes, the *CAP* distinguishes both of these figures from the fleshly Jesus. The *CAP* refers to this figure as the “son of the glory” of the principalities of the lower realm, underscoring his inferior material nature, a point reinforced by the *CAP*’s highlighting of the hammering of his hands and feet. The *CAP* critiques those Christians who ascribe too much importance to the fleshly Jesus, claiming that they “hold on to the name of a dead man, thinking that in this way they will become pure, but instead they will become more and more defiled. They will fall into a name of error and into the hand of an evil deceiver with complicated doctrines, and they will be dominated by heresy.”<sup>491</sup> The *CAP* claims that “those who say all this will inquire into dreams, *and if they claim that a dream came from a demon*, which is appropriate for their error, they shall be granted perdition instead of incorruption.”<sup>492</sup> These Christians, the Apocalypse argues, place too much stock in earthly suffering as part of their desire for immortality: “Still others among them endure suffering and think they will perfect the wisdom of the brotherhood that already exists, the spiritual fellowship with those united in communion, through which the wedding of incorruptibility will be revealed.”<sup>493</sup> Such Christians will be sorely disappointed, however: “instead, what will appear is a mere imitation, the kindred generation of the sisterhood.”<sup>494</sup> This “generation of the sisterhood” errs not only in

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<sup>490</sup>Ibid, 82.

<sup>491</sup>Ibid, 73-4.

<sup>492</sup>Ibid, 75. Emphasis mine.

<sup>493</sup>Ibid, 78-9.

<sup>494</sup>Ibid, 79.

its Christology, but also in its ecclesiological structure: “And there are others among those outside our number who call themselves bishops and deacons, as if they have received authority from God, but they bow before the judgment of the leaders. These people are dry canals.”<sup>495</sup>

It is instructive here to pause briefly and reflect on just who might be the “dry canals” that are the targets of the *CAP*’s invective.<sup>496</sup> It is quite tempting, based on the outlines of this “generation of the sisterhood,” to draw some kind of intertextual relationship between the opponents of the *CAP* and trajectories of Christianity associated with Ignatius of Antioch. After all, the *CAP* condemns three Christian tenets that are quite prevalent in the letters of Ignatius: (1) the fleshly constitution and redemptive suffering of Jesus, (2) the importance of the bishop in leading Christian churches, and (3) the value of suffering for Christian salvation, a point underscored by Ignatius’ own desire for martyrdom. Such intertextual ties are likewise suggested by the rather direct way in which the *CAP* counters one of the main pieces of evidence that Ignatius cites in his argument for the fleshly constitution of the risen Jesus. Namely, the *CAP* rejects the value of physical touching for knowing anything about the living Jesus or Savior. In speaking to Peter, the Savior highlights the foolish, self-defeating presumptions of heretical Christians: “For look, those who will bring judgment on themselves are approaching and will put themselves to shame. *They cannot touch me*. Peter, you will stand in their midst, but don’t be afraid, though you are fainthearted. Their understanding will be gone, for the invisible one has

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<sup>495</sup>Ibid.

<sup>496</sup>In similar ways to the letters of Ignatius, there has been lengthy scholarly debate over the identity of the opponents of the *CAP*. For relevant treatments, see Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Michel Tardieu, “Hérésio-graphie de l’Apocalypse de Pierre,” in Albert de Pury, ed., *Histoire et conscience historique dans les civilisations du Proche-Orient ancien* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 33-39; Birger Pearson, “The Apocalypse of Peter and the Canonical Peter,” in James Goehring et al., eds., *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990), 67-74; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 402-404.

taken a stand against them.”<sup>497</sup> The Savior again insists to Peter that the immortal body of the Savior is incomprehensible to mortal senses: “the person of this world, who is completely dead, who derives from the planting of creation and procreation, *who thinks he can lay hold of someone else of immortal nature when such a person appears* – this will be taken away from that person and added to whatever exists.”<sup>498</sup>

The connections here with the resurrection appearance in Ignatius, as well as other Christian writings, are striking. Whereas Ignatius highlights the value of unity under the bishop, the *CAP* emphasizes the identification of a select group of followers who stand outside the authority of the established clergy. Although Ignatius emphasizes the value of his own suffering in light of the suffering of Jesus, the *CAP* claims that the “true” messiah(s), the “living Jesus” and “the Savior,” escaped crucifixion and all forms of suffering. In presenting the transcendent corporeality of the post-resurrection living Jesus and Savior, the *CAP* directly contradicts Ignatius’ insistence on the continued flesh-and-spirit dual embodiment of the risen Jesus. Whereas Ignatius’ resurrection tradition verifies Jesus’ fleshly constitution through the disciples’ touching of Jesus’ body, the *CAP* claims that Jesus’ followers must *foreclose* their bodily senses in order to experience the living Jesus and true Savior. Finally, though Ignatius argues that true Christian embodiment entails the dual flesh-and-spirit imitation of the risen Jesus, the *CAP* insists that the ideal corporeality of the true Christian entails the shedding of the fleshly “garment” and the incorporeal ascension of the inner soul.

In sum, the *CAP* and Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* appear to exist as Christological and corporeal inversions. The close ties between the ways that the texts articulate these

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<sup>497</sup>*CAP* 80-81. Emphasis mine.

<sup>498</sup>*Ibid*, 83-4. Emphasis mine.



knowing that they were born blind. The one capable of suffering must remain, since the body is the substitute, but what was set free was the *bodiless body*.<sup>500</sup>

Here, then, the “bodiless body” of the living Jesus is connected with immortality and a lack of suffering, while the demon-infested body of the fleshly Jesus is abandoned to suffer.

The condemnation of the fleshly Jesus as an “abode of demons” is likely connected to the claim, often found in Gnostic texts, that this lower material realm is the creation of demonic “archons.”<sup>501</sup> The *CAP* hints at such a cosmological paradigm throughout the treatise. In its discussion of the fleshly body of Jesus, for example, the *CAP* encourages Peter to distinguish between the living Jesus’ “radiant body” and “the sinews of his hands and feet and *the crowning by those of the middle region*.”<sup>502</sup> The “middle region” here likely references an intermediary cosmic realm where demonic archons reside. These entities, therefore, are responsible for the sufferings faced by the fleshly Jesus. According to the *CAP*, “every authority, principality, and power of the ages wants to be with the immortal souls in the created world, in order that these powers, who do not come from what exists and have forgotten who they are, may be glorified by the immortal souls that do exist.”<sup>503</sup> In seizing Jesus, however, these archontic powers have made

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<sup>500</sup>Ibid, 82-3. Emphasis mine. The Coptic here reads as follows: “ΠΗΔΕ ΕΤΑΞΕΡΑ<ΤΙ> ΕΙΣΤΗΝ ΕΡΟΙ ΠΙΣΩΤ<ΗΡ> ΠΕ ΕΤΟ<ΝΙ> ΠΩΟ<ΡΠ> ΝΙΖΗ<ΤΙ> ΕΤΑΥΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΜΟΟΙ· ΑΥΩ ΑΥΚΑΔΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΙΣΤΑΞΕΡΑ<ΤΙ> <ΝΙ> ΟΥΡΑΨΕ· ΕΙ[Σ]ΝΑΥ ΕΝΗ ΕΤΑΥΧΙ<ΤΙ> ΝΙΟ<ΝΙ> ΕΥΠΟ<ΡΧ> ΕΒΟΛ ΝΙΝΕΥ ΕΡΗΥ· ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΙ ΕΙΣΩΒΕ ΝΙΟΑ ΤΕΥ<ΜΙΝΤ>ΑΤΕΙΩ<Ρ> ΕΙΣΟΟΟΥΝ ΧΕ ΖΕΝ<ΒΛ>ΛΕ ΜΙΣΕΝΕ· ΕΙΣΕΨΩΠΕ ΟΥΝ ΑΡΑ ΝΙ ΠΙΡΕΙΧΙ ΜΚΑΖ ΕΠΙΣΩΜΑ ΠΕ ΨΕΒΙΩ· ΠΗ ΔΕ ΝΙΤΑΥΚΑΔΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΠΑΣΩΜΑ ΠΕ ΝΑΤΣΩΜΑ.” Coptic text from Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*.

<sup>501</sup>On this, see especially the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NH II, 4) and *On the Origin of the World* (NH II, 5), as well as the *Apocryphon of John*. For discussion, see Elaine H. Pagels, “Demiurge and His Archons: A Gnostic View of the Bishop and Presbyters,” *Harvard Theological Review* 69.3-4 (July 1976), 301-324; Andrew J. Welburn, “Identity of the Archons in the ‘Apocryphon Johannis,’” *Vigiliae Christianae* 32.4 (1978), 241-254; Nils Alstrup Dahl, “The Arrogant Archon and the Lewd Sophia: Jewish Traditions in Gnostic Revolt,” in Bentley Layton, ed., *Rediscovery of Gnosticism, Vol 2: Sethian Gnosticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 689-712; Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *The Nature of the Archons: A Study in the Soteriology of a Gnostic Treatise from Nag Hammadi (CGII, 4)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985).

<sup>502</sup>*CAP* 71. Emphasis mine.

<sup>503</sup>Ibid, 77.

a drastic mistake: “they have put to shame the son of *their own glory* instead of the one who serves me [i.e., the living Jesus, who serves the Savior].”<sup>504</sup> The crucified Jesus, therefore, is the “abode of demons” in a dual sense: evil spirits inhabit his fleshly “vessel,” and the flesh itself stems from the creative activities of the archontic powers who brought about this lower material realm. Quite unlike Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, therefore, the *CAP* characterizes the body of Jesus as “demonic” because it *possesses*, rather than lacks, flesh.

The connection between these demonic archons and mundane materiality is likewise operative in the *CAP*’s condemnation of its opponents’ revelatory visions, as noted previously: “And those who say all this will inquire into dreams, and if they claim that a dream *came from a demon*, which is appropriate for their error, they shall be granted perdition instead of incorruption.”<sup>505</sup> For the *CAP*, therefore, demons are representative of the illusions and material entanglements of this lower cosmic realm, and implicated in the tragic cosmic reign of ignorant semi-divine powers.

As discussed previously, the divergences between the *CAP* and Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* are not limited to their characterizations of demonic corporeality. Whereas the *CAP* located true embodiment in the “bodiless body” of the spirit, Ignatius of Antioch, as will be explored at length shortly, located true Christian corporeality in the dual possession of flesh *and* spirit. Concomitantly, Ignatius stressed the redemptive value of Jesus’ fleshly suffering on the cross, as well as his continued possession of flesh even after his resurrection; the *CAP*, on the other hand, denied that the “true” (i.e., “living”) Jesus was implicated in the crucifixion, and emphasizes the living Jesus’ and the Savior’s transcendence of the lower material realm. The

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<sup>504</sup>Ibid, 82. Emphasis mine.

<sup>505</sup>Ibid, 74-5. Emphasis mine.

differences in description of the demonic bodies between these two texts, therefore, are reflective of their divergent articulations of proper embodiment, Christology, and cosmology.

A careful comparative consideration of Ignatius' *Smyrnaeans* and the *CAP*, moreover, highlights the way in which divergent demonologies of these early Christian authors reflect the broader cosmological and theological entanglements of demonic and human corporeality. In much the same way that Christian writers in the second and third centuries reported discrepant narratives regarding the nature of Jesus' body and resurrection, so also Ignatius and the *CAP* have produced divergent accounts of the nature and significance of the risen Jesus. Early Christian diversity on the issue of Jesus' resurrection, therefore, comes to be refracted through differing understandings of the demonic body. Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* and the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, as a result, serve as important opportunities for considering how divergent articulations of demonic corporeality informed conflicting understandings of Christological and anthropological orthodoxies (and vice versa). In such a way, the demonic body proves a valuable assistant to the contemporary interpreter in more fully appreciating both the diversity of early Christian demonologies as well as the interconnections between the bodies of Jesus, his followers, and their demonic foes.

### **Bodiless “Docetists” and Ecclesial Politics**

This chapter thus far has explored how early Christian ideas regarding demonic bodies, specifically those found in Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* and the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, are reflective of broader discrepancies in early Christian understandings of corporeality and Christology. In keeping with the more wide-ranging interests of this project, however, this penultimate section explores how such differences were not only reflective, but also generative

of differences in the Christian body. It does so by tracing the overlap between Ignatius' corporeal and ritual ideologies, primarily through an exploration of Ignatius' comments regarding the participation of Christian bodies in communal ritual meals. As I demonstrate, Ignatius' insistence on the necessity of dyadic flesh-and-spirit embodiment for Christians is part of a broader ritual program wherein the consumption of Jesus' "flesh" in the Christian Eucharist is implicated in the "spiritual" uniting of the Christian body with the Godhead.

### *Bodiless "Docetists" and the Fleshly Jesus*

The previous sections have primarily focused on the resurrection narrative of Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. However, as indicated previously, Ignatius also mentions demons in connection with his condemnation of his Christological opponents. In *Smyrnaeans* 2, Ignatius launches a direct attack against Christians espousing an alternative Christology: "They are the ones who are only an appearance,"<sup>506</sup> Ignatius proclaims, "and it will happen to them just as they think: they will be without bodies – and demonic!"<sup>507</sup> Ignatius here censures his opponents by condemning them to an afterlife that would be an imitation of the "bodiless" Jesus to which they adhered. The problem for Ignatius, of course, would be that several early Christian groups and texts ascribed a positive valuation to existence outside the body as a "spiritual" entity. Philipp Vielhauer and William Schoedel have both noted the broader early Christian valuation of a bodiless afterlife, and the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, explored above, is but one example of an early Christian text that locates true salvation in the soul's abandonment of its fleshly vessel.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>506</sup>Cf. the similar condemnation by Ignatius in his *Letter to the Trallians*: "some who are atheists – that is, unbelievers – say, that he only appeared to suffer (it is they who are the appearance)" (10.1).

<sup>507</sup>Translation amended from Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, I.296. See note 335, above.

<sup>508</sup>Vielhauer, "Jewish-Christian Gospels," 144-45; Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 226.

Ignatius does not simply condemn his opponents to a “bodiless” afterlife, but to a “demonic” existence, as well. Ignatius’ condemnation to both a bodiless *and* demonic afterlife, therefore, functions to counter positive valuations of a bodiless afterlife by associating “docetic”<sup>509</sup> Christians with demons, entities that were not only bodiless, but, within Christian circles, malevolent, monstrous, and destined for a morose existence. In the eyes of many Christian interpreters, this would have entailed serving as a minion of Satan who actively opposed the Gospel to which they adhered. A condemnation to a demonic existence, moreover, would have implicated Christians in a prolonged entanglement in the lower, material realm of the cosmos from which they sought escape. Ignatius’ censure, therefore, functions as a mocking parody of the Christian anticipation of bodiless deliverance, jeering opposing Christians with a future existence quite contrary to their anticipations.

This, of course, is typical of Ignatian invective, as demonstrated elsewhere in *Smyrnaeans*, where the Antiochene bishop compares his opponents to “wild beasts in human form.”<sup>510</sup> Ignatius recommends that his readers shun such ‘beasts’: “Not only should you refrain from welcoming such people, if possible you should not even meet with them,”<sup>511</sup> and later in the same letter: “it is fitting to avoid such people and not even to speak about them, either privately or in public.”<sup>512</sup> Ignatius even expresses his pessimism that they will ever repent: “Pray for them that they might somehow repent, though even this is difficult.”<sup>513</sup> He goes on to claim that they

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<sup>509</sup>In keeping with the terminological considerations outlined previously, I here use “docetic” and “docetists” in reference to Ignatius’ own literary caricature of his opponents, rather than as a label for any “real” group of Christians.

<sup>510</sup>*Smyrn.* 4.1.

<sup>511</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>512</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.2.

<sup>513</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.1.

are not even worthy of identification until they do so: “But I see no point in recording their disbelieving names. I do not even want to recall them, until they repent concerning the Passion, which is our resurrection.”<sup>514</sup> When Ignatius’ demonological polemic merges with his derisive rhetoric, his construction of “docetic” Christians solidifies: they are evil, anonymous, sub-human, and demonic, the epitome of the ‘other,’ doomed to inhabit the cosmic and societal margins, and unworthy of interaction with orthodox Christians.

It is important to note, however, that Ignatius’ condemnation of his opponents was not limited to “mere” literary censure. Rather, as a writer embedded within the broader church leadership networks of Asia Minor, Ignatius’ literary denunciations likely played some role in shaping the nature of Christian communities in that region, especially in the areas of ritual practice and communal governance. In what follows, then, I trace how Ignatius’ condemnations of his adversaries as “bodiless demons” held the potential to inform the ritual practice of Christians in Smyrna (and elsewhere in Asia Minor), and thus reproduce particular modes of Christian corporeality.

### *Ignatius and the “Incarnation” of the Christian Body*

The implication of Ignatius’ condemnation to a “bodiless” afterlife is best understood when contextualized within his broader understanding of Christian corporeality. As noted earlier within the resurrection narrative of the *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius ostensibly contrasts “bodiless” existence with the dually embodied corporeality of “flesh and spirit.”<sup>515</sup> We find similar phrasing in the opening to *Smyrnaeans*, where Ignatius characterizes the church’s faith

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<sup>514</sup>Ibid, 5.3.

<sup>515</sup>Ibid, 3.2.

thus: “I know that you have been made complete in a faith that cannot be moved – as if you were nailed to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ *in both flesh and spirit*.”<sup>516</sup> In the closing to *Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius greets the church “in the name of Jesus Christ, in his flesh and blood, in his passion and resurrection, which pertains to *both flesh and spirit*,”<sup>517</sup> and likewise prays that the household of Tavia “will be firm in faith and in a love that pertains to *both flesh and spirit*.”<sup>518</sup>

When we consider the remainder of the Ignatian corpus, it becomes clear that this latter phrase (“flesh and spirit”) serves as a summation of Ignatius’ understanding of ideal embodiment. In his *Letter to the Magnesians*, for example, Ignatius prays that his recipients “experience the unity of the *flesh and spirit* of Jesus Christ—our constant life.”<sup>519</sup> When writing to the Romans, Ignatius greets his audience: “I extend warmest greetings blamelessly in Jesus Christ, our God, to those who are united in *both flesh and spirit* in his every commandment.”<sup>520</sup> In advising the Ephesians, Ignatius emphasizes that they “abide in Jesus Christ both in flesh and in the spirit.”<sup>521</sup> As a final example, Ignatius informs Polycarp that his dual nature is essential for his leadership role: “You are fleshly and spiritual for this reason, that you may deal gently with what is visible before you.”<sup>522</sup>

According to Ignatius’ anthropology, humans are composed of both flesh and spirit, possessing a dual corporeality that enables them to commune with the divine while also carrying

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<sup>516</sup>Ibid, 1.1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>517</sup>Ibid, 12.2. Emphasis mine.

<sup>518</sup>Ibid, 13.2. Emphasis mine. For similar instances where the phrase “flesh and spirit” figures prominently in the Ignatian corpus, see Eph. 7.2, 8.2, 10.3; Magn. 13.1-2; Trall. Pref, 12.1; *Phild.* 7.1, 11.2; *Polyc.* 1.2, 2.2, 5.1.

<sup>519</sup>*Magn.* 1.2. Emphasis mine.

<sup>520</sup>*Rom.*, pref. Emphasis mine.

<sup>521</sup>*Eph.* 10.3.

<sup>522</sup>*Poly.* 2.

out proper Christian roles in the mundane world. This flesh/spirit duality is in direct imitation of the bodily composition of Jesus, both before and after his resurrection. According to Ignatius, however, those who ascribe to a phantasmal Christ will have bodies just like their savior: purely spiritual and lacking in flesh. Such existence will not entail a welcome release from the troubles of this world, Ignatius contends, but a deficiency in the fleshly nature essential for proper communion with the Lord Jesus. Upon a closer reading of Ignatius' letters, it appears that the Antiochene bishop reifies this boundary between orthodox flesh/spirit Christians and "bodiless" heretics by inscribing this Christological divide onto Christian ritual performance. That is, Ignatius imbued weekly communal ritual gatherings with the weight of theological discrimination, a public performance of the ideological differences that were dividing his Christian communities.

### *Ignatius and Early Christian Ritual Meals*

For Ignatius, the ideological differences between Christians should materialize in the separation of the Christian communities, as noted previously: "And so it is fitting to avoid such people and not even speak about them, either privately or in public."<sup>523</sup> This separation, moreover, is to be performed and embodied through the Eucharist, the ritual meal that for Ignatius entailed the consumptions of the "flesh and blood" of Christ. Ignatius implores the Ephesians, for example, to "come together more frequently to celebrate the Eucharist and give glory to God."<sup>524</sup> In writing to the Trallians, Ignatius contends that the leaders who administer the Eucharist are in fact handling the "mysteries of Jesus Christ": "And those who are deacons of

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<sup>523</sup>*Smyrn.* 7.2.

<sup>524</sup>*Eph.* 13.1.

the mysteries of Jesus Christ must also be pleasing in every way to all people. For they are not deacons dealing with food and drink; they are servants of the church of God. And so they must guard themselves against accusations as against fire.”<sup>525</sup> In Ignatius’ understanding, the Eucharist was not mere bread and wine, but consisted of the “bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ” and “his blood, which is imperishable love.”<sup>526</sup> The divine potency of the Eucharist, moreover, held the potential to renew the faith of Christians: “You should therefore take up gentleness and *create yourselves anew in faith*, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>527</sup> The flesh and blood of Christ, therefore, represents the source and sustenance for the faith of Christians, a point underscored in Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*: “For I know that you have been made complete in a faith that cannot be moved – as if you were nailed to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ in both flesh and spirit – and that you have been established in love by the blood of Christ.”<sup>528</sup>

The occasion for Ignatius’ repeated declamations concerning the Eucharist might stem from the splintering of Christian communities over Eucharistic theology and practice. This divide manifested itself, so it seems, in sectarian worship ceremonies and separate performances of Christian rituals. In writing to the Magnesians, Ignatius decries those Christians that do not respect the ceremonial authority of the bishop:

And so it is fitting not only to be called Christians, but also to be Christians, just as there are some who call a person the bishop but do everything without him. Such persons do

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<sup>525</sup>*Trall.* 2.3.

<sup>526</sup>*Rom.* 7.3.

<sup>527</sup>*Trall.* 8.1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>528</sup>*Smyrn.* 1.1.

not seem to me to be acting in good conscience, because they do not hold valid meetings in accordance with the commandment.<sup>529</sup>

It appears that lack of respect for church leadership was not limited to Magnesians Christians, but may have also plagued the Trallians:

So too let everyone respect the deacons like Jesus Christ, and also the bishop, who is the image of the Father; and let them respect the presbyters like the council of God and the band of the apostles. *Apart from these a gathering cannot be called a church.*<sup>530</sup>

The latter phrase likely indicates that certain Christians had been gathering apart from the church leaders whom Ignatius sanctioned. Ignatius strongly condemns those who would hold such gatherings: “The one who is inside the sanctuary is pure but the one outside the sanctuary is not pure. This means that the one who does anything apart from the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons is not pure in conscience.”<sup>531</sup> As seen here, Ignatius cites separate ritual spaces as reifications of the divide between the factions and the exclusion of heretical Christians.

The source for this conflict seems to be a dispute over the bodily constitution of the risen Jesus. Ignatius entreats that the Trallians

be deaf when someone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was from the race of David and from Mary, who was truly born, both ate and drank, was truly persecuted at the time of Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died...He was also truly raised from the dead, his Father having raised him.<sup>532</sup>

Ignatius goes on to cite his own suffering as proof for the physical constitution of Jesus: “But if, as some who are atheists – that is, unbelievers – say, that he only appeared to suffer (it is they who are the appearance), why am I in bondage, and why also do I pray to fight the wild beasts? I

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<sup>529</sup>*Magn.* 4.

<sup>530</sup>*Trall.* 3.1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>531</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.2.

<sup>532</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.2.

am then dying in vain and am, even more, lying about the Lord.”<sup>533</sup> It seems that this Christological dispute manifested itself in rival ritual performances, something Ignatius condemns in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*: “Let no one do anything involving the church without the bishop. Let that eucharist be considered valid that occurs under the bishop or the one to whom he entrusts it...It is not permitted either to baptize or to hold a love feast [i.e., Agape meal] without the bishop.”<sup>534</sup> Likewise, in writing to the Philadelphians, Ignatius emphasizes that his readers unify in the exclusion of competing Christian factions:

Do not be deceived my brothers; no one who follows someone creating a schism will inherit the kingdom of God; anyone who thinks otherwise does not agree with the Passion. *And so be eager to celebrate just one Eucharist.* For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup that brings the unity of his blood, and one altar, as there is one bishop together with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow slaves.<sup>535</sup>

Ignatius’ contention that there be only one Eucharist likely signals divergent ritual performances among Christians in the Philadelphian community; Ignatius responds by emphasizing the unity of the flesh and blood of Jesus, perhaps indicating that the dispute stems from rival Christological interpretations. This problem seems to have also occurred among Trallian Christians:

Therefore I am urging you – not I, but the love of Jesus Christ – make use only of Christian food and abstain from a foreign plant, which is heresy. Even though such persons seem to be trustworthy, they mingle Jesus Christ with themselves, as if giving a deadly drug mixed with honeyed wine, which the unsuspecting gladly takes with evil pleasure, but then dies.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>533</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>534</sup>*Smyrn.* 8.2.

<sup>535</sup>*Phil.* 3.3-4. Emphasis mine.

<sup>536</sup>*Trall.* 6.1-2.

According to Ignatius, those who practice rival Eucharists do not actually receive the “bread of God,” which Ignatius elsewhere specifies as the “flesh of Christ,” but a potent poison which brings about their demise.<sup>537</sup>

For Ignatius, then, such Christological disputes consolidate and solidify in ritual performance: those who have a deficient Christology likewise practice a deficient Eucharist. Such a dispute seems to be at the root of issues among the Smyrnaeans, where Ignatius notes that his opponents “abstain from the Eucharist and prayer, since they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered on behalf of our sins and which the Father raised in his kindness.”<sup>538</sup> For Ignatius, these Christians’ improper practice of the Eucharist entails eschatological ramifications. Ignatius insists that the resurrection of Jesus, and thus his followers, consists of flesh and spirit.<sup>539</sup> Those who deny the fleshly nature of Jesus’ resurrection, therefore, disqualify themselves from the opportunity for resurrection at the Parousia. Ignatius maintains, “Those who dispute the gift of God perish while still arguing the point. It would be better for them to engage in Agape meals that they might also rise up [or, “be resurrected”].”<sup>540</sup> According to Ignatius, then, those who disagree with him over the Eucharist (“the gift of God”) deny their own salvation; their only opportunity for reconciliation rests in rejoining the orthodox Eucharist (or “Agape meals”). By partaking of the “flesh of Christ,” they themselves would be able to have fleshly continuity in death and resurrection. Those who

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<sup>537</sup>*Eph.* 5.2. Interestingly, the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* may likewise hint at rival Eucharists being held among parties who ascribed to divergent Christologies. In condemning heretical Christians, the *CAP* notes that “others among them endure suffering and think they will perfect the wisdom of the brotherhood that already exists, the spiritual fellowship with those united in communion, through which the wedding of incorruptibility will be revealed” (78-79).

<sup>538</sup>*Smyrn.* 7.1.

<sup>539</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.2.

<sup>540</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.1. Translation amended from Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, I.303.

practice the Eucharist apart from Ignatius' faction, however, will not gain the necessary vitality through Jesus' flesh, and will be condemned to a "bodiless" existence.<sup>541</sup> With their deficiency of flesh, such Christians will ultimately lack the requisite body for a fleshly resurrection. With no prospects for resurrection, the Ignatius' opponents face an undesirable end: "judgment is prepared even for the heavenly beings, for the glory of the angels, and for the rulers both visible and invisible, if they do not believe in the blood of Christ."<sup>542</sup> Ignatius' opponents, then, stand condemned, bereft of the opportunity for salvation due to their bodiless state.

By emphasizing this direct connection between fleshly salvation and the observance of a "flesh and spirit" Eucharist, while simultaneously condemning his opponents to the incorporeal life of a demon, Ignatius utilizes demonological rhetoric to map out a particular ritual ideology that is directly tied to "orthodox" Christological tenets. This ritual ideology materializes in the ritual bodies of Christians who participate or abstain from the Eucharist administered by Ignatius' ecclesial allies. In sum, Ignatius' demonological rhetoric and policing of Christian ritual combine to map out and constrain Christian ritual performance by creating ritual spaces where the performance of a particular ritual ideology publically inscribes the bodies of Christians as either "orthodox" or "heretical." In the letters of Ignatius, then, the imperceptible bodies of demons help make visible the bodies of Christians, and thus manifest the complex ways in which ideological discourses and ritual dispositions work in tandem to mold the contours of Christian corporeality.

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<sup>541</sup>*Smyrn. 2.*

<sup>542</sup>*Ibid, 6.1.*

## Conclusion

As explored at length here, Ignatius of Antioch and the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* present two strikingly different portrayals of the demonic body. Whereas Ignatius portrays demons as bodiless, and thus ultimately foreclosed from fleshly communion with the divine, the *CAP* depicts the demonic body as closely connected with the materiality of the lower realms, and especially with the corruptible flesh of humanity. These divergences are reflective of wide-ranging discrepancies between these two texts, as well as broader quarrels within early Christianity over the significance of the flesh and body. As demonstrated by *Smyrnaeans* and the *CAP*, some early Christian writers articulated their positions on such issues through consideration of the interconnected bodies of Christians, the risen Jesus, and demons.

This comes into particular relief in the juxtaposition of the resurrection traditions of Ignatius and the *CAP*. While both feature several common elements, such as the appearance of the risen Jesus and the mention of demonic corporeality, they exhibit widely divergent approaches to the issues of Christology, cosmology, and demonology. In such a way, then, the discrepant demonologies of Ignatius and the *CAP* mirror concomitant diversities in Christian thought of the second and third centuries. When we consider the bodies of demons closely, we encounter one of the ideological lenses through which early Christian disagreements are refracted.

As was the case in Chapter Two, however, the demonic body was not only reflective of its broader ideological context, but also propagative of particular forms of Christian corporeality. By informing the articulation of proper (and improper) modes of embodiment, the demonic body helped to generate a wider corporeal paradigm that, in turn, informed specific ritual ideologies. This is notable especially in the close intertwining between Ignatius' dual flesh-and-spirit

anthropology and his practice of the Eucharist as a ritual consumption of both Jesus' flesh and spirit. In shaping the practice of this ritual meal, and in serving as a kind of litmus test for proper Christian ritual ideologies, the anthropology of Ignatius, informed in part by his understanding of demonic bodies, came to play an important role in the public performance of Christian corporeality in Asia Minor.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Dining with Demons: Early Christian Demonologies and the Beginnings of Sacrifice

In contrast with the early Gospels' and Ignatius of Antioch's portrayal of demons as bodiless, many early Christian authors perceived the demonic body as rather corporeal – fattened, weighed down with materiality, subject to the bodily passions familiar to human experience. One of the main instances where we see the “filling out” of the demonic body is in early Christian discussions of animal sacrifice. Jesus' earliest followers, drawing on their Jewish heritage, often eschewed participation in traditional Greco-Roman sacrifice. Because of this disregard for religious custom, Christians increasingly faced charges of “atheism,” or lack of respect for the gods, from Roman intellectuals and administrators. In response, Christians crafted a rather sharp-edged critique of the “pagan” religious system: Greco-Roman traditional rites did not pay homage to the Greco-Roman pantheon, but to evil demons, who trick foolish Romans into worshipping them so that they can partake of the sacrificial fumes that succor their (pneumatic) bodies. The present chapter uses this broader Christian critique of Greco-Roman ritual, to which I will refer as the “discourse of demonic sacrifice,” in order to explore how early Christian demonologies crafted the bodies of demons, Greco-Roman traditionalists,<sup>543</sup> and Christians through particular forms of ritual ideology and praxis.

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<sup>543</sup>I use this term in part to avoid the negative connotations of “pagan,” as well to stress what I believe would have distinguished Greco-Roman practitioners from Jews, Christians, and other groups of worshippers in the Ancient Mediterranean: their attachment to local and regional traditional cults, which did not typically embrace universalizing mythologies or ideologies, but focused on the importance of local ritual performances as part of the maintenance of beneficial relationships with the gods. Christian apologetic discourses would come to group these cultic traditions under one umbrella term, “paganism,” and so obscured the local and regional variations typical of the Greco-Roman cult.

The chapter proceeds in four parts: (1) an examination of Greco-Roman animal sacrifice, with special attention to philosophical critiques of the practice, (2) an overview of the Second Temple Jewish condemnation of Gentile sacrifice as “demonic” in nature, (3) a survey of early Christian discussions of demonic sacrifice, with particular consideration of its ramifications for the corporification of demonic and human bodies, and (4) a more focused exploration of the function of the discourse of demonic sacrifice in Clement of Alexandria, an author whose surviving writings showcase a thoroughgoing interest in the involvement of demons in Greco-Roman sacrifice.

Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that early Christian writers constructed the bodies of demons, Greco-Roman traditionalists, and Christians in tandem. The demonic body, for example, emerged as gluttonous, fattened, and tethered to the lower realms of the cosmos. Because Greco-Roman traditionalists participated in demon-inspired ritual activity, their bodies likewise took on excess material heft. Christian writers contrasted the grotesque bodies of demons and “pagans” with ideal Christian corporeality – chaste, thin, and concerned with heavenly contemplation rather than material goods. This vision of the Christian body materialized in the ritual ideologies of Christian authors, who emphasized the Christian’s detachment from demonic materiality as a prerequisite for participation in Christian ritual performances. In such a way, the ancient discourse of demonic sacrifice demonstrates how the “gluttonous” demonic body, in similar ways to the “bodiless” demons explored previously, came to reflect and reproduce the constructive performance of Christian corporeality.

## Sacrifice and its Discontents in Ancient Rome

In the Greco-Roman world, one of the primary methods of establishing and maintaining a relationship with the divine realm was through the routine offering of plants and animals. Such sacrifices helped maintain a relationship of generalized reciprocity – the deferred return of goods and blessings in exchange for routine religious patronage – between gods and humans.<sup>544</sup> The ritualized slaughter of domesticated animals and the distribution of the sacrificial meat maintained a prominent place in the ancient Mediterranean, stretching as far back as the Neolithic period (ca. 8000 BCE).<sup>545</sup> In the Greco-Roman context, cattle were the most valued

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<sup>544</sup>On this, see especially Robert Parker, “Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion,” in Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford, eds., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 105-25; John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 23; idem, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), x, 95. See also Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Joseph W. Day, “Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedicatory Epigrams and Ritual,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 96 (1994), 37-74; Jan-Maarten Bremer, “The Reciprocity of Giving and Thanksgiving in Greek Worship,” in Gill et al., eds., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, 127-137; Zeba A. Crook, “General Reciprocity Among Humans and their Gods,” in idem, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 53-89. For Greco-Roman religion more broadly, see Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New York: Yale University Press, 1981); Jean Rudhart, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique* (Paris: Picard, 1992); Jan Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); John A. North, *Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jon D. Mikalson, “Greek Religion: Continuity and Change in the Hellenistic Period,” in Glenn R. Bugh, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 208-222; idem, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010); James Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); idem, “Graeco-Roman Religion in the Roman Empire: Old Assumptions and New Approaches,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 8 (2010), 240-299; Jörg Rüpke, *Religion of the Romans* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); idem, ed., *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Daniel Ogden, ed., *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); John A. North and Simon Price, eds., *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Julia Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>545</sup>Daniel Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 15. Ullucci notes that earlier scholarship placed the beginnings of animal sacrifice in the rituals of Paleolithic hunter-gatherer groups. More recent studies, however, have noted the lack of archaeological evidence for this position, and also pointed out that our earliest evidence of sacrificial victims is limited to domesticated (rather than wild) animals, which would seem to indicate that the ritual has its roots in agrarian or pastoral, rather than hunter-gatherer, groups. On sacrifice in the ancient Greco-Roman world, see Edward Kadletz, “Animal Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religion,” (Ph.D., Washington University, 1976); Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (tr. Peter Bing; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, eds., *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks* (tr. Paula Wissing; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Folkert van Straten, *Hiera Kala: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece*

sacrificial victims, though the typical animal sacrifice entailed the less-costly offering of sheep or goats.<sup>546</sup> While the ostensible purpose of sacrifice was the establishment and maintenance of favorable relations with divine entities, several scholars have noted the implication of sacrifice in broader societal issues such as kinship, gender, class, and economic status.<sup>547</sup>

Modern classics and religious studies scholarship has often understood sacrifice to be the central rite of the Greco-Roman “religious” system.<sup>548</sup> More recently, however, several scholars have begun to emphasize the relative rarity of animal sacrifice in comparison both to other (smaller-scale) offerings and the broader range of Greco-Roman religious activities.<sup>549</sup> Offerings to the gods, for example, did not primarily consist of animal meat, but often entailed libations of wine, milk, and honey, as well as offerings of grains and plant matter. Sacrifice was not the only Greco-Roman religious ritual, moreover, but stood alongside other practices, such as divination,

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(New York: Brill, 1995); Stanley K. Stowers, “Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not: Toward an Anthropology of Greek Religion,” in L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, eds., *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 293–333; George Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC–AD 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); F.S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For more on sacrifice as a scholarly category, see Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (tr. W. D. Hall; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Jonathan Z. Smith, “The Domestication of Sacrifice,” in Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 191–205; Jeffery Carter, ed., *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader* (New York: Continuum, 2003); Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); David Frankfurter, “Egyptian Religion and the Problem of the Category ‘Sacrifice,’” in Knust and Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, 106–28; Fritz Graf, “One Generation after Burkert and Girard: Where are the Great Theories?” in Christopher A. Faraone and F.S. Naiden, eds., *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 32–51.

<sup>546</sup>Ullucci, *Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, 40.

<sup>547</sup>For kinship, see especially Nancy B. Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Stowers, “Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not.”

<sup>548</sup>On this, see especially Frankfurter, “Egyptian Religion.”

<sup>549</sup>On this, see especially Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods*.

communal and individual prayer, mythic storytelling, ritual meals, dances, hymns, processions, and festivals.<sup>550</sup> This diversity of religious praxis leads David Frankfurter to conclude that “the religions of the ancient world in their local or regional contexts were about much more than sacrifice (as this term is generally conceived)...and it seems the height of simplification to put sacrifice at the center, however we define it.”<sup>551</sup>

Frankfurter is correct to emphasize the incongruity between the prominence of sacrifice in religious studies theorizations and its relative infrequency in ancient religious praxis. Nevertheless, sacrifice did at times play an outsized role in the religious lives of Greco-Roman cultic practitioners and intellectuals. James Rives points out, for example, that in the first few centuries of the Common Era “the practice of animal sacrifice was becoming invested with greater cultural significance than it had in earlier times,” a development evidenced in “the spread of large-scale civic animal sacrifices as a form of euergetism and the role played by animal sacrifice in defining the relationship between the Roman emperor and the inhabitants of the empire.”<sup>552</sup> Intensification in the importance of sacrificial practice in the early imperial period led to robust debates over its meaning and function.<sup>553</sup> These disputes built on the enduring Greco-Roman intellectual tradition of debating the nature of the gods and the rites appropriate to them. With regard to customary religious practices, most intellectual traditions took an approach

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<sup>550</sup>On the diversity of Roman religious practice, see especially Stanley Stowers, “The Religion of Plant and Animal Offerings Versus the Religion of Meanings, Essences, and Textual Mysteries,” in Knust and Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, 35-56.

<sup>551</sup>Frankfurter, “Egyptian Religion,” 86.

<sup>552</sup>James Rives, “The Theology of Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World: Origins and Developments,” in Knust and Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, 187-202 [197].

<sup>553</sup>Rives notes that the intensification of debates on this issue surfaced in part due to the rise in importance of neo-Pythagorean intellectual traditions, which emphasized abstinence from animate food and thus forced reflection on the animal sacrifice and the consumption of sacrificial meat (Ibid).

of appeasement. The Epicureans and Stoics, for example, critiqued traditional anthropomorphic depictions of the gods, but nonetheless condoned continued participation in traditional cultic rites.<sup>554</sup> Jon Mikalson argues that this conciliatory approach by intellectuals stemmed from the Greco-Roman distinction between the *theologia fabulis* (ideas regarding the gods of popular myth) and the *theologia civilis* (ideas and practices regarding the gods of local cult). When Greco-Roman intellectuals criticized the gods, they typically had in mind the gods of the poets, rather than the gods of the city.<sup>555</sup>

Nevertheless, Jörg Rüpke notes that even amidst this general spirit of religious conciliation, certain practices – including and especially animal sacrifice – were often on the receiving end of pointed critiques from Greco-Roman intellectuals.<sup>556</sup> The Peripatetic philosopher Theophrastus (4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE), for example, argued that while paying the gods proper respect was honorable, animal sacrifice should be avoided because it was expensive, ostentatious, and theologically misleading.<sup>557</sup> Satirists such as Lucian of Samosata and Oenomaus of Gadara, moreover, ridiculed traditional worship practices as nonsensical.<sup>558</sup> Intellectuals in the Orphic and Pythagorean traditions, furthermore, opposed animal sacrifice as

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<sup>554</sup>Harold W. Attridge, “The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.16.1 (1978), 45-78.

<sup>555</sup>Jon Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16-18.

<sup>556</sup>Jörg Rüpke, *Religion of the Romans* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 122-23. Rüpke points out that the representation of the divine with material images also came under attack by Greco-Roman intellectuals.

<sup>557</sup>Theophrastus, fr. 584A (FHS&G; ap. Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 2.32.3). For the fragments of Theophrastus, see W.W. Fortenbaugh, P.M. Huby, R.W. Sharples, and D. Gutas, eds., *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill; 1993 [1992]). For discussion on Theophrastus’ influence on Porphyry, see Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 64-66.

<sup>558</sup>See especially Lucian’s *A True Story* and the fragments of Oenomaus of Gadara’s *Detection of Deceivers* (ap. Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Preparation for the Gospel* 5.18-36 and 6.7).

part of a more general opposition to consumption of food from “ensouled” entities.<sup>559</sup> Many philosophers preferred less extravagant alternatives to animal sacrifice, a position reflected in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Empedocles, among others.<sup>560</sup>

As this brief survey demonstrates, sacrifice was at times a key point of dispute in Greco-Roman intellectual debates regarding religious piety, with the result that many writers construed it as outside the bounds of proper philosophical practice. Christopher Faraone and F.S. Naiden note that this is particularly true of the early imperial period, when many philosophers began to conceptualize sacrifice as “central to religious identity,” though this centralization occurred primarily as part of broader attempts to condemn traditional religious practices.<sup>561</sup> The dual centralization and negation of sacrifice by early imperial intellectuals positioned sacrifice as a synecdoche – a part for a whole – for Greco-Roman religious practice. That is, despite the prevalence of other Greco-Roman rites (e.g., festivals, prayer, oracles, divination), sacrifice

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<sup>559</sup>On Orphic opposition to sacrifice, see Plato, *Laws* 782c-d and Euripides, *Hippolytus* 952-4. For early evidence of Pythagorean opposition, see Eudoxus fr. 325 (Lasserre; ap. Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 7), Mnesimachus fr. 1 (Kassel-Austin; ap. Diogenes Laertius 8.37), Antiphanes fr. 133 (Kassel-Austin; ap. Athenaeus 4.161a); Alexis fr. 223 (Kassel-Austin; ap. Athenaeus 4161b). For discussion, see Rives, “Theology of Animal Sacrifice,” 190-191.

<sup>560</sup>See esp. Plato, *Laws* 4.716e2-717a3 and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.1163b13-18. For discussion, see Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 62-77. It is important here to note, of course, the limited impact of philosophical discourses on broader Greco-Roman religious ideology and practice. Only a very small portion from the most elite strata of society had the resources and leisure to pursue philosophical instruction, and so most Greco-Roman practitioners of cult would have pursued their rites detached from the intricate theologizing of the philosophical schools. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that those figures who are the focus of the current study (i.e., Christian writers who helped produce and maintain the discourse of demonic sacrifice) were themselves members of the upper echelons of Roman society, a fact perhaps best indicated by their advanced literacy and (as will be discussed) their familiarity with Greco-Roman philosophical traditions. In this way I follow James Rives, who notes that “the fact that these [critiques of religion] occur in a range of texts suggests that they were widespread among the educated classes, although we should be cautious in assuming that everyone accepted them without reservation” (Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 38).

<sup>561</sup>“It is only in this period, the early Common Era, that we find an ample literature that presents animal sacrifice as a distinct practice, and as central to religious identity. Yet the distinctiveness and centrality of animal sacrifice are both negative traits. Animal sacrifice is something to condemn” (Faraone and Naiden, *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice*, 5).

became the central category through which Greco-Roman intellectuals defined their relationship to the overarching Greco-Roman religious system.

This broader discourse serves as an important precedent and intellectual wellspring for early Christian discourses of demonic sacrifice.<sup>562</sup> By turning a critical eye on their own tradition, Greco-Roman intellectuals established a synecdochal, critical discourse, wherein debates and critiques of sacrifice played important roles in continuing reflections on Greco-Roman religious practice. Christian critiques of sacrifice, in turn, drew upon these critiques, even while altering the implications of such discussions by arguing that the inadequacies of animal sacrifice necessitated the *complete* abandonment of Greco-Roman traditionalist practice. Put simply, Greco-Roman philosophical traditions, despite notable differences from their Christian successors, helped provide an intellectual atmosphere in which the Christian “demonization” of animal sacrifice was comprehensible, and even, in some ways, rather familiar.

### **Ancient Judaism and the Sacrifices of the “Nations”**

Greco-Roman writings are not the only places where Christians will have encountered condemnations of “pagan” animal sacrifice. Rather, ancient Jewish writings contain many denunciations of foreign cultic rites, aimed especially at “idolatrous” and polytheistic practices. Texts from early Israelite history, for example, often contrast the idolatrous image-worship of

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<sup>562</sup>In tracing out this connection, I depart from Daniel Ullucci’s suggestion that there existed a basic dissimilarity between Greco-Roman and Christian critiques of sacrifice. Ullucci correctly notes that whereas Greco-Roman literary traditions allowed and encouraged the continuance of traditional forms of piety, Christian critiques of sacrifice outright rejected sacrificial practice altogether. Based on this, Ullucci concludes that Christians “did not take their cue from these [Greco-Roman] texts” (Ullucci, *Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, 63). I argue, by contrast, that Christians certainly drew upon Greco-Roman debates about the propriety of sacrifice, even as they fundamentally transformed those intellectual traditions for their own purposes.

competing cults with Israelite aniconic cultic traditions.<sup>563</sup> The prohibition against image-worship is buttressed by attendant bans on making sacrifices to other gods,<sup>564</sup> adopting foreign cultic customs,<sup>565</sup> mentioning the names of foreign gods,<sup>566</sup> and cultic exogamy.<sup>567</sup> The Pentateuch, moreover, requires the destruction of any images, altars, or other idolatrous ritual structures discovered in Israelite territory.<sup>568</sup> In tandem with this prohibition against idols, the Hebrew Bible contains several censures of foreign deities that, when translated into Greek as part of the Septuagint, came to be known as “demons.”<sup>569</sup> Deuteronomy condemns Jeshurun and the Israelites, for example, because “they sacrificed to demons and not to God, to gods they did not know.”<sup>570</sup> Psalm 106 (LXX 105), moreover, condemns wayward Israelites for sacrificing “their sons and their daughters to the demons.”<sup>571</sup> Isaiah describes the future desolation of “Babylon” by noting its inhabitation by demons and savage animals: “Donkey-centaurs will dwell there, and the houses will be filled with noise; there sirens will rest, and there demons will dance.”<sup>572</sup> In

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<sup>563</sup>See especially Exod 20:4-6, 32. For aniconism in Jewish cultic practice, see Exod 21-22, 34; Lev 19:4; 26:1; Deut 4:15-20, 5:813:6-18, 17:2-7, 27:15.

<sup>564</sup>Exod 22:19, 34:16.

<sup>565</sup>Lev 18:21, 20:2-5; Deut 12:30ff; 16:21.

<sup>566</sup>Exod 23:13.

<sup>567</sup>Exod 34:15-16; Deut 7:2-4.

<sup>568</sup>Exod 23:24, 34:13; Deut 7:5, 12:2.

<sup>569</sup>For more on Old Testament demonology, see Blair, *De-demonising the Old Testament*; Kitz, “Demons in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East.”

<sup>570</sup>LXX 32:17 (NETS). Here and throughout I cite the Septuagint tradition, as I am primarily interested in Jewish interpretative practices of the Hellenistic and Roman eras, when Second Temple Jewish critiques of Greco-Roman cults would have been taking shape. This interest in later material, of course, is occasioned by my ultimate concern with the ritual practices and ideology of Jesus and his earliest followers.

<sup>571</sup>LXX 105:37 (NETS).

<sup>572</sup>LXX 13:21 (NETS).

Trito-Isaiah, the prophet warns the Israelites: “But as for you who forsake me and forget my holy mountain and prepare a table for the demon and fill a mixed drink for Fortune, I will deliver you over to the dagger; all of you shall fall by slaughter.”<sup>573</sup> As seen in this sampling of passages, the Septuagint often condemns the worship of foreign deities among Israelites as a form of demonolatry. As pointed out by J.Z. Smith, such terminology construes Israelite worship of foreign gods not just as a foolish breaking of the covenant, but the perilous worship of evil spirits.<sup>574</sup>

The close identification of foreign deities with “demons” appears also in Second Temple Jewish literature. The *Book of the Watchers*, for example, claims that primordial fallen angels are the ones who led Israelites to “offer sacrifices to the demons as unto gods.”<sup>575</sup> *Pseudo-Daniel* (4Q243) likewise chastises the “children of Israel” for choosing the “presence [of other gods]” and sacrificing their children to “demons of error.”<sup>576</sup> In *Jubilees*, Noah beseeches God to rescue his people from the “demons” who are leading them astray,<sup>577</sup> while Abraham implores the Israelites not to interact with Gentiles because “their deeds are defiled, and all of their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable. They slaughter their sacrifices to the dead, *and to the demons they bow down.*”<sup>578</sup> Other Second Temple Jewish texts stress the drastic

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<sup>573</sup>LXX 65:11-12 (NETS).

<sup>574</sup>Smith, “Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers.”

<sup>575</sup>*I En.* 19:1-2. Annette Reed points out that while the Watchers’ incitement of demonic worship is not included in the original enumeration of their illicit teachings (*I En.* 6-11), it nonetheless comes to play a major role in later exegetes’ discussions of the sins of the Watchers. According to Reed, Jewish and Christian interpreters frequently interpreted *I En.* 6-11 through the lens of *I En.* 19: “Not only do they add idolatry to the list of the Watchers’ illicit teachings in *I En.* 8, but some even cite this verse [*I En.* 19:1] to underline the causal connection between the fall of the angels before the Flood and the continued activities of demons on the earth” (Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 51).

<sup>576</sup>4Q243 13.2, 4Q244 12.2.

<sup>577</sup>*Jub* 10:1-14.

<sup>578</sup>*Ibid*, 22:16-19. Emphasis mine.

consequences that have resulted from Israel's demon-inspired apostasy. *Baruch*, for example, draws a connection between Israel's worship of demons and its political downfall: "Take courage, my people, who perpetuate Israel's name! It was not for destruction that you were sold to the nations, but you were handed over to your enemies because you angered God. For you provoked the one who made you *by sacrificing to demons and not to God.*"<sup>579</sup> In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, moreover, Judah bemoans his children's idolatry: "My grief is great, my children, on account of the licentiousness and witchcraft and idolatry that you practice contrary to the kingship, following ventriloquists, omen dispensers, and demons of deceit."<sup>580</sup> Finally, the *Testament of Solomon* includes multiple demons who state their desire to "disperse among human beings again with the result that we shall be worshipped as gods."<sup>581</sup>

As seen in this brief survey, many ancient Jewish texts asserted that competing ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cults comprised the worship of impotent idols and mischievous demons.<sup>582</sup> It is from this cultic milieu that the Jesus movement of the first century emerged. As will become clear in the next section, Jesus' earliest followers perpetuated the assertion that non-Jewish cultic sacrifices were in fact dedicated to evil demons, a claim that would come to have major ramifications for the shaping and ritualization of the Christian body.

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<sup>579</sup>*Baruch* 4:5-7 (NRSV). Emphasis mine.

<sup>580</sup>*Testament of Judah* 23:1-2. All translations of the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* are from H.C. Kee, tr., "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. I.

<sup>581</sup>*Testament of Solomon* 5:2. See also *Testament of Solomon* 7:4.

<sup>582</sup>It should be noted that not all Jewish condemnations of idolatry featured the connection of foreign cult with demons. Philo, for example, routinely highlighted the foolishness of worshipping idols without implicating demons in the perpetuation of foreign worship. For Philo's stance on idolatry, see *De Decal.* 65-66, 74-76, on angels and demons, see especially *De Gigantibus* II.6-7.

## Early Christians and the Discourse of Demonic Sacrifice

Based on our early Gospel sources, Jesus and his disciples continued to observe traditional Jewish cultic practices, which presumably included participation in the Passover festival and its attendant sacrificial offering and meal.<sup>583</sup> Due to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the increasingly Gentile demographic makeup of the early churches, however, Christians largely abandoned sacrifice as a central religious rite.<sup>584</sup> Despite their discarding of Jewish sacrificial *practice*, Christians perpetuated some aspects of Jewish sacrificial *discourse*. Christians continued to condemn Greco-Roman religious practice, for example, based on its polytheistic underpinnings.

Many early Christian sources suggest that Roman citizens and administrators did not respond kindly to Christian disregard for traditional rites. The Acts of the Apostles, for example, tells of the so-called ‘Revolt of the Silversmiths,’ where artisans of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus rioted against followers of Jesus (including Paul) because their negligence of the cult of Artemis was damaging Temple finances.<sup>585</sup> Christian apologists, moreover, repeatedly claim that Romans accuse Christians of atheism based on their disdain for traditional cults. In Minucius Felix’s *Octavius*, for example, the character Caecilius, representing Greco-Roman traditionalist sensibilities, claims that Christians “despise our temples as being no more than sepulchres, they

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<sup>583</sup>See Mark 1:40-45; Luke 2:24, 17:12-14; Matt 5:17-18 for instances where Jesus (or the Gospel writer) ostensibly participates in or recommends traditional Jewish rites and Temple sacrifices. For the Passion Narratives and their connections to the Jewish Passover, see Matt 26:30–27:66; Mark 14:26–15:47; Luke 22:39–23:56; John 18:1–19:42.

<sup>584</sup>It should be noted that while the official early Christian stance was decidedly anti-sacrifice, there nonetheless seem to have been various Christian groups who saw no problem in reconciling sacrificial practice with a commitment to the Christian cult. For this, see especially 1 Cor 8-10, Rev 2, Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, Irenaeus *Against All Heresies*, and Cyprian’s *On the Lapsed*, to provide just a few examples. The heresiological nature of many of these sources, of course, cautions against presuming that they accurately reflect Christian practice.

<sup>585</sup>Acts 19:23-40.

spit after our gods, they sneer at our rites.”<sup>586</sup> According to Lactantius, furthermore, the mother of the Roman Emperor Galerius (r. 305-311) was offended because Christians in the imperial household refused to attend banquets that served meat from sacrificed animals.<sup>587</sup> These Christian writers’ depictions of Roman annoyance at Christian cultic laxity may not be far off the mark. Pliny the Younger, the Roman provincial governor of Bithynia-Pontus, complains that the influence of Christian non-participation in sacrifice led to a lack of business for local meat-markets.<sup>588</sup>

In response to these criticisms by their traditionalist neighbors, Christian intellectuals attempted to justify their lack of participation in Roman cultic practices. One rejoinder entailed the revival of the ancient Jewish motif of “demonic sacrifice” – the allegation that the sacrifices of Greco-Roman cultic systems were actually dedicated to evil demons. Among extant literature from the earliest followers of Jesus, Paul’s 1 Corinthians provides the most famous and broadly cited passage that forwards this charge. In this letter, Paul responds to the positions of the so-called “Strong” in Corinth, who apparently believed that eating meat that had been sacrificed as part of Greco-Roman cultic ceremonies was inconsequential. Paul responds by acknowledging that “idols” themselves are “nothing,”<sup>589</sup> but claims that non-Jewish sacrifices constitute demonolatry: “I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of

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<sup>586</sup>*Octavius* 8:4 (LCL, Rendall).

<sup>587</sup>Lactantius, *On the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died* 11.

<sup>588</sup>Pliny, *Letters* 10.96-97.

<sup>589</sup>1 Cor 8

demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”<sup>590</sup> By asserting that animal sacrifice includes a demonic “cup” and “table,” Paul implies that some form of demonic “dining” takes place at sacrificial ceremonies. Contemporary biblical interpreters have analyzed this passage extensively, and yet few have given due attention to its implications for understandings of the demonic body.<sup>591</sup> This is perhaps due to Paul’s own ambiguity on the issue; how exactly would demons “eat” at their table, or “drink” from their cup? Are these just metaphors for demonolatry, or do they imply some kind of “real” physical consumption?

The text of 1 Corinthians yields little to help in answering these inquiries, but later Christian exegetes would have plenty to say about demons’ receipt and consumption of sacrificial offerings. Through these later interpreters, Paul’s contention that sacrifice entails the feeding of demons became a common motif in early Christian denunciations of Greco-Roman ritual.<sup>592</sup> In what follows, I focus my discussion on five authors or texts that showcase particularly detailed discussions of demonic sacrifice and corporeality: the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* and *Acts of Thomas*, and the writings of Athenagoras of Athens, Tertullian of Carthage, and Origen of Alexandria. These works/authors provide distinctive details regarding the makeup of the demonic body, but nonetheless exhibit a common motif: the demons’ consumption of sacrificial elements has led to their bodies taking on excess corporeal heft, which, in turn, has perpetuated their entanglement with the materiality of the lower cosmic realms.

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<sup>590</sup>Ibid, 10:20-21.

<sup>591</sup>The secondary scholarship on 1 Cor 8-10, especially regarding idols and sacrifice, is extensive. For a more recent bibliographical overview, see John Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 1-48.

<sup>592</sup>We find this claim in a diverse range of Christian texts, including the Book of Revelation, Justin Martyr’s *Apologies*, Tatian’s *Address to the Greeks*, Novatian’s *On Jewish Meats*, Minucius Felix’s *Octavius*, the Christian *Sibyline Oracles*, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, among others.

We encounter the discourse of demonic sacrifice most often in writings associated with the Christian “apologetic” tradition. One of the earliest and clearest examples appears in Athenagoras of Athens’ *Embassy for the Christians*, an apologetic treatise ostensibly addressed to the Emperors Commodus and Marcus Aurelius in the 170s CE.<sup>593</sup> In similar fashion to other early Christian writers, Athenagoras explains that demons are the souls of the gigantic offspring of mortal women and fallen angels.<sup>594</sup> Since they no longer possess gigantic bodies, demons take alternative measures to quench their desire for material pleasures. This attachment to material goods reveals itself in the demonic diet, which consists primarily of “the steam and odor of sacrifices.”<sup>595</sup> The demons’ gluttonous desire leads them to “engross themselves in the blood from the sacrifices and *lick all around them*.”<sup>596</sup> Notable here is Athenagoras’ claim that demons are “engrossed” or “infatuated” (οἱ προστετηκότες) with the blood that is spilled on the altar as part of animal sacrifices, as well as his assertion that demons “lick all around” the sacrificial altars. Here Athenagoras uses the Greek participle περιλιχμόμενοι, from the verb περιλιχμάομαι (“lick up, around”).<sup>597</sup> Within Greek literature, this verb and its cognates typically refer to animals who use their tongues to lap up food or lick wounds, as well as for humans who lick dishes clean out of gluttony or hunger.<sup>598</sup> In graphic fashion, therefore, Athenagoras asserts that

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<sup>593</sup>On Athenagoras’ demonology and its connections with Graeco-Roman psychology, see Dragos-Andrei Giulea, “The Watchers’ Whispers: Athenagoras’s *Legatio* 25,1-3 and the *Book of the Watchers*,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 61.3 (2007), 258-281.

<sup>594</sup>For more on this, see Chapter Two.

<sup>595</sup>*Embassy* 27.2. All translations of the *Embassy for the Christians* are from William R. Schoedel, tr., *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

<sup>596</sup>*Ibid*, 26.1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>597</sup>Liddell-Scott s.v. περιλιχμάομαι.

<sup>598</sup>Interestingly, Claudius Aelianus’ *Characteristics of Animals* (ca. third century CE) uses the term with reference to a cultic context in Egypt, where snakes “lap up” human grain offerings: “And the Asps as at a signal assemble, creeping out from different quarters, and as they encircle the table, while the rest of their coils remain on the floor,

the recipients of Greco-Roman sacrifice are animalistic demons, rather than the heavenly gods.

David Frankfurter has noted how ancient writers often portrayed demons as hybrid, monstrous creatures:

The demonic is often imagined not only in terms of animals, but also as having an intrinsic affiliation with the animal world, often manifest in the polymorphic appearances attributed to demons: monstrous combinations of woman and horse, ass-legs and human body, wolf's head and man's torso. While presenting a horrible picture of the monstrous - the marginal, the unclassifiable, the perverse - these demons are at the same time fixed and located by reference to particular animals and therefore, tentatively, organized into the comprehensible world.<sup>599</sup>

Athenagoras builds upon this broader tradition by depicting demons as hybridized animals who, despite possessing invisible bodies, nonetheless have animalistic tongues that ravenously consume the blood of sacrifice. This depiction underscores the grotesque and gluttonous nature of the demonic body while providing an explanation for its corpulence and continued inhabitation of the lower cosmic realms.

What is more, Athenagoras contends that the demons “drag humans to the images (of the gods),”<sup>600</sup> which ultimately results in the infection of the human soul with excess materiality:

A soul experiences [corruption] especially when it attaches itself to the spirit of matter and blends with it, when it does not look up to heavenly things and their Maker but down

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they rear their heads up *and lick the food*; gently and by degrees they take their fill of the barley and eat it up” (17.5; LCL, Scholfield; emphasis mine). In a similar manner, and even more important for my purposes, Plutarch’s *Life of Pyrrhus* claims that a strange instance of cultic bovine “licking” foreshadowed a dire turn of events for the Greek general Pyrrhus: “Moreover, Pyrrhus himself had a significant portent; for the heads of his sacrificed cattle, though they already lay apart from the bodies, were seen to put out their tongues and *lick up their own gore*” (31; LCL, Perrin; emphasis mine). These two examples, drawn from authors whose *floruit* brackets the proposed dates of Athenagoras (second century CE), showcase how “licking about” was characteristic of animalistic behavior within early imperial literature. Even more striking, both passages connect this bestial “licking” with foreign cult or, in the case of Plutarch, sacrifice gone wrong. This is suggestive in excavating the textual logic of Athenagoras’ depiction of the demonic “licking up” of Greco-Roman sacrifice. By attributing this action to demons, it undermines Greco-Roman cult through its association with foreign, animalistic non-deities, and thus positions the rite as an ineffectual cultic practice mistakenly dedicated to bestial spirits.

<sup>599</sup>Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 114.

<sup>600</sup>*Embassy* 26.1.

to earthly things [i.e., “material” images and cultic statues], or, in general terms, when it becomes mere blood and flesh and is no longer pure spirit.<sup>601</sup>

Thus, the souls of Greco-Roman cultic practitioners will come to resemble the elements of their cultic system: bloody like the sacrificial offerings they perform, tied to materiality in a manner similar to the demonic beings they worship.

Tertullian of Carthage similarly implicates the demonic body in Greco-Roman cultic practices. In his *Apology*, Tertullian argues that demons trick humans into offering animal sacrifice because this rite “serves to secure for themselves [i.e., demons] their peculiar diet of smell and blood (*pabula propria nidoris et sanguinis*).”<sup>602</sup> An alternative translation for the Latin noun *nidor* is “vapor, steam.”<sup>603</sup> The term here likely refers to the smoke that results from the steaming or roasting of meat. Tertullian claims that his audience should know that demons consume this sacrificial “steam” and blood from the witness of the demons themselves: “They tell you that they are unclean spirits – as ought to have been understood even from their diet – the blood, the smoke, the stinking burnt offerings of dead beasts.”<sup>604</sup> Here we see an explicit connection between the unclean nature of the demonic body (*immundos spiritus*) and the food they consume (*sanguine et fumo et puditis rogi*), likely based on the common ancient idea that some form of “spirit” (*spiritus*) was present in both blood and smoke.

We see this connection again in Tertullian’s discussion of animal sacrifice in *On Idolatry*, where he characterizes sacrificial smoke as a *spiritus vilissimi nidoris alicuius* (“an exhalation of

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<sup>601</sup>Ibid, 27.1.

<sup>602</sup>Tertullian, *Apology* 22.6 (LCL, Glover). I have amended Glover’s translation of the *Apology* here and throughout for inclusiveness and readability.

<sup>603</sup>Lewis & Short s.v. *nidor*.

<sup>604</sup>Ibid, 23.14 (LCL, Glover).

a vile sacrificial vapor”).<sup>605</sup> Because this “vapor” or “smoke” gives the demons their necessary sustenance, Tertullian accuses Greco-Roman traditionalists of being the evil spirits’ sycophants through their “sacrificing” of Christian martyrs: “You worship [demons]...with the blood of Christians. So they would not wish to lose you, when you are so profitable, so obsequious, to them.”<sup>606</sup> Participation in demonic sacrifice, Tertullian claims, presents a grave danger to humanity, as it is through sacrifice that “the breath of demons and angels achieves the corruption of the mind in foul bursts of fury and insanity...along with every kind of delusion.”<sup>607</sup> In *On Idolatry*, Tertullian emphasizes that Christians who call on the names of Greco-Roman deities “draw to themselves the demons and every impure spirit by means of the bond brought about by consecration.”<sup>608</sup> Tertullian complains, moreover, that Christians who help manufacture idols “apply to the Lord’s body those hands which give a body to the demons,” and warns that individual demonic pollution can easily corrupt others within the community.<sup>609</sup>

Outside the apologetic tradition, we also encounter the discourse of demonic sacrifice in the *Acts of Andrew*, an early third century apocryphal text that purports to tell the travels of its title apostle.<sup>610</sup> According to the *Acts*, when Christians do not sacrifice, “The demonic nature does not have its blood-red nourishment, nor draws in the sustenance that comes from it, since

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<sup>605</sup>*On Idolatry* 6.3. All translations of *On Idolatry* are from J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. van Winden, eds., *De Idololatria* (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

<sup>606</sup>*Apology* 23.19 (LCL, Glover).

<sup>607</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>608</sup>*On Idolatry* 15.5. Cf. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 2.17, where it is stated that the demons hide in temples and attend sacrifices in order to attach themselves to people.

<sup>609</sup>*On Idolatry* 7.1-2.

<sup>610</sup>For dating of the *Acts of Andrew*, I follow Hans-Josef Klauck, “The Acts of Andrew,” in idem, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 113-140.

animals are not slain, it is weak and comes to nothing, being wholly dead. But when it has what it desires, it *becomes strong and expands and rises up, enlarged by things it delights in.*<sup>611</sup>

Notable here is the *Acts*' claim regarding demons' dependence on the consumption of sacrificial "nourishment" for its strength. When the demonic body ingests its desired ritual "meal," it gains strength and expands. When it does not, it "comes to nothing."

The *Acts of Andrew*'s depiction of the demonic diet aligns well with another apocryphal text, the third century *Acts of Thomas*.<sup>612</sup> The latter text includes an exorcism narrative where the possessing demon reveals to the apostle Thomas its preference for sacrificial offerings: "As you are refreshed by your prayer and good works and spiritual hymns, similarly I am refreshed by murder and adulteries and *sacrifices made with wine at the altars.*"<sup>613</sup> Regrettably, the *Acts* do not reveal whether demons prefer red or white wine, though they do emphasize their fervent oenophilia. Later in the *Acts*, for example, a demon protests Thomas' directive that demons discontinue demanding offerings from humans: "A difficult command you have given us<...>For those who have made...the images rejoice in them more than you, and the multitudes worship them<.>and do their will, *sacrificing to them and bringing food and libations <of> wine and water.*"<sup>614</sup> The demon here emphasizes Greco-Roman traditionalists' complicity in satiating the demonic appetite for cultic offerings, a ritual practice that aids and abets the demons'

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<sup>611</sup>*Acts of Andrew* 53. Translation from Jean-Marc Prieur and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, tr., "The Acts of Andrew," in idem and McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. II. Emphasis mine.

<sup>612</sup>Hans-Josef Klauck dates the earliest version of the *Acts of Thomas* to 220-240 CE (Klauck, "The Acts of Thomas," in idem, *Apocryphal Acts*, 141-179).

<sup>613</sup>*Acts of Thomas* 76. All translation of the *Acts of Thomas* are from Hans J.W. Drijvers, tr., "The Acts of Thomas," in Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. II. Emphasis mine.

<sup>614</sup>*Ibid*, 77. Emphasis mine. Andrew McGowan suggests that the reference here to "wine" as a libation may be a subtle condemnation of the use of wine in the Eucharist. The *Acts of Thomas* endorses the use of water as a liquid alternative to wine in Christian ritual meals, a practice typical of rigorist ascetic Christian communities (Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Christian Ritual Meals* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999], 193).

meddling in the human realm. The pious Christian, by contrast, brings about the end of demonic tyranny by eschewing sacrifice and thus robbing the demons of their necessary sustenance. The *Acts of Thomas* underscores this relationship between Christian ritual practice and the demonic body through its portrayal of Thomas' ultimate defeat of his demonic foe. After conversing with the evil spirit, Thomas declares that demons "shall now be abolished, together with their works." After this pronouncement, "suddenly the demon became invisible."<sup>615</sup> The *Acts of Thomas*, therefore, contrasts the demonic body's invigoration by Greco-Roman cultic practitioners with its complete eradication by the followers of Jesus.

Origen of Alexandria provides our final example of the connections between sacrifice and demons within early Christian literature. According to Origen, demons "greedily partake" of sacrifices in part by duping their human suppliants with "certain magical spells."<sup>616</sup> The demons' greed for sacrifice results from the fact that they "must have the nourishment of the exhalations and, consequently, are always on the lookout for the savor of burnt sacrifices, blood, and incense."<sup>617</sup> This is in part due to the nature of the demonic body, which, according to Origen, "does not resemble this gross and visible body of ours...[but is] naturally fine, and thin as if formed of air."<sup>618</sup> The "airy" body of the demons is reliant upon Greco-Roman cultic practices for its existence. If the sacrifices ceased, Origen claims, the demons would perish, since they would be "without the exhalations and nourishment considered vital to their bodies."<sup>619</sup> For the

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<sup>615</sup>Ibid. Translation adapted from Drijvers, "Acts of Thomas," 370.

<sup>616</sup>*Against Celsus* 8.64.

<sup>617</sup>*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45. All translations of the *Exhortation to Martyrdom* are from John Joseph O'Meara, tr., *Origen: Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom* (New York: Paulist Press, 1954).

<sup>618</sup>*On First Principles*, Pref. 8. For more on this passage, see Chapter One.

<sup>619</sup>*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45.

time being, however, Greco-Roman cultic practices continue to “fatten” the demonic body, such that demons are forced to abide in the “heavy atmosphere which encircles the earth.”<sup>620</sup>

According to Origen’s discussion in *Against Celsus*, these demons take sadistic delight in this smoky feast:

[The demons’] bodies, nourished by the smoke from sacrifices and by portions taken from the blood and burnt-offerings in which they delight, find in this, as it were, their heart's desire, like vicious men who do not welcome the prospect of living a pure life without their bodies, but only enjoy life in the earthly body because of its physical pleasures.<sup>621</sup>

Here Origen characterizes the demonic body by its peculiar attachment to “physical pleasures” that are associated with “earthly” corporeality. Origen warns that “dining with demons” as part of cultic meals may invite demonic cohabitation: “Things strangled, with the blood undrained – *which they say is the food of demons, who feed on its exhalations* – these the Word forbids, lest, if we were to partake of things strangled, we should feed on the food of demons, eating together with the spirits right next to us.”<sup>622</sup> Sacrificial meat and libations, in fact, remain the primary method by which Christians may eat with demons: “a person cannot feast with demons except by eating what are popularly called sacred offerings, and by drinking the wine of the libations made to the demons.”<sup>623</sup> Origen claims that this anti-sacrificial teaching is the “milk for children” (cf. 1 Cor 3:2) that is taught to Christian youth and new converts,<sup>624</sup> efforts which have resulted in Christian abstention from sacrifice and the physical wearying of demonic bodies.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>620</sup>Ibid.

<sup>621</sup>*Against Celsus* 8.5.

<sup>622</sup>Ibid, 8.30. Emphasis mine.

<sup>623</sup>Ibid, 8.31.

<sup>624</sup>*Homilies on Ezekiel* 7.10.

<sup>625</sup>*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 45. Cf. *Commentary on Matthew* 13.23.

### *Sacrificial Pneuma and Demonic Sustenance*

Despite their distinctive features, the preceding authors and writings converge in claiming that the blood and smoke of sacrifice are staples in the demonic diet.<sup>626</sup> This claim likely draws upon ancient medical and philosophical ideas regarding “pneumatic” substances. Gregory Smith points out that around the second century CE, when the Christian discourse of demonic sacrifice was taking shape, Greco-Roman intellectual traditions held that *pneuma* (“spirit”) flowed alongside blood in the veins of humans and other animals, and also constituted “airy” substances like smoke and water vapor.<sup>627</sup> Medical writers such as Galen asserted that this enlivening substance initially entered the body as regular air, but that a “complex process of refinement and elaboration within the body turned it into a substance – “psychic *pneuma*” – that was responsible for (or critical to) thought, emotion, and sensation no less than the preservation of life itself.”<sup>628</sup> Because *pneuma* contributed to psychic vitality, ancient thinkers believed that pneumatic vapors nourished other cosmic entities whose bodies consisted of *pneuma*.<sup>629</sup> According to Porphyry of Tyre’s *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, for example, Stoics held that pneumatic “exhalations” (ἀναθυμιάσεις) from the earth and its bodies of water provided sustenance for astral bodies such

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<sup>626</sup>The Greco-Roman philosopher Porphyry exhibits a position on animal sacrifice very similar to these Christian authors. On this tradition within the writings of Porphyry, see Heidi Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies*, 13-37. I have argued elsewhere that the reasons for these overlaps can be attributed to the intersecting intellectual circles between Greco-Roman philosophers (such as Porphyry) and their Christian counterparts (esp. Origen) (“Daemonic Trickery, Platonic Mimicry”).

<sup>627</sup>Gregory Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” 497.

<sup>628</sup>Ibid. For further discussion, see Gerard Verbeke, *L’évolution de la doctrine du Pneuma*, 206-19.

<sup>629</sup>As noted by Smith in his analysis of Galenic models: “According to Galen, *pneuma* is an “exhalation” from blood, while arterial blood itself is especially “fine and vaporous” and thus liable to the exhalations that nourish vital and other kinds of *pneuma*” (Smith, “How Thin is a demon?” 498 n. 75).

as the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>630</sup> Plutarch of Chaeronea similarly alleged that oracular springs emitted “prophetic ἀναθυμιάσεις” that had the ability to “inspire” the prophet’s soul.<sup>631</sup>

In several texts of the early imperial period, this process of vapor consumption comes to be associated in particular with demonic spirits.<sup>632</sup> Porphyry of Tyre, for example, thought that demons “rejoice in the ‘drink-offerings and smoking meat,’” in part because their “pneumatic part grows fat” from the inhalation of the sacrificial materials.<sup>633</sup> The demonic body, moreover, “lives on vapors and exhalations...and it draws power from the smoke that rises from blood and flesh.”<sup>634</sup> The Greek Magical Papyri (PGM) contain several spells where practitioners summon the presence of a god or demon by offering a sacrifice of “pneumatic” substance. As noted by Hans-Josef Klauck, practitioners often accomplished this task by preparing a cultic meal and “dining” with the demon:

man einen Dämon dazu bringt, daß er “mit dir speisen und schlafen wird”...Durch Opfer und Gebet läßt man den Dämon ein zur “Benutzung von Speise und Mahl und hingestelltem Gericht.” Der Geist ist, wenn er einmal kommt, in die Macht das Menschen geraten und muß für ihn Dienste verrichten.<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>630</sup>*On the Cave of the Nymphs* 11. For discussion, see Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” 498-99.

<sup>631</sup>*On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 41. For discussion, see Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” 498. Plutarch’s position here seems to build on the idea that the human soul was made of pneuma (or perhaps possessed a pneumatic vessel).

<sup>632</sup>The idea that demons feed on exhalations potentially draws upon the related concept that the Greco-Roman gods fed on the vapors of sacrifice. We can see this in the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus’ (ca. first century CE) comments that the gods are satiated by the “vapors rising up from the earth and water” (*Discourses* 18A-18B), as well as in Lucian of Samosata’s satirical quip that the gods “look off at the earth and gaze about in every direction, leaning down to see if they can see fire being lighted anywhere, or steam drifting up to them” (Lucian, *On Sacrifices* 9; LCL, Harmon).

<sup>633</sup>*On Abstinence* 2.42.3. All translations of *On Abstinence* are from Gillian Clark, tr., *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>634</sup>*Ibid.* For discussion, see Laura Nasrallah, “The Embarrassment of Blood: Early Christians and Others on Sacrifice, War, and Rational Worship,” in Knust and Várhelyi, eds., *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, 142-166 [150].

<sup>635</sup>Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1982), 157-8.

Among the instances of such “demonic meals” in the PGM, there are at least two examples where the incantation alleges that demonic beings desire the *pneuma* of a sacrificial victim. PGM XII, a spell designed to solicit the assistance of Eros for various magical tasks, instructs the reader to sacrifice seven birds. Rather than immolating the birds, as might be expected, the spell enjoins, “Do not make a burnt offering of any of these; instead, you are to take them in hand and choke them, all the while holding them up to your Eros, until each of the creatures is suffocated and their breath (*pneuma*) enters him.”<sup>636</sup> Thus Eros, a figure sometimes characterized as a “demon” in the Greco-Roman tradition, here appears as a “magical” spirit who desires pneumatic offerings.<sup>637</sup> We likewise encounter pneumatic “sacrifice” in PGM XIII, where the spell instructs the reader “to sacrifice one pigeon and leave another” so that the recipient may “take the spirit from whichever he prefers.”<sup>638</sup> The same spell enjoins the magician to sacrifice a rooster “so that the god may receive lots of spirit (*pneuma*).”<sup>639</sup> Both of these sets of instructions build on the idea that the *pneuma* is an enlivening substance, carried in both the breath and blood, which sacrificial practices release for the purposes of “feeding” demons and other divining spirits.

This broader sacrificial discourse provides an important backdrop for early Christian discussions of demonic sacrifice. Athenagoras’ depiction of demons licking up blood, Tertullian’s claim that demons desire the “blood and smoke” of sacrifice, and Origen’s comments that demons take particular “physical” pleasure in offerings where the blood has not

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<sup>636</sup>PGM XII.32-34. For discussion, see Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” 497.

<sup>637</sup>On Eros as a “demon,” see Plato, *Symposium* 202 d-e. For discussion, see Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne*, 37-52.

<sup>638</sup>XIII.371-2.

<sup>639</sup>XIII.378. For a discussion of sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri, see Sarah Iles Johnston, “Sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 344-58.

been drained are all comprehensible when contextualized within a corporeal system where the demons' pneumatic bodies take pleasure in the *pneuma* that resides in the blood of animals and the smoke of sacrifice. Additionally, the idea that the demonic body "expands" or "enlarges" due to its consumption of sacrificial vapors depends upon the widespread ancient view that demonic corporeality, while often difficult to discern with human senses, nonetheless does consist of a certain kind pneumatic substance. When the demons' considerable appetites lead them to consume too much *pneuma*, their bodies accumulate excess material heft that keeps them bound to the lower material realms. As will become clear in the ensuing section, this image of the "fattened" demonic body came to have important ramifications for the shaping of Christian corporeality in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.

### **"The Demonic Human": Clement of Alexandria, Demonic Sacrifice, and Christian Bodies**

Titus Flavius Clemens ("Clement") was born in the mid-second century (ca. 140-150 CE), perhaps in Athens or Alexandria,<sup>640</sup> purportedly to non-Christian parents. By the end of the century, Clement had settled in Alexandria, where he audited the philosophical lectures of the Christian philosopher Pantaenus,<sup>641</sup> and later pursued his own pedagogical program. Eusebius claims that Clement inherited from Pantaenus leadership of the catechetical school in

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<sup>640</sup>Eusebius' and Epiphanius' testimonies disagree. Eusebius claims that Clement was born in Athens, while Epiphanius places Clement's birth in Alexandria (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.11; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 32.6). Annewies van den Hoek argues that, based on Clement's claim to have settled in Alexandria later in life, the Athenian provenance is more likely. The ascription of Alexandria as Clement's provenance is first attested in Eusebius, and so this moniker does little in resolving Clement's place of origin (Annewies van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflection on Clement and his Alexandrian Background," *The Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990), 179-194 [179]).

<sup>641</sup>For this claim Eusebius cites a non-extant passage from Clement's *Hypotyposes*, as well as Clement's reference in his *Stromateis* to a teacher "from Egypt" among his philosophical mentors (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.11).

Alexandria, though Eusebius' apologetic *Tendenz* casts doubt on the veracity of this report.<sup>642</sup>

Recent studies have tended to place Clement's philosophical pedagogy within the context of the small, informal philosophical circles that typically centered on frequent lectures by a main instructor.<sup>643</sup> Clement left Alexandria around 202 CE, perhaps due to the threat of persecution, and settled in Palestine until his death in 215/216 CE.<sup>644</sup> Eusebius claims that Clement authored at least ten treatises,<sup>645</sup> though only seven are extant.<sup>646</sup> None of these works can be dated with precision, but Eusebius' chronology places Clement's most active period during the last decade of the second century.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>642</sup>Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.10-11, 6.5. In this I follow David Dawson, who notes that Eusebius' desire for establishing continuous lines of orthodoxy in every major Christian center leads him to insert Clement into an institutional context that does not seem to fit with the Alexandrian's own self-positioning and writing. While Clement occasionally alludes to ecclesial leadership, he never provides specifics and never indicates that his own instructional approach is taking place within such church structures (David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 219-222). For further discussion, see van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian?" 181.

<sup>643</sup>Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 219-22. Comparable instructional circles were purportedly operated by Justin Martyr and Valentinus in Rome, as well as Origen in Alexandria. On this, see Winrich A. Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project," *Vigiliae Christianae* 64.2 (2010), 160-188; Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," *Harvard Theological Review* 90.1 (1997), 59-87.

<sup>644</sup>The Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem refers to Clement as a "presbyter" when discussing Clement's assisting the bishop in transmitting a letter to the Antiochene church, though the extant fragment does not elaborate on Clement's possible roles in the Jerusalem church. For more on Clement's biography, see Elizabeth Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria's Refutation of Gnosticism* (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1977), 89-94; Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-27; Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 219-222.

<sup>645</sup>Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.13

<sup>646</sup>The seven extant works include *Exhortation to the Greeks (Protrepticus)*, *Christ the Educator (Paedagogus)*, *Miscellanies (Stromateis)*, *Excerpts from Theodotus (Excerpta ex Theodoto)*, *Extracts from the Prophets (Eclogae Propheticae)*, and *On the Rich Man Who is Saved*, as well as fragments from the non-extant *Hypotyposesis*. There is also a short piece titled *To the Newly Baptized* attributed to Clement. The non-extant treatises, mentioned either by Eusebius or Clement himself, include *On Fasting*, *On the Pascha*, *Hypotyposesis*, *On Slander*, and *Against the Judaizers*. I have excluded from discussion here the *Letter to Theodore*, purportedly discovered by Morton Smith at the Mar Saba monastery, due to the ongoing dispute over its authenticity.

<sup>647</sup>This is based on Eusebius' chronicling (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.5), where Eusebius notes that Clement ends his own chronological table in *Stromateis* 1.21 with the death of Commodus, and thus likely indicates a date of composition under Severus (r. 193-211 CE). Two of Clement's major works – the *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* – stand as the first two parts of a planned trilogy originally designed to convert, instruct, and edify Christian readers,

Clement’s rich corpus includes extensive discussion of the place of demons within the Christian cosmos.<sup>648</sup> In line with the Christian intellectuals examined earlier, Clement asserts that the so-called gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon are in fact wicked demons.<sup>649</sup> Greco-Roman practitioners, therefore, are nothing more than “demon-worshippers” (οἱ δεισιδαίμονες).<sup>650</sup> This demon-worship developed originally, Clement claims, in the deception of primordial humans by “delusive fancies” that led to the invention of false gods and institution of demonolatry.<sup>651</sup> Such specious religious practices devolved, Clement asserts, into the multi-faceted Greco-Roman religious system of his day, as evidenced especially in the festivals, statues, temples, and “great public sacrifices.”<sup>652</sup> According to Clement, the central place of sacrifice in Greco-Roman demonolatry is not incidental, but reflects the fact that demons are “allured by the sacrificial

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respectively. The planned third installment of the trilogy – the *Didaskolos* – remained unwritten, while the *Stromateis* stands uneasily in its place as an intricate collection of disparate edificatory notes intended primarily for advanced Christians (on the planned trilogy, see *Paed.* 1.3.3; for discussion see Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 183). Clement’s writings bear the imprint of the rich intellectual resources and atmosphere of Alexandria, especially in their interaction with and utilization of a vast array of literary resources, including those drawn from Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian cultural lineages (on this, see van den Hoek, “How Alexandrian?” 180).

<sup>648</sup>On Clement’s demonology, see Friedrich Andres, *Die Engel- und Dämonenlehre des Klemens von Alexandrien* (Freiburg: Herder, 1926).

<sup>649</sup>*Protrepticus* 2, 4. My translations of the *Protrepticus* follow that of G.W. Butterworth (*Clement of Alexandria*. Loeb Classical Library 92 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919]), though I amend his use of “daemon(s)” to my preferred “demon(s).” For more on this, see Chapter One. I have also updated the translation where appropriate for purposes of clarity and inclusiveness.

<sup>650</sup>*Protr.* 2. I here opt for a literal translation of “demon-worship” rather than the more usual “superstition” because of Clement’s explicit connection of οἱ δεισιδαίμονες with cultic practices dedicated to a “multitude of demons” elsewhere in the *Protrepticus* (e.g., *Protr.* 3, see note 652, below). Clement seems to be highlighting the “demonic” etymology of the Greek word for “superstition,” and so a literal translation more accurately reflects the rhetorical subtext of Clement’s discussion. On demons and “superstition” or “demon-worship,” see Martin, *Inventing Superstition*.

<sup>651</sup>*Protr.* 3.

<sup>652</sup>“We must not then be surprised that, once demon-worship (ἡ δεισιδαιμονία) had somewhere taken a beginning, it became a fountain of insensate wickedness. Then, not being checked, but ever increasing and flowing in full stream, it establishes itself as creator of a multitude of demons. It offers great public sacrifices; it holds solemn festivals; it sets up statues and builds temples. These temples...are called by a fair-sounding names, but in reality they are tombs. But I appeal to you, even at this late hour, forget demon-worship, feeling ashamed to honor tombs” (Ibid. emphasis mine).

smoke” of animal offerings.<sup>653</sup> Elsewhere in the *Protrepticus*, Clement cites Homeric literature as evidence for the fact that “the demons themselves admit this gluttony of theirs, when they say ‘Wine and odorous steam; for that we receive as our portion’ [Iliad 4.49].”<sup>654</sup> Perhaps because of the demons’ “gluttony,” their bodies have come to take on excess bulk:

How then can shadows and demons any longer be gods, when they are in reality unclean and loathsome spirits, admitted by all to be earthy and foul, *weighed down to the ground*, and “prowling round graves and tombs,” where also they dimly appear as “ghostly apparitions”?<sup>655</sup>

Clement’s depiction of the demonic body here is significant for its correlation between impurity and cosmological position – the demons’ sordid body forces them to inhabit spaces in the lower cosmos that are notable for their polluted and unclean nature (“graves and tombs”), and which also happen to be sites where they can obtain sustenance from Greco-Roman cultic offerings.<sup>656</sup> Because demons loiter around these sacrificial places and ingest the ritual residue, their bodies take on surplus material heft and thus become tethered to the lower cosmos.

### *“Demonic Humans” and the Greco-Roman Body*

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<sup>653</sup>Ibid, 2.

<sup>654</sup>Ibid. In the same chapter, Clement similarly cites Zeus’ appearance at a sacrifice as evidence for this connection: “Later on Zeus appeared [after the sacrificing of Dionysus’ limbs]; perhaps, since he was a god, because he smelled the steam of the flesh that was cooking, which your gods admit they ‘receive as their portion’ [Iliad 4.49]” (Ibid).

<sup>655</sup>Ibid, 4. Emphasis mine. Cf. *Excerpts from Theodotus* 1.14: “The demons are said to be incorporeal, not because they have no bodies (for they have even shape and are, therefore, capable of feeling punishment), but they are said to be incorporeal because, in comparison with the spiritual bodies which are saved, they are a shade.” All translations of the *Excerpts from Theodotus* are from Robert Pierce Casey, tr., *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria* (London: Christophers, 1934).

<sup>656</sup>Worship of ancestors at tombs, often conflated with and related to hero-worship, was a popular practice in Greco-Roman antiquity. For discussion, see Gunnel Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods* (Liège: Centre international d’étude de la religion grecque antique, 2002).

Clement's perpetuation of the discourse of demonic sacrifice plays a significant role not only in his articulation of *demonic* corporeality, but also in his discussion of proper and improper *human* embodiment. According to Clement, the human body is a dual entity composed of an eternal divine spirit and a mortal fleshly vessel: "This [body] is a form thrown around us from without for the purpose of our entrance into the world, that we may be able to take our place in this universal school; but hidden within dwells the Father, and His Son who died for us and rose with us."<sup>657</sup> The human body, Clement asserts, serves as the soul's "consort and ally," the vessel through which the soul directs its path toward heaven.<sup>658</sup> What is more, God designed the outer fleshly form of humans to deceive "death and the devil," such that the "inner possessions" of the soul remain invisible to humanity's wicked adversaries.<sup>659</sup> The soul's inconspicuousness, however, does not entail incorporeality:

Why even the soul is a body, for the Apostle says, "It is sown a body of soul, it is raised a body of spirit." And how can the souls which are being punished be sensible of it, if they are not bodies? Certainly he says, "Fear him who, after death, is able to cast soul and body into hell." Now that which is visible is not purged by fire, but is dissolved into dust. But, from the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man, the soul is directly shown by its possession of bodily limbs to be a body.<sup>660</sup>

For Clement, the route to proper piety lies in properly discerning the existence of these two bodies – the psychic and the fleshly – and directing one's life towards those activities that edify the former while eschewing the pleasures of the latter.

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<sup>657</sup>*On the Rich Man Who is Saved* 33 (LCL, Butterworth). On this, see also *Strom.* 5.14.94.3-4. For discussion, see Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 149.

<sup>658</sup>*Paed.* 1.13.102. For more on the theme of the interdependence of the body and soul, see *Strom.* 4.26.

<sup>659</sup>*On the Rich Man Who is Saved* 34 (LCL, Butterworth).

<sup>660</sup>*Exc. Theod.* 1.14.

Greco-Roman cultic practitioners err in performing activities, such as spectacles, sacrifices, feasts, and sexual immoralities, which service fleshly pleasures and so in turn corrupt the inner psychic body. In imitation of their demonic pantheon, therefore, Greco-Roman traditionalists' bodies come to be associated with gluttony, impurity, and materiality. Clement scolds his "pagan" audience based on their supposed attachment to material enjoyments:

"nothing else but madness has taken possession of life, when it spends itself with so much earnestness upon matter."<sup>661</sup> By entangling themselves with mundane activities, non-Christians sever the natural ties between the human body and the divine realms:

there was of old implanted in humanity a certain fellowship with heaven, which, though darkened through ignorance, yet at times leaps suddenly out of the darkness and shines forth...But opinions that are mistaken and deviate from the right...turned aside the human, the heavenly plant, from a heavenly manner of life, and stretched humans upon earth, by inducing them to give heed to things formed out of earth.<sup>662</sup>

Animal sacrifice is chief among the "ignorant" or "mistaken" customs that dims the divine splendor of the human body. Clement argues, for example, that Greco-Roman customs, including animal sacrifice, "are the slippery and harmful paths which lead away from the truth, dragging humanity down from heaven and overturning them into the pit."<sup>663</sup> By repeatedly walking such "slippery paths," Greco-Roman traditionalists invite demonic intercourse: "Why is it that...when faced by deadly and accursed demons, you do not turn aside nor avoid them, although you have already perceived...that they are plotters and human-haters and destroyers?"<sup>664</sup> What is more, Greco-Roman "ignorance" and "vain opinion" regarding these rites has "devised many forms for

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<sup>661</sup>*Protr.* 10 (LCL, Butterworth).

<sup>662</sup>*Ibid.*, 2. On humanity as a "divine plant," see Plato, *Timaeus* 90A.

<sup>663</sup>*Protr.* 2 (LCL, Butterworth).

<sup>664</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

the demons, and stamped the mark of a lasting death upon those who followed its guidance.”<sup>665</sup>

The stamp of demonic death manifests itself in the weighing down of Greco-Roman traditionalists’ divine element, as the soul within their fleshly body bloats through the ingestion of superfluous “exhalations”:

*As the exhalations which arise from the earth, and from marshes, gather into mists and cloudy masses; so the vapours of fleshly lusts bring on the soul an evil condition, scattering about the idols of pleasure before the soul. Accordingly they spread darkness over the light of intelligence, the spirit attracting the exhalations that arise from lust, and thickening the masses of the passions by persistency in pleasures...And how we say that the powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits, sow into the sinner's soul, requires no more words from me, on adducing as a witness the apostolic Barnabas...who speaks in these words: “Before we believed in God, the dwelling-place of our heart was unstable, truly a temple built with hands. For it was full of idolatry, and was a house of demons, through doing what was opposed to God.”<sup>666</sup>*

Clement builds here on the motif of sacrificial exhalations, explored previously in the writings of early Christians and early imperial philosophers, which connects the “fattening” of pneumatic bodies (e.g., demons, souls) with the consumption of pneumatic exhalations (e.g., sacrificial offerings, fleshly passions). Due to their ingestion of pneumatic “food” in a manner similar to the demons, the souls of Greco-Roman traditionalists “thicken” and so become demonic “hosts.”

### *Greco-Roman Sacrifice and Demonic Meat*

According to Clement, demons infiltrate Greco-Roman sacrifice in part through the slaughtered animal meat that comprised the rite’s ensuing feast. Clement cites Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 8-10 for support in this connection:

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<sup>665</sup>Ibid, 10. On this, cf. *Protr.* 3, where Clement sarcastically inquires, “Kindly beings to be sure the demons are...and how can the demon-worshippers help being holy in a corresponding way?” (Ibid, 3). See also *Protr.* 10, where Clement asserts that Greco-Roman traditionalists become more and more like their demonic pantheon: “as for gods that can be seen, and the motley multitude of these created things, the human who worships and consorts with them is far more wretched than the very demons themselves” (Ibid, 10).

<sup>666</sup>*To the Newly Baptized* iii.222 (Stählin) (LCL, Butterworth). Emphasis mine. Clement here cites the *Epistle of Barnabas* (16:7).

But let us turn our attention now to the food that is spoken of as ‘idol-offered,’ and to the command enjoining us to avoid it. These foods I consider a sacrilege and an abomination: from the blood of them fly ‘the shades from out of Erybus now dead’ (ὧν ἐφίπτανται τοῖς αἵμασιν ψυχαὶ ὑπὲξ ἐρέβευς νεκῶν κατατεθνειώτων).<sup>667</sup> ‘I would not have you become associates of demons,’ the Apostle says. There are two sorts of food, one ministering to salvation, and the other proper to those who perish. We should abstain from this last sort, not out of fear (for there is no power in them), but to keep our consciences pure and to show our contempt for the demons to whom they have been dedicated...But it is not right for those judged worthy of partaking of divine and spiritual food to share ‘the table of demons.’<sup>668</sup>

Following Paul, Clement here hesitates to claim that demons “physically” corrupt the meat consumed by Greco-Roman diners. Nevertheless, later in the same work Clement cites 1 Cor 5 in arguing that Christians should not associate with idolaters, either in conversation or in communal meals, “foreseeing the defilement of such contact, as with ‘the table of demons.’”<sup>669</sup> Christians can avoid this polluted “table” by abstaining from meat and wine, the two elements most closely associated with Greco-Roman sacrifice: “‘It is good...not to eat meat and not to drink wine’ [Rom. 14.21].”<sup>670</sup>

With this line of argumentation, Clement adapts a rigorous interpretation of the dangers of idol meat – demons have infected the elements of animal sacrifice to such an extent that Christians should not only avoid sacrificial feasts, but steer clear of meat (and wine) consumption altogether. If Christians join demons at their table, Clement warns, they leave themselves vulnerable to invasion by demonic spirits:

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<sup>667</sup>The reference here is to *Odyssey* 11.37, where Odysseus summons the presence of the seer Tiresias through a sacrificial offering. After Odysseus spills the blood into the sacrificial pit, the spirits of the dead are stirred “from Erybos,” the place in the Greek underworld where the recently deceased congregate (sometimes called Tartarus). The passage makes clear that the deceased spirits desire to consume the sacrificial blood, and Odysseus must use force to hold them at bay until Tiresias arrives.

<sup>668</sup>*Paed.* 2.1.8.

<sup>669</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.1.10.

<sup>670</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.1.11.

Those who hunch over overloaded tables, nourishing their own passions, are ruled by a most gluttonous demon (δαίμων καθηγείται λιχνότατος), whom I shall not be ashamed to call the “belly-demon” (κοιλιοδαίμων), [who is] the worst and most abominable of demons. As such, he absolutely resembles the one who is called the “ventriloquist-demon” (ἐγγαστριμύθω).<sup>671</sup>

Clement here constructs a taxonomy of demons who share connections to the “belly.” He warns his readers, on the one hand, of the κοιλιοδαίμων, a Greek term that typically served as a mocking insult of someone who “makes a god of their belly.”<sup>672</sup> In this instance, Clement claims that a specific kind of “belly-demon,” rather than the human stomach, is the entity that “rules” gluttonous humans.<sup>673</sup> Clement argues that this demon is even worse than the ἐγγαστριμύθος (“one who divinizes with the belly, ventriloquist”).<sup>674</sup> This term appears in LXX 1 Kings 28:5-8, where King Saul seeks the help of a “ventriloquist,” the so-called “Witch of Endor,” so that he can summon the departed spirit of Samuel and seek his advice regarding the upcoming battle with the Philistines. Much to the chagrin of later Patristic interpreters, this necromancy is successful and Samuel counsels Saul on the forthcoming battle.<sup>675</sup> Several early Christian authors, including Justin Martyr and Tertullian of Carthage, cite this passage as evidence for the

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<sup>671</sup>Ibid, 2.1.15. Translation my own.

<sup>672</sup>Liddel-Scott s.v. κοιλιοδαίμων. This term was often applied to the so-called “parasites” who show up at dinner parties uninvited because of their insatiable appetites. For a similar motif (though with slightly different terminology), cf. Paul’s comments in Philippians: “Their end is destruction; their god is the belly (ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία); and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things” (3:39, NRSV).

<sup>673</sup>For other instances of Jewish or Christian discussion of “spirits” and the stomach, see *Testament of Reuben* 3.2 and *Sentences of Sextus* 30.10-21.

<sup>674</sup>For a discussion of “ventriloquism” in late antiquity, see Robert Wiśniewski, “La consultation des possédés dans l’Antiquité tardive: pythones, engastrimythoi, et arrecticii,” *Revue d’études augustiniennes et patristiques* 51 (2005), 127-152. For a history of the use of this term for “ventriloquism” and its connection to modern “magical” entertainment, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, “From Demon Possession to Magic Show: Ventriloquism, Religion, and the Enlightenment,” *Church History* 67.2 (1998), 274-304.

<sup>675</sup>For an overview of the Patristic commentaries on this passage, see K.A.D. Smelik, “The Witch of Endor: I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis Till 800 A.D.,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 33.2 (1979), 160-79; Patricia Cox, “Origen and the Witch of Endor: Toward an Iconoclastic Typology,” *Anglican Theological Review* 66.2 (1984), 137-47.

existence of a certain type of “ventriloquist-demon” that usurps deceased human souls and, through necromantic rites, tricks living humans.<sup>676</sup> For his part, Clement posits a new kind of demon, the κοιλιοδαίμων, who, like the ἐγγαστρίμυθος, is connected with the human belly and usurps human souls. Unlike the ἐγγαστρίμυθος, the κοιλιοδαίμων attacks human souls while they are still attached to the body and uses this connection to satiate its desires for human food.

Clement concludes this discussion by contrasting the bodily states of Christians and Greco-Roman traditionalists: “It is much better to be happy (εὐδαίμονα) than to have a demon living within us.”<sup>677</sup> Greek-speakers usually understood the term εὐδαιμονία to refer to a state of happiness because it signaled that one had benefitted from the guidance of a good “spirit” or “god.” Clement retorts, however, that Christians are εὐδαιμονία because they have *avoided* “demons” and their carnivorous dietary habits, and so are not afflicted with demonic pollution. The bodies of Greco-Roman traditionalists, on the other hand, are indeed afflicted by demons, but not ones that make them “happy”!

With demons in full control of their stomach, Greco-Roman meat-eaters and gluttons will begin to take on the bodies of their demonic pantheon: fattened and tethered to the earth. In the *Paedagogus*, Clement argues that abstaining from wine and meat is good, because “eating and drinking is the occupation of animals, and *the fumes rising from them*, heavy and earth-laden, cast a shadow over the soul.”<sup>678</sup> Thus, as seen earlier with the pneumatic bodies of demons, the

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<sup>676</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 105.4-5; Tertullian of Carthage, *On the Soul* 28.

<sup>677</sup>*Paed.* 2.1.15.

<sup>678</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.1.5. Emphasis mine. See also *Paed.* 2.1.17, where Clement claims that a sparse diet paradoxically leads to better nourishment: “It is said...[that] the bodies of the young in the period of their physical maturing are able to grow because they are somewhat lacking in nourishment; the life-principle (πνεῦμα) which fosters growth is not encumbered – on the contrary, an excess of food would block the freedom of its course” (*Paed.* 2.1.17).

pneumatic vessel of the soul stands in danger of consuming too many “fumes” and thus becoming heavy and sluggish. Teresa Shaw notes that in this respect, “Clement reflects what seems to be the consensus of ancient medicine and moral philosophy: a light and dry diet is good for the soul. Heavy and moist foods and drinks, especially meat and wine, obscure and “corporify” the soul, make it heavy and dull, and lead it to evil thoughts.”<sup>679</sup>

According to Clement, the corporification of the soul manifests in the fleshly bodies of meat-eaters and gluttons, who have sacrificed “life itself for the pleasures of the belly, creeping upon their bellies, beasts that merely resemble humanity, made to the likeness of their father, the ravening beast.”<sup>680</sup> Clement here critiques the gluttons’ infatuation with material goods by equating them with no less than the originator of evil itself, the Serpent from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:14). Elsewhere, Clement similarly emphasizes the earthbound punishment of Greco-Roman traditionalists by comparing their state to “serpent-like windings” and asserting that the “enemies of the Lord shall lick the dust [Ps. 72:9],” thus calling to mind the punishment of the Serpent in Genesis.<sup>681</sup> By relegating the human body and soul to such “material” integuments, Greco-Roman traditionalists have ruined their divine element: “You sink in the earth...the incorruptible existence, and that which is stainless and holy you have buried in the tombs. Thus you have robbed the divine of its real and true being.”<sup>682</sup> For Clement, it seems, being “down to earth” was not an admirable character trait.

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<sup>679</sup>Teresa Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 51. On this, see also *Paed.* 2.2.29, where Clement asserts that the soul “should become clean and dry and lightsome,” and that “a soul that is dry is a light very wise and very noble” (*Paed.* 2.2.29). With the latter phrase, Clement quotes Musonius, *Discourses* 18A. Musonius refers to Heraclitus for his concept (cf. Heraclitus, fr. 74). For discussion on these citations, see Shaw, *Burden of the Flesh*, 51.

<sup>680</sup>*Paed.* 2.1.7 (LCL, Butterworth).

<sup>681</sup>*Protr.* 10 (LCL, Butterworth).

<sup>682</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

Ultimately, Clement asserts that those who partake in activities associated with demons will indeed become “demonic” themselves: “by choosing the same things as demons, by sinning; being unstable, and light, and fickle in their desires, like a demon, [the Greco-Roman practitioner] *becomes a demonic human*.”<sup>683</sup> Clement argues that in this way, “pagans” and demons, like two rotting corpses chained together, will experience their downfall side by side:

For the wicked, crawling wild beast makes slaves of humans by his magical arts, and torments them even until now, exacting vengeance...after the manner of barbarians, who are said to bind their captives to corpses until both rot together. Certain it is that wherever this wicked tyrant and serpent succeeds in making humans his own from their birth, he rivets them to stocks, stones, statues, and suchlike idols, by the miserable chain of demon-worship; then he takes and buries them alive, as the saying goes, until they also, humans and idols together, suffer corruption.<sup>684</sup>

In short, the traditional cultic practices of the Greco-Roman world have intermingled their practitioners with a wicked demonic pantheon that is intent on their ruin. As a result, the Greco-Roman body has taken on the qualities of the demonic – fattened, weighed down, tethered to this lower cosmos, and destined for miserable putrefaction.

In ways similar to the Christian authors surveyed earlier, therefore, Clement utilizes the discourse of demonic sacrifice to “demonize” Greco-Roman ritual and dining practices. As part of his broader goal of promoting dietary restraint among his Christian readers, however, Clement’s citation of demonic corruption comes to have a much broader scope than many of his coreligionists. In Clement’s understanding, the demonic corruption of meat is not only limited to that which has been dedicated to idols, but also extends to all foods that are consumed indiscriminately. In effect, Clement has relocated the “table of demons” from the Greco-Roman

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<sup>683</sup>*Strom.* 6.12. Emphasis mine. All translations of the *Stromateis* are amended from Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II., unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

<sup>684</sup>*Protr.* 1 (LCL, Butterworth).

temple precincts to the triclinium of Christian homes. Pious Christians, therefore, are called to avoid all gluttonous dietary activities that may occasion the infiltration of the Christian body with insidious “belly-demons.”

### *The Christian Gnostic and “True Sacrifice”*

For Clement, the avoidance of meat consumption and its attendant demonic corruption was important primarily for its role in preparing the body and soul for the pinnacle of Christian ritual practice: divine contemplation. Clement held that the ultimate goal for humans was the ascent of their soul to the divine realms and its unification with the Christian Godhead. In discussing the cleansing benefits of Christian baptism, for example, Clement argues that Christians must seek after purity so that they might “ascend to heaven.”<sup>685</sup> This ascent will entail the joining of “that which is mortal of us with the immortality of God,” a form of apotheosis which serves as the “communication of immortality.”<sup>686</sup> Elsewhere, Clement characterizes this contemplation of the divine as “uninterrupted converse and fellowship with the Lord,”<sup>687</sup> which provides a kind of “divine food” for the soul.<sup>688</sup> By consuming this contemplative “food,” the “Gnostic,” or spiritually advanced, Christian could come to view the divine in a new light:

I affirm that gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks...reaching places better than the better places, embracing the

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<sup>685</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>686</sup>*Strom.* 4.6.

<sup>687</sup>Ibid, 7.3.13. See also *Strom.* 2.80-81, 2.97-101, and 2.131-136 for additional discussions about assimilation to God (“apotheosis”).

<sup>688</sup>*Paed.* 2.1.9. Emphasis mine.

divine vision not in mirrors or by means of mirrors, but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable visions which is the privilege of intensely loving soul.<sup>689</sup>

In his *Protrepticus*, Clement claims that the human by its very nature is “made for the contemplation of heaven, and is in truth a heavenly plant,” who must therefore seek to join its “heavenly” nature (i.e., the soul) with the divine.<sup>690</sup> Ritual contemplation, then, represents not the transferal of humanity to an alien world, but the *restoration* of the human body to its original purity, free of the entanglement of the material cosmos.<sup>691</sup>

According to Clement, this psychic restoration is a key aspect of ritual practice for Gnostic Christians:

Our philosopher holds firmly to these three things: *first, contemplation; second, fulfilling the commandments; third, the formation of people of virtue. When these come together they make the Gnostic Christian. If any one of them is missing, the state of Gnostic knowledge is crippled.*<sup>692</sup>

While Clement presumably held that contemplation should be important for all Christians, he called on advanced Christians in particular to pursue this ritual practice:

If, then, “the milk” is said by the apostle to belong to the babes, and “meat” to be the food of the full-grown, milk will be understood to be catechetical instruction – the first food, as it were, of the soul. *And meat is the mystic contemplation; for this is the flesh and the blood of the Word, that is, the comprehension of the divine power and essence.*<sup>693</sup>

By positioning contemplation as the “meat” for “full-grown” Christians, Clement situates this practice as the “telos” of the Christian Gnostic.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>689</sup>*Strom.* 7.3.13.

<sup>690</sup>*Protr.* 10 (LCL, Butterworth). On the assimilation of the “divine part” of the human, see also *Strom.* 5.14.96.2.

<sup>691</sup>Itter, *Esoteric Teaching*, 149-150.

<sup>692</sup>*Strom.* 2.10.46.1. Translation from Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria*, 190. Emphasis mine.

<sup>693</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.10. Emphasis mine. Clement here quotes Ps. 34.8, reading *χριστος* rather than the LXX reading of *χρηστός*.

<sup>694</sup>Ilaria Ramelli, “*Stromateis* VII and Clement’s Hints at the Theory of Apokatastasis,” Matyas Havrda, Vit Husek, and Jana Plátová, eds., *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis: Proceedings of the Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria (Olomouc, October 21-23, 2010)* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 239-257 [243]. On this topic, see also G.W.

Clement was not alone among ancient intellectuals in viewing divine contemplation as essential to a proper philosophical (or “religious”) life. The practice goes back to Plato,<sup>695</sup> and appears in several of Clement’s immediate philosophical predecessors and successors.<sup>696</sup>

Clement places a particularly interesting twist on this ritual ideology by framing it in terms of the dichotomy between Christian and Greco-Roman “sacrifices.” According to Clement, Christian “sacrifice” entails abstraction from the body: “Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions (σώματός τε καὶ τῶν τούτου παθῶν ἀμετανόητος χωρισμός). This is the really true piety.”<sup>697</sup> The “true piety” of “abstraction from the body” comes to fruition through bodily exercises that bring about the abandonment of all sensory inputs in favor of psychic contemplation:

For the person who neither employs their eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from their other senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, practices the true philosophy. This is, then, the import of the silence of five years prescribed by Pythagoras, which he enjoined on his disciples; that, *abstracting themselves from the objects of sense, they might with the mind alone contemplate the Deity.*<sup>698</sup>

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Butterworth, “The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria,” *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 17.1 (1916), 157-169; Cuthbert Latty, “The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria: Some Further Notes,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 17.67 (1916), 257-262.

<sup>695</sup>In the *Theaetetus*, for example, Plato states, “it is impossible that evils should be done away with...for there must always be something opposed to the good; and they cannot have their place among the gods, but must inevitably hover about mortal nature and this earth. Therefore *we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like god is to become righteous and holy and wise*” (176a5-b2; LCL, Fowler; emphasis mine). See also *Phaedo* 81B-D, which contrasts the ascent of the good soul with the lingering of bad souls near the earth.

<sup>696</sup>Clement’s Alexandrian Platonic forebear Philo, for example, exhibits his support for contemplative practice in *De fuga et invention* (62). For Clement’s use of Philo, see Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis. An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*. *Vigiliae Christianae Supplement 3* (Leiden: Brill, 1988). For the reception of this idea within early imperial Platonism, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 100.

<sup>697</sup>*Strom.* 5.11.

<sup>698</sup>*Ibid.* Emphasis mine. For Clement’s ideas regarding silence and contemplation, see Raoul Mortley, “The Theme of Silence in Clement of Alexandria,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1973), 197-202.

For Clement, then, ritual contemplation involves the divestment from the body through particular ritual practices (e.g., prolonged silence), whereby the Gnostic Christian can contemplate the divine. Clement compares the separation from the fleshly limbs to the ritual dismemberment of sacrificial victims commanded in Mosaic Law:

It was from Moses that the chief of the Greeks drew these philosophical tenets. For he commands holocausts to be skinned and divided into parts. For the gnostic soul must be consecrated to the light, stripped of the integuments of matter, devoid of the frivolousness of the body and of all the passions, which are acquired through vain and lying opinions, and divested of the lusts of the flesh.<sup>699</sup>

Through this allegorical reading of Mosaic law, Clement positions Christian contemplation as a philosophical “sacrifice” that fulfills the ritual prescriptions of the Hebrew covenant.<sup>700</sup> In order to follow the appropriate sacrificial procedure, the Christian must “strip” away the bounds of matter from the Gnostic soul through analytical negation:

We shall understand the mode of purification by confession, and that of contemplation by analysis, advancing by analysis to the first notion (δι’ ἀναλύσεως ἐκ τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιούμενοι), beginning with the properties underlying it; abstracting from the body its physical properties (ἀφελόντες μὲν τοῦ σώματος τὰς φυσικὰς ποιότητας), taking away the dimension of depth, then that of breadth, and then that of length. For the point which remains is a unit, so to speak, having position; from which we abstract position, there is the conception of unity. If, then, abstracting all that belongs to bodies and things called incorporeal, we cast ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and thence advance into immensity by holiness, we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>699</sup>*Strom.* 5.11.

<sup>700</sup>Clement’s citation of Moses, whom he posits as the fountainhead for Greek philosophy, fits well within ancient Jewish and Christian claims regarding Moses’ purported philosophical influence on “Gentile” intellectuals. For more on this, see Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses: The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1995).

<sup>701</sup>*Strom.* 5.11. For other examples of “contemplation by analysis” through abstraction, see Plutarch *Plat. Quaest.* 100E-100F; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 10.259ff.; Nicomachus, *Introd. Arithm.* 2.6.7. For discussion see John Whittaker, “Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 44.1 (2010), 109-125. For discussion of this process in Clement’s work, see Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d’Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 12-25.

In this passage Clement constructs an analytical model of the *via negationis*, the progressive contemplation of the divine through the negation or denial of corporeal attributes.<sup>702</sup> For Clement, then, the “true sacrifice” of the Christian entailed the progressive “dismemberment” of the physical body in order to enable the proper “negative” contemplation of the divine.

In order to underscore the difference between this Christian “sacrifice” and its Greco-Roman counterpart, Clement returns to a theme explored previously: the portly bodies involved in the Greco-Roman ritual system. In this case, Clement highlights how Greco-Roman sacrifice entails the commingling with and consumption of “fattened” animals. We can see this especially in Clement’s discussion of swine as a particularly corpulent entity:

The divine law...disciplines us beforehand to the attainment of self-restraint (ἐγκράτειαν) by forbidding us partake of such things as are by nature fat (πίονα), as the breed of swine, which is full-fleshed (εὐσαρκότατον). For such a use is assigned to epicures. It is accordingly said that one of the philosophers, giving the etymology of [ῥῆν] (“sow”), said that it was [thus], as being fit only for slaughter (θύσιν) and killing; *for life was given to this animal for no other purpose than that it might swell in flesh* (ἔνεκα τοῦ τὰς σάρκας σφριγᾶν).<sup>703</sup>

We see here how Clement constructs a dichotomy between Greco-Roman and Christian ritual performance. Whereas Christian contemplative practices entail the divestment from the body, Greco-Roman sacrifices plunge the body into the thick materiality of the lower cosmos.<sup>704</sup> This is evident especially in the elements that constitute the rites’ respective “meals”: whereas the Gnostic Christian “feeds” on knowledge of the divine, Greco-Roman traditionalists consume the

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<sup>702</sup>As noted by John Whittaker, this contemplative practice was common among Platonic philosophers of Clement’s day, including Albinus, Celsus, Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, and Nicomachus (Whittaker, “Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology,” 112-13).

<sup>703</sup>*Strom.* 2.20.105. Emphasis mine.

<sup>704</sup>On this theme, see also *Protr.* 4, 9.

meat of an animal notable only for its “swollen” flesh. In support of this adversative construction, Clement cites Plato’s *Republic*:

Wherefore also Plato says, in the second book of the *Republic*, “*It is those that sacrifice not a sow, but some great and difficult sacrifice,*” who ought to inquire respecting God. And the apostle writes, “Christ our Passover was a sacrifice for us,” a sacrifice hard to procure in truth, the Son of God consecrated for us.<sup>705</sup>

Through a creative synthesis of Platonic and Pauline textual witnesses, therefore, Clement positions the crucifixion of Jesus as the “great and difficult sacrifice” that Plato had prescribed in his *Republic*. In imitation of this paradigmatic sacrificial ritual, Christians are called to conduct their own. But for Clement, this entails neither Greco-Roman animal sacrifice nor the ritual commemoration of Jesus’ crucifixion (e.g., through Christian Agape or Eucharist meals). Rather, Clement calls his readers “to inquire respecting God” (ζητεῖν περὶ θεοῦ) so that they might make a “great and difficult” sacrifice through divine contemplation.

Those who continue to commingle with the “materialistic” sacrifices of Greco-Roman religion, however, will only deepen their connection to the demonic:

*Who is there that flees from God to live with demons?...*But there are some who, after the manner of worms, wallow in marshes and mud, which are the streams of pleasure, and feed on profitless and senseless delights. *These are swinish men...*let us not be made slaves, nor become swinish, but as true “children of the light,” direct our gaze steadily upward towards the light, lest the Lord prove us bastards as the sun does the eagles.<sup>706</sup>

Greco-Roman corporeality is characterized, therefore, by its entwinement with entities that are engrossed in the lower material realm: worms, swine, and, most of all, demons. Christians, however, are exhorted to be “children of the light” by directing their gaze “upward,” a call that

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<sup>705</sup>*Strom.* 5.10. Emphasis mine. Clement here cites 1 Cor 5:7.

<sup>706</sup>*Protr.* 10 (LCL, Butterworth). Emphasis mine.

constructs the Christian body as a direct negation of the gross materiality of its Greco-Roman past and demonic foe.<sup>707</sup>

With Clement's comments on Christian and Greco-Roman "sacrifice," we encounter the construction of a range of bodies, both pious and impious, human and nonhuman. Clement positions Greco-Roman bodies, on the one hand, as reflections of the demonic pantheon they worship and the animals they sacrifice – fattened, weighed down to the lower cosmos, unduly concerned with material goods and pleasures. The ideal Christian body, however, is fashioned as a direct repudiation of this mode of corporeality. Looking up to the heavens, the Christian body takes up practices that eschew material goods – including abstemious diets and contemplative regimens – and so refashion the Christian body as light, buoyant, and poised for assimilation to the divine.

It is important to recognize, moreover, that the demonic body comes to shape not only the ideal *constructions* of Christian corporeality, but also its performative *materialization*. As emphasized by Clement, proper Christian corporeality entailed both correct ideas about the body and the suitable performance of Christian comportment: "It seems to me that the perfection of the Gnostic in this world is twofold: *one contemplative and epistemic, the other practical*" (τέλος γὰρ οἶμαι τοῦ γνωστικοῦ τό γε ἐνταῦθα διττόν, ἐφ' ὧν μὲν ἡ θεωρία ἡ ἐπιστημονικὴ, ἐφ' ὧν δὲ ἡ πρᾶξις).<sup>708</sup> The importance of the "practical" dimension in Clement's ritual program comes to

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<sup>707</sup>On these points, see also *Protr.* 1, 4, 10.

<sup>708</sup>*Strom.* 7.16.102. Translation and emphasis my own. For more on the "Gnostic" in Clement's writings, see Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952) and Andrew Iiter, *Esoteric Teaching*, 194-214. Kathleen Gibbons notes that one of the major "practical" expectations that Clement lays on the Gnostic is her/his' responsibility to instruct other Christians. Kathleen Gibbons, "Moses, Statesman and Philosopher: The Philosophical Background of the Ideal of Assimilating to God and the Methodology of Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* 1," *Vigiliae Christianae* 69 (2015), 157-185.

the fore in his insistence on appropriate dietary regimens and the pursuit of apotheosis through particular ritual practices (e.g., ritual silence).

Clement's emphasis on proper activities in tandem with proper philosophical orientation aligns nicely with what Pierre Hadot has called the "lived philosophies" of the ancient world. According to Hadot, ancient philosophical systems diverge from contemporary analytic philosophical disciplines by the former's coupling with integrated systems of ethics and practice.<sup>709</sup> Ancient philosophical traditions, Hadot emphasizes, stressed the importance of certain "spiritual" exercises (e.g., contemplation, diet regimens, etc.) designed to transform the outer and inner bodies so that they were most amenable to the philosophical life and its telos (which most often entailed apotheosis). Interestingly, Hadot notes how Clement's discussion of mystic contemplation is a particularly good example of the philosophical integration of psychic and practical concerns. Clement's construction of contemplation as a kind of "preparation for death," for example, parallels practices found in other Greco-Roman intellectual circles:

On retrouve [cette tradition] déjà chez Clément à Alexandrie qui comprend cet exercice de la mort dans un sens tout à fait platonicien: il faut séparer spirituellement l'âme du corps. La connaissance parfaite, la gnose, est une sorte de mort qui sépare l'âme du corps, la promet à une vie consacrée entièrement au bien et lui permet de s'appliquer à la contemplation des réalités véritables avec un esprit purifié.<sup>710</sup>

Clement's portrayal of Christian contemplative sacrifice elsewhere as "disembodied," therefore, obscures the fact that it was actually a part of a much broader corporeal program. In order to prepare the Christian body for contemplation of the divine, Christians must first rid themselves

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<sup>709</sup>Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002).

<sup>710</sup>Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 72. On these points, see also Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 125-6. For more on Clement's moral system, see Jean Dumortier, "Les idées morales de Clément d'Alexandrie dans *Le Pédagogue*," in *Mélanges de science religieuse* 11 (1954), 63-70, as well as Pierre Guilloux, "L'ascétisme de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 3 (1922), 282-300.

of the encrusted layers of demonic materiality that they had accrued in their pre-Christian past, in part by taking up the practices appropriate to the Christian body. In sum, we should see Clement's practical prescriptions and corporeal ideology not as two separate aspects of his work, but parts of a broader philosophical and practical system that emphasized the close psychosomatic integration of the Christian body.<sup>711</sup>

In this respect, Clement's philosophical program falls in line with that of many of his contemporaries. What distinguishes Clement is the important role that demons come to play in this construction. Throughout his writings, the demonic body serves Clement as shorthand for the corporeal attributes that are unbecoming of pious Christians. Through its excess engrossment in this material cosmos as well as its gluttonous consumption of sacrificial elements, the demon represents the nadir of corporeal existence. Clement calls on his Christian readers, therefore, to avoid any activities that might invite demonic corruption – including and especially animal sacrifice and the consumption of meat. If Christians succeed in doing so, they can fashion their bodies such that they are poised for contemplation of the divine, the pinnacle of ritual life for Christians.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the contours and functions of the discourse of demonic sacrifice in ancient Christian literature. Early followers of Jesus were notorious among Roman writers for eschewing Greco-Roman sacrifices and the meals that accompanied them, an avoidance that they shared with their Jewish forebears. Due to the apparent novelty of their religious practices,

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<sup>711</sup>In a similar vein, Teresa Shaw points out that Clement and other moral philosophers of his day “demonstrate the extent to which medicine and philosophy converge in the arena of ethics. Their practical advice and reflections demonstrate...that it is simply artificial and somewhat dangerous to apply modern distinctions of physiology and psychology to the ancient formulations – at least without careful definition” (Shaw, *Burden of the Flesh*, 52).

however, followers of Jesus did not enjoy the same protections afforded to their Jewish neighbors, and were thus liable to criminal prosecution. To defend their non-participation in traditional cults, Christians alleged that the gods whom Greco-Roman traditionalists propitiated with their sacrifices were in fact wicked demonic spirits. The implication of this move for early Christian demonologies was immense: unlike parallel traditions that construed the demonic body as ephemeral, Christian discussions of demonic sacrifice came to “fill out” the demonic body as heavily weighted, sinking near the earth, glutted with the fumes and blood of animal sacrifice. This served Christians well in condemning the various elements of sacrifice – blood, smoke, and animal meat all came to be viewed as “demonic food” that satiated and energized the demons as they carried out their devious agenda.

The discourse of demonic sacrifice, moreover, reflected and ritualized constructions of the human body. Demonic corporeality served as an inverse reflection, on the one hand, of ideals concerning early Christian anthropology and bodily comportment. Whereas demons are characterized by their gluttonous appetites and grotesque, fattened bodies, Christian writers exhorted their readers to abstain from gluttonous and otherwise-corrupting bodily habits so as to transform their bodies into the lightweight, thin, psychically pure vessels that could lead to heavenly ascension and salvation. Such ideologies ritualized the Christian body by informing Christian bodily habits and ritual practice. We can see this most pointedly in Clement of Alexandria’s intricate connection between ascetic dietary habits and Christian contemplative performance. Clement exhorted his readers to follow a vegetarian lifestyle, in part based on avoiding demonic corruption through idol-meat, but also due to Clement’s claim that meat-eating would re-shape the Christian body into an entity resembling the demonic – fat, heavy, and tied to this material cosmos. This issue comes to the fore in Clement’s discussion of ritual

contemplation, where he warns his readers that pollution by demons and attachment to the material realm will encumber their mystical union with the divine, and so prevent their attainment of Christian salvation.

Clement undergirds this ritual prescription by tracing out an adversative relationship between Greco-Roman ritual bodies and those of their Christian counterparts. Greco-Roman traditionalists, on the one hand, sacrifice “fattened” swine to corpulent demons and plump their own bodies with demon-infested meat. Christians sacrificed, too. But the “true sacrifice” of Christians did not entail the slaughtering of swine. It comprised the “dismembering” of the material body. The pious Christian did not offer this sacrifice to materialistic, wicked demons, but to the Christian God whose transcendent qualities could only be grasped through negation. The “food” of Christian ritual meals did not consist of demonized meat and wine, but the mystical experience of immersion in the divine.

At each turn, then, Clement’s construction of proper Christian ritual activity builds upon a repudiation of the demonic body and the material entities it infected. For Clement, therefore, the demonic body serves as both an important site of articulation for corporeal ideals as well as a significant “vessel” through which to lay out his broader ritual program. The demonic body, in sum, was not just a nuisance to the Christian body, but part of the very ideological and performative foundations that constituted its coherency.

It is in such a way that I suggest that Clement’s demonological and ethical program work in tandem to construct a broader vision of the Christian cosmos that includes a plurality of bodies that impinge upon, penetrate, and shape the Christian body, constantly informing the constructions and performances of Christian corporeality. The demonic body serves as an important point of negotiation and articulation as Clement outlines a holistic bodily repertoire

that ritualizes Christian corporeality in its repeated repudiation of demonic habits and embodiment. As such ritual procedures were enacted (or contested) among Clement's readers and fellow Christians, they will have served to shape the materialization of Christian identity as an embodied thwarting of demonic corporeality.

Viewed from this side of the third century, it is easy to dismiss Clement's integrated program of dietary habits and ritual contemplation as an aberration within Christian ritual history. It did not become the norm for Christians to eschew meat entirely, and other types of "true sacrifice," such as martyrdom and participation in the Eucharist, eclipsed Clement's preferred ritual contemplation. Nonetheless, Clement's articulation of proper ritual in terms of the opposition between proper and improper sacrifice – expressed through a particular vision of the demonic body – stands within an emergent early imperial intellectual tradition that was to have enormous ramifications for the history of the Roman and Byzantine Empires.

Beginning around the time of Clement, in the second and third centuries of the Common Era, sacrifice grew in importance as an index for Roman citizenship and loyalty to the Emperor. This becomes most obvious with the Decree of Decius in 249 CE, only a few decades after Clement's death, where the Emperor Decius required all Roman citizens to sacrifice to their local gods under the auspices of imperial regulation as a demonstration of loyalty to the Empire. An empire-wide religious regulation such as this stands in stark contrast to previous Greco-Roman sacrificial ideologies, where offerings were primarily tied to local temples and the undergirding of local kinship (rather than empire-wide loyalty). James Rives has argued that Decius' requirement "created a religious obligation between the individual and the Empire...[which] helped to weaken the old tradition of collective local cults that linked the individual with his or

her city, and put an increased emphasis on the ties between the individual and the Roman Empire.”<sup>712</sup>

This centralization of sacrificial cult intensified the ongoing debate among Roman elites over the proper contours of sacrifice (and “religious” practice more broadly). The Christian discourse of demonic sacrifice played a significant role within this dispute, and garnered consideration and occasional endorsement from certain Greco-Roman intellectuals such as Porphyry of Tyre.<sup>713</sup> In similar ways to early Christians, then, some Greco-Roman intellectuals fashioned their own philosophical and religious endeavors in terms of “rational” or “spiritual” sacrifices that diverged from the “primitive” rites of Greco-Roman traditionalists. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser has noted that this unexpected ideological alliance between Greco-Roman and Christian intellectuals played an important role in the fourth century ascent of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. According to Digeser, Constantine seized on the growing consensus among (Christian and non-Christian) Roman elites by affording imperial favor to religious and intellectual movements (such as Christianity) that favored these alternative sacrificial practices, over and against traditional Greco-Roman animal sacrifice, which lost much of its imperial support.<sup>714</sup> When viewed through the lens of the Decree of Decius and the increasing centralization of ritual in the early imperial period, Constantine’s anti-sacrifice ritual policy is significant not only in its presaging of the eventual creation of a “Christian” Empire, but also in its catalyzation of a “non-sacrificial” Empire by according imperial favor to institutions that abandoned traditional forms of sacrifice in favor of new expressions of “sacrificial” piety (e.g.,

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<sup>712</sup>James Rives, “Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), 135-154 [152].

<sup>713</sup>On this development, see my “Daemonic Trickery, Platonic Mimicry.”

<sup>714</sup>Digeser, *Threat to Public Piety*, 164-191.

martyrdom, spiritual exercises, symbolic meals, apotheosis). As entities whose purported involvement in sacrificial ritual aided in Christian and Roman intellectuals' censure of the practice, demons played an important role in shoring up the intellectual undergirding of the Roman imperial abandonment of the sacrificial cult. In this way, the bodies of demons ultimately served a variety of religious and political constituencies in articulating a vision of the ritual body that did not sacrifice, and so brought together Christian and Roman intellectuals for the creation and materialization of new Roman imperial bodies. Thus, while it may be accurate to connect the "demonization" of Greco-Roman sacrifice with its ultimate demise, it is nonetheless appropriate to note the way in which the Christian discourse of demonic sacrifice also contributed to the "beginnings" of new ritual discourses that shaped bodies in light of the spiritual "sacrifices" they owed to the gods. In this way, the evil spirits of Christian writings in this early period will have continued to have an immense impact on late antique and medieval religious practices, long after Jesus' earliest followers stepped away from the "table of demons."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Birth in the Baptismal Font, Death in the Arena: Tertullian, Demons, and the Abject Body

The surviving writings of Tertullian of Carthage display an intense and thoroughgoing interest in articulating the nature and proper performance of Christian corporeality. Born ca. 170 CE, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (“Tertullian”) was raised in the Roman colony of Colonia Concordia Iulia Carthago (“Carthage”) and served as a lay leader in his local Christian community,<sup>715</sup> which was set amidst a city that, in the words of Timothy Barnes, “could vie with Alexandria for second place after the imperial capital.”<sup>716</sup> Carthage maintained a stellar intellectual reputation and remained a cosmopolitan city well into the fourth and fifth centuries of the Common Era.<sup>717</sup> Tertullian was not born into a Christian family, but was an adult convert, and later married a Christian wife.<sup>718</sup> Despite his lay status, Tertullian produced several treatises

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<sup>715</sup>Contemporary scholars have largely dismissed the tradition that Tertullian was a Carthaginian “priest.” Tertullian’s lay status is solidified by his own self-reference as a lay person in *Exhortation to the Chastity* 7.3 and *On Monogamy* 12.2. For discussion, see T.D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 11. For additional discussion of Tertullian’s background see Cahal Daly, *Tertullian the Puritan and His Influence* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993); Eric Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); David E. Wilhite, *Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian’s Context and Identities* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

<sup>716</sup>Barnes, *Tertullian*, 67. As noted by Barnes, Carthage’s dual status as a “territory” and colonial city makes Tertullian’s relationship with it vague. It is entirely possible that Tertullian belonged only to the “territory” of Carthage, and may have been born, raised, and active in a city or town other than the colonial capital. For more on Tertullian’s remarks regarding Carthage, see Geoffrey Dunn, *Tertullian* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.

<sup>717</sup>On Carthage in late antiquity, see Anna Leone, *The End of the Pagan City: Religion, Economy and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Liliane Ennabli, *Carthage: une métropole chrétienne du IV<sup>e</sup> à la fin du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1997). For a discussion of Christianity in Carthage during the time of Tertullian, see Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

<sup>718</sup>Dunn, *Tertullian*, 4-5.

(in both Latin and Greek) that attempted to intervene in the administration and adjudication of issues in the Carthaginian Christian community.<sup>719</sup> There are thirty-two extant treatises from his pen, with proposed dates ranging from 196-212 CE,<sup>720</sup> and that cover such diverse genres as apologetic, polemic, homiletic, and personal letters. It is difficult to gauge the extent of Tertullian's influence within his local community, though his writings gained great popularity among later Christian intellectuals such as Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo.<sup>721</sup>

In contemporary scholarship, Tertullian's works have been mined for information on second and third century Christianity, especially developments regarding Trinitarian theology, ecclesiological organization, Marcionism, and the New Prophecy. More recently, the increased attention paid to the body as a cultural entity has returned Tertullian to a prominent place of interest among scholars of early Christianity. Especially prevalent topics include the body of Jesus, the resurrection of the flesh, bodily adornment, the relationship between body and soul, and issues of gender and sexuality.<sup>722</sup> In this chapter, I contribute to this broader discussion by

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<sup>719</sup>As suggested by Barnes, a plausible context for Tertullian's outspoken exhortations and instructional boldness on these topics can be found in Carthaginian Christian worship: Tertullian's description of the Christian Agape meal includes a time where members of the laity could be "called before the rest *deo canere* [lit., 'to sing/recite to God']", based on "what he knows of the Holy Scriptures, or from his own heart" (*Apology* 39.18 [LCL, Glover]). Tertullian might have found an audience for his exposition, therefore, as part of Christian weekly gatherings, which could explain his occasional composition in the style of sermons or public orations (Barnes, *Tertullian*, 117).

<sup>720</sup>*Ibid*, 58.

<sup>721</sup>Jerome (*De Vir.* 53) claims that Cyprian even refers to Tertullian as "my master," though this appellation is not found in Cyprian's extant writings. By the time of Jerome, Tertullian's works were apparently circulating among Christian readers (*Letter* 5.2). For more on Tertullian's influence, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 348-352.

<sup>722</sup> See, for example, F. Forrester Church, "Sex and Salvation in Tertullian," *Harvard Theological Review* 68 (1975), 83-101; Elizabeth Carnelley, "Tertullian and Feminism," *Theology* 92 (1989), 31-35; Lynn H. Cohick, "Virginity Unveiled: Tertullian's Veiling of Virgins and Historical Women in the First Three Centuries A.D.," *Andrew University Seminary Studies* 45.1 (2007), 19-34; Catherine Conybeare, "Tertullian on Flesh, Spirit, and Wives," in Simon Swain et al., eds., *Severan Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 430-439; Geoffrey Dunn, "Mary's Virginity In Partu and Tertullian's Anti-Docetism in De Carne Christi Reconsidered," *Journal of Theological Studies* 58 (2007), 467-484; Brad Windon, "The Seduction of Weak Men: Tertullian's Rhetorical Construction of Gender and Ancient Christian 'Heresy,'" in Penner and Stichele, *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, 457-478; Dyan Elliot, "Tertullian, the Angelic Life, and the Bride of Christ," in Lisa M. Bitel

focusing on Tertullian's construction of the human body as an entity entangled with its nonhuman counterparts, especially demonic spirits. I trace this entwining of human and nonhuman bodies through an interpretive juxtaposition of Tertullian's comments regarding Christian, Roman, and demonic bodies, especially as found in his treatises *On the Soul*, *On Baptism*, and *On the Shows*. I begin by exploring Tertullian's construction of humanity's dual flesh-and-spirit body in *On the Soul*, where he emphasizes the pervasive attachment of demonic spirits to the human soul. This demonic corruption stems, Tertullian asserts, from inadvertent participation in demonolatry via Roman religious rites. When Tertullian's anthropology is read in concert with his comments on demons in *On Baptism*, it becomes clear that he understands the Christian baptismal rite to be an essential step in removing attendant demonic spirits from the soul as part of the creation of a new, Christian body. Incorporating theoretical insights from cultural theorists Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz, I argue that the demonic body functions within Tertullian's writings as a kind of abject entity – one that is foreclosed from the Christian body and yet loiters as a threatening embodiment of those elements unbecoming of Christian corporeality. The lingering threat of the abject demon is best evidenced in Tertullian's *On the Shows*, a treatise that warns of the demonic corruption of myriad activities. Christian participation in such activities, Tertullian avers, will invite demonic commingling and the pollution of the Christian soul. The only way to ensure the purity of one's Christian corporeality, Tertullian argues, is by maintaining Christian habits in daily life and eschewing all activities infected by Roman demonolatry. In such a way, demons in Tertullian's writings function to both

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and Felice Lifshitz, eds., *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 16-33; Jennifer Glancy, "The Law of the Opened Body: Tertullian on the Nativity," *Henoch* 30.2 (2008), 267-288; Carly Daniel-Hughes, *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage: Dressing for the Resurrection* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); Benjamin Dunning, *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference, Creation, and Resurrection in Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), esp. 125-150.

reflect and reproduce Christian modes of corporeality, underscoring the blurred boundaries between human and nonhuman in the Christian cosmos.

### **Excursus: Tertullian and the New Prophecy**

Before considering Tertullian's views on the human body, it is important to attend to his notorious association with the New Prophecy movement, both as a key step in contextualizing Tertullian's broader anthropology and as a necessary methodological prolegomenon. As is made clear in several of Tertullian's writings, at some point in his career he became involved with the New Prophecy, or "Montanism."<sup>723</sup> This ecstatic prophetic movement originated in the teaching and prophecies of the prophet Montanus and two female prophetesses, Prisc(ill)a and Maximilla, during the mid-second century CE in the Phrygia region of Asia Minor.<sup>724</sup> By the time of Tertullian, the movement had spread widely across the Mediterranean, including Rome, Alexandria, Antioch of Syria, Gaul, and Carthage.<sup>725</sup> Members of the New Prophecy believed

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<sup>723</sup>The heresiological moniker "Montanism" has a rather late attestation, appearing for the first time in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) (*Catecheses illuminandorum* 18.6). Members of the movement seem to have referred to themselves simply as "the Prophecy" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.16.4; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.13).

<sup>724</sup>Antti Marjanen, "Montanism: Egalitarian Ecstatic "New Prophecy,"" in Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen, eds., *A Companion to Second-Century Christian Heretics* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 185-212 [191]. Marjanen notes that the movement remained rather popular in the second and third centuries, but began to weaken in the fourth and fifth. The New Prophecy encountered persecution under the emperor Justinian I (482-565) and under John, Bishop of Ephesus (507-589) (Ibid, 193-4). For more on the New Prophecy, see Pierre de Labriolle, *Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme: Textes Grecs, Latins, Syriaques* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913); Ronald E. Heine, *The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989); Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Sheila McGinn, "The 'Montanist' Oracles and Prophetic Theology," *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997), 128-35; William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997); idem, *Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments: Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions to Montanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Rex D. Butler, "Montanism," in idem, *The New Prophecy and "New Visions": Evidence of Montanism in The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2011), 9-43.

<sup>725</sup>Marjanen, "Montanism," 191-2.

that the Holy Spirit, or Paraclete, was inundating contemporary Christian communities with spiritual prophecies, many of which called Christians to lead a more stringent ethical life in anticipation of the world's imminent end. The New Prophecy was most famous for its championing of ecstatic prophecy, a practice that Tertullian himself valued highly. Tertullian held that prophecy helped gradually reveal divine ordinances for proper Christian behavior, as he lays out in *On the Veiling of Virgins*: "When the Lord sent the Paraclete [it was] in order that, as human inferiority was not able to grasp all things at once, teaching may be guided and arranged and brought to perfection gradually by that substitute of the Lord, the Holy Spirit."<sup>726</sup>

In addition to his valuation of ecstatic prophecy for ethical edification, there are other indications within Tertullian's writings that he maintained a strong connection with the New Prophecy. Several times he quotes prophecies that stemmed from New Prophecy circles,<sup>727</sup> and three times explicitly quotes Prisca, one of the movement's founding prophetesses (see above).<sup>728</sup> Tertullian refers explicitly to Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla in his treatise *Against Praxeas*, where he criticizes his opponent Praxeas for influencing the Bishop of Rome to revoke the admission of the New Prophecy into Eucharistic fellowship with the Roman church.<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>726</sup>*On the Veiling of Virgins* 1.4 All translations of *On Veiling* adapted from Dunn, *Tertullian*, unless otherwise noted. Anne Jensen notes that Tertullian "differentiates between the teaching of faith (*regula fidei*), which is immutable, and the ecclesiastical regulation of the conduct of life (*disciplina*), which under the influence of God's grace experiences progressive improvement" (Anne Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996], 144-145).

<sup>727</sup>See, for example, *On Modesty* 21.7 and *On Flight in Persecution* 9.4.

<sup>728</sup>*On Modesty* 21.7; *Exhortation to Chastity* 10.5; *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 11.1. Besides these positive citations of Prisca, Tertullian also approvingly cites a prophetess within his own community regarding the nature of the soul (*On the Soul* 9; see discussion below).

<sup>729</sup>*Against Praxeas* 1.

Beginning with Jerome in the fourth century, biographers of Tertullian have assumed that his association with the New Prophecy entailed a split from the mainstream (“Catholic”) church. Within contemporary scholarship, this presumed dissociation has often been mapped onto Tertullian’s literary oeuvre, as scholars have debated whether works belong to Tertullian’s orthodox “pre-Montanist” or schismatic “Montanist” periods.<sup>730</sup> More recently, however, scholars have tended to treat Tertullian's brand of the New Prophecy as a development *within* broader church structures, either as an ‘ecclesiola’ or simply as part of a wider wave of support for ecstatic utterances in the church at large.<sup>731</sup> Laura Nasrallah argues, for example, that while Tertullian was clearly associated with the New Prophecy, this does not necessarily mean “that he converted or that he understood himself...to be anything other than a true Christian, attentive to God's revelation. Rather, the New Prophecy was one of many forms of Christianity available in Carthage at his time.”<sup>732</sup> William Tabbernee likewise contends that “despite the traditional view to the contrary, there is no evidence that Tertullian, or anyone else for that matter, left the official church in Carthage to join a Montanist group in that city. In fact there is nothing to suggest that such a separate Montanist congregation existed in Carthage during [the early third century].”<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>730</sup>See, for example, the chronological schemas produced in Barnes, *Tertullian*, and Jean Claude Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique* (Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1972). Besides his association with the New Prophecy, there are some other indications in Tertullian’s writings that he at some point distanced himself from other Christians, especially in his recurring critique of “psychic” Christians. Scholars today, however, are less likely to see this as a full-scale separation from the “mainstream” church, and more as a pointed critique of Tertullian’s individual opponents. The writings typically included in his “Montanist” phase include *Against Marcion*, *Against Valentinus*, *On the Soul*, *The Soldier’s Crown*, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, *On Flight in Persecution*, *Exhortation to Chastity*, *On Modesty*, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, *On Fasting*, *Against Praxeas*, *To Scapula*, and *On Monogamy* (Trevett, *Montanism*, 72-3).

<sup>731</sup>On Tertullian belonging to an ecclesiola within the larger ecclesia, see Douglas Powell, “Tertullianists and Cataphrygians,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 29 (1975), 33-54.

<sup>732</sup>Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 100.

<sup>733</sup>Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia*, 54-55.

The fluidity between the New Prophecy movement and “orthodox” Christian communities surfaces most clearly in Tertullian's own dispute with Praxeas. The fact that the Bishop of Rome was, prior to Praxeas’ contestation, willing to admit the movement into full communion highlights how the New Prophets were not that far removed from the communities that would later condemn them as heretics. Because of this reassessment of the boundaries between the New Prophecy and other Christian groups, scholars have largely moved away from assuming that Tertullian's association with the New Prophecy entailed a split from the mainstream church. This reexamination, in turn, has brought about the dismantling of the pre/post-Montanist bifurcation of Tertullian’s literature and career.

Most significant for my purposes, this new approach has led to a reappraisal of Tertullian's views on the nature and proper performance of the body. M.C. Steenberg, for example, points to the relative consistency in matters regarding human corporeality: “the anthropological convictions of Tertullian's later works in fact bear little categorical difference than those of his earliest writings.”<sup>734</sup> Benjamin Dunning likewise notes the stability of Tertullian’s anthropological stances (vis-à-vis issues of gender and sexuality), and so calls for a more integrated methodological approach:

[A]lthough Tertullian's views undoubtedly shifted in certain ways during the course of his literary career, important lines of continuity can be charted throughout. Consequently, it seems necessary to situate his understanding of sexual difference within the arc of his theological anthropology as a whole (and across the full spectrum of his extant writings), rather than relying too heavily on a division between the pre- and post-Montanist Tertullian.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>734</sup>M.C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (London: T&T Clark Bloomsbury, 2009), 58.

<sup>735</sup>Dunning, *Specters of Paul*, 126.

Building on the work of Steenberg and Dunning, my analysis of Tertullian situates his understandings of Christian and demonic bodies within the larger “arc” of his views on corporeality as part of an effort to forward a more holistic and integrative reading of Tertullian’s demonology, anthropology, and somatology. In doing so, I do not focus on classifying Tertullian’s writings with reference to the New Prophecy, but examine them as part of broader discourses that posited the entanglement of human and nonhuman bodies.

### **Carthaginian Christians and the Abject Demon**

This chapter argues that in constructing the demonic as the expelled remainder of the Christian body, Tertullian attributes to demons a form of “abject” corporeality. In reading Tertullian’s demonology through the lens of abjectivity, I signal my interest in utilizing recent theoretical approaches to cultural constructions of the human body as avenues through which to explore the interconnection between demonic and human corporeality in Tertullian’s writings. The English adjective “abject” is most commonly defined as “very bad or severe,” “feeling or showing shame,” or “sunk to or existing in a low state or condition.”<sup>736</sup> Earlier English usage, however, often made use of abject to describe things that had been “cast off” or “rejected,” based in part on the term’s semantic roots in the Latin participle *abjectus*, from the verb *abicere/abjicere* (“to cast away/off, to throw away/down”).<sup>737</sup> It is in this latter sense that cultural theorists have used abject as an analytical category, often in reference to those elements of human nature, identity, or experience that are “cast away” or “excluded.” In contemporary

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<sup>736</sup>Merriam-Webster s.v. abject. *Merriam-Webster.com*. Web. 12 March 2016.

<sup>737</sup>Lewis & Short s.v. *abicio*

scholarship, abject has been popularized by the work of Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian-French philosopher and psychoanalyst whose work *Powers of Horror* uses abject to signal those elements of human experience that are excluded as part of the formation of human psychological subjectivity.<sup>738</sup> While Kristeva's approach has been influential, its heavy reliance on Lacanian psychoanalytic frameworks tempers its utility for scholars, such as myself, whose work resides primarily outside the bounds of modern psychoanalytic theory. For the purposes of this exploration, then, my use of abject builds on the work of Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz, two theorists whose use of abject functions primarily to discern the constructive and destructive processes of socio-cultural constructions of the body, where the abject signifies those elements or entities that are excluded from these corporeal systems.<sup>739</sup>

Judith Butler adapts the notion of the “abject body” to draw attention to those bodily activities and performances that are excluded by dominant socio-cultural corporeal ideologies, with a special focus on issues of gender, sex, and sexuality. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler considers how cultural systems construct certain types of bodies, and how regimes of knowledge, as part of these inherently selective and partial processes, “produce...a domain of unintelligible,

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<sup>738</sup>Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (tr. Leon S. Roudiez; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Kristeva builds her theory of the abject primarily on Lacanian theories of psychosexual development. According to Kristeva, human infants first perceive their own individual subjectivity as part of an exclusionary process, whereby they distinguish their “self” and body as distinct from other persons and objects. This separation begins with the infant’s distinguishing between themselves and their mother, and further develops through the rejection and expulsion of certain bodily drives so as to formulate a coherent and contained bodily identity. The abject, then, stems from the “immemorial violence” of “casting off” certain bodily drives in order to create the subject, whereby “the body became separated from another body in order to be” (9-10).

<sup>739</sup>It should be noted that while the notion of abjection has been popularized by Kristeva, it was first utilized for socio-cultural analysis in the (posthumously-published) writings of Georges Bataille. There, the French philosopher argues that socio-political systems construct their coherency through the inevitable expulsion and exclusion of certain unwanted elements, which Bataille identifies as the “abject” members of society. Bataille focuses especially on economic forces of abjection, whereby affluent segments of society demean the menial labor that they exploit, and so render as abject the bodies of lower class citizens. Bataille builds his theory of abjection in part on Sigmund Freud's discussion of the formation of civilization through the repression of libidinal impulses. For discussion, see Rina Arya, *Abjection and Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 66-72.

abject, unlivable bodies.”<sup>740</sup> According to Butler, the construction of subject and abject bodies is simultaneous and coextensive:

This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet “subject,” but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those “unlivable” and “uninhabitable” zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the “unlivable” is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which – and by virtue of which – the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life.<sup>741</sup>

The formation of the subject is evident especially in normative codes of sex, gender, and sexuality, though these codes obscure the process of repudiation without which they could not emerge.<sup>742</sup>

In *Undoing Gender*, Butler develops the notion of abjection further in order to interrogate processes of “humanization” and “dehumanization” whereby certain definitions of humanity are constructed and excluded as part of normative corporeal discourses. Butler emphasizes that the category of human “has been crafted and consolidated over time,” and that there are “power differentials embedded” in this construction,<sup>743</sup> a point that alerts us to the tenuous and exclusionary nature of the most foundational category of humanistic study. The power of such differentials emerges most clearly in the identities and bodies that are excluded from the realm of humanity: “[f]or the human to be human, it must relate to what is nonhuman, to what is outside itself but continuous with itself by virtue of an interimplication in life. This relation to what is

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<sup>740</sup>Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, x.

<sup>741</sup>Ibid, xiii.

<sup>742</sup>Ibid.

<sup>743</sup>Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13.

not itself constitutes the human being in its livingness, so that the human exceeds its boundary in the very effort to establish them.”<sup>744</sup> Butler’s sustained attention to the nonhuman through the lens of abjectivity highlights the productive way in which theories of abjection can aid in theorizing the role of nonhuman entities, such as demons, in cultural constructions of human subjectivity.

Because of the “interimplication” of subject and object bodies, those elements that are excluded as part of constructive processes often threaten the subject with reintegration, and, thus, bodily dissolution.<sup>745</sup> In discussing Kristeva’s notion of the abject, gender theorist Elizabeth Grosz notes, “what is excluded can never be fully obliterated but hovers at the borders of our existence, threatening the apparently unsettled unity of the subject with disruption and possible dissolution.”<sup>746</sup> Because of this, the abject “attests to the impossibility of clear borders, lines of demarcation or divisions between the proper and improper, the clean and the unclean, order and disorder.”<sup>747</sup> Grosz goes on to note that the threat of the abject resides in its possession of parts of the subject – it is parts of “our self” that ultimately horrify and threaten the subject with the recognition of “our” fragmented corporeality:

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<sup>744</sup>Ibid, 12.

<sup>745</sup>This element of abjectivity occurs in the work of both Georges Bataille and Julia Kristeva. According to Bataille, this act of exclusion and degradation is always tenuous; the abject elements of society always threaten the (upper-class) “subject” with disequilibrium and disorder, and so render the constructed system unstable: “Stable homogenous systems are always under the threat of disequilibrium because of heterological forces that disrupt the balance” (Arya, *Abjection and Representation*, 72; cf. Georges Bataille, *Œuvres Complètes* [Paris: Gallimard, 1970], II.217). For Kristeva, likewise, the abject “is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it – on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger” (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 9-10). Because of this, Kristeva characterizes the abject as that which “does not respect borders, positions, rules” and so “disturbs identity, system, order” (Ibid, 4).

<sup>746</sup>Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989), 71.

<sup>747</sup>Ibid, 73.

Detachable, separable parts of the body – urine, feces, saliva, sperm, blood, vomit, hair, nails, skin – retain something of the cathexis and value of a body part even when they are separated from the body. There is still something of the subject bound up with them – which is why they are objects of disgust, loathing, and repulsion as well as envy and desire. They remain (peripheral, removable) parts of the body image, magically linked to the body.<sup>748</sup>

Judith Butler likewise notes the threat of the abject, referring to it as “the excluded and illegible domain that haunts the former domain as the spectre of its own impossibility, the very limit to intelligibility, its constitutive outside.”<sup>749</sup> The abject haunts, Butler claims, because it threatens “to expose the self-grounding presumptions” of human subjectivity by reminding the subject of those aspects of itself that were repudiated and yet remain.<sup>750</sup> The abject, therefore, disturbs the “limits” of human subjectivity, and is “found where the reproducibility of the conditions is not secure, the site where conditions are contingent, transformable.”<sup>751</sup>

In response to this contingency of corporeal solidity, constructive discourses fortify bodily boundaries through the prescription of certain bodily performances. These performative rituals function to solidify the corporeal coherency of the subject and reinforce the exclusion of the abject.<sup>752</sup> Judith Butler argues that constructions of the body achieve their “naturalized effect” through “reiterative or ritual practice,” and yet “gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm [i.e.,

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<sup>748</sup>Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>749</sup>Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, x.

<sup>750</sup>Ibid, xiii.

<sup>751</sup>Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 27.

<sup>752</sup>Rina Arya notes that for Bataille, “religious rituals and other social practices imposed sanctions forbidding the abject and keeping its destructive powers away from society and the individual” (Arya, *Abjection and Representation*, 76).

the “abject”].<sup>753</sup> These rituals, then, are part of “the process of sedimentation” or “materialization” of the body that Butler sees as the effect of power that reenacts the formative construction of normative subjectivity.<sup>754</sup> This normative construal of the body, Butler claims, is “institutionalized as a form of differential treatment” that works against the abject, and yet it is this excluded remainder that constitutes the boundary of the subject: “It is the inhuman, the beyond the human, the less than human, the border that secures the human in its ostensible reality.”<sup>755</sup> In this way, then, the abject remains in the “shadowy regions of ontology,” a reminder of the “violent and unspeakable underside” of the asymmetric construction of human embodiment.<sup>756</sup>

The attention paid to the boundaries of human subjectivity by Butler and Grosz attest to the utility of the abject in explicating the simultaneous contingency and resiliency of cultural constructions of human corporeality. The concept of abjectivity can aid in better appreciating the “outside,” “excluded,” or “inhuman” aspects of this constructive process, and lead to the formulation of questions that aid in excavating the destructive “underside” and “constitutive instability” of cultural systems of corporeality. What is left out in our constructions of the human body? What bodies are not counted as intelligibly human in such frameworks? How do such bodies challenge the coherency of the subject? The abject calls us to attend to the “inhuman” bodies that populate the cosmos of humanity – whether “real” or “imagined” – and consider how such bodies speak to the unstable boundaries of their human counterparts.

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<sup>753</sup>Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, xix.

<sup>754</sup>*Ibid*, xxiii.

<sup>755</sup>Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 30.

<sup>756</sup>Irene Costera Meijer and Baukje Prins, “How Bodies Come to Matter: An Interview with Judith Butler,” *Signs* 23.2 (1998), 275-286 [277, 284].

*Early Christian Studies, the Abject, and Tertullian*

Several recent studies have demonstrated the fruitful ways in which the abject can be utilized for reading early Christian texts. Manuel Villalobos Mendoza, for example, has used the concept of abjectivity to explore depictions of Jesus' and his followers' bodies in the Gospel of Mark, noting how such bodies often go against prevailing Roman constructions of corporeality.<sup>757</sup> Virginia Burrus has likewise examined the valorization of the abject in depictions of Christian saints; the narration of abject bodily practices and deformities came to underscore the Christian articulation of extreme piety, and so served to reorient Christian corporeal norms.<sup>758</sup> As a final example, Judith Perkins has argued that early Christians went against Roman judicial standards by affirming the universal and enduring value of the flesh; in doing so, Christians affirmed (rather than rejected) the abject corporeality of the human body and countered Roman cultural customs that demeaned and punished the lower-class bodies of Roman society.<sup>759</sup> One of the important figures in Perkins' exploration is Tertullian, who, according to Perkins, affirmed the value of abject fleshly experience as part of his defense of bodily resurrection.<sup>760</sup>

A common thread in the studies of Mendoza, Burrus, and Perkins is their use of abject as a way to explore how Christians championed bodily attributes that were typically excluded from

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<sup>757</sup>Manuel Villalobos Mendoza, *Abject Bodies in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012).

<sup>758</sup>Virginia Burrus, *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and other Abject Subjects* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>759</sup>Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>760</sup>*Ibid*, 103-4. In Perkins' analysis, Tertullian takes this position against Christians, like Marcion, who devalued the salvific value of the human flesh.

broader Roman cultural norms. The present work diverges from these studies by shifting attention away from Christian valorization of *Roman* abjectivity, and toward the making of *Christian* modes of abjectivity. In doing so, I place emphasis on Christian constructive practices that not only altered Roman norms, but formulated new Christian standards that invariably entailed the asymmetric creation of subject and abject bodies. Toward this end, the present examination scrutinizes the creation of both the Christian body and those “inhuman” and “non-Christian” modes of corporeality that were excluded as part of its making. By contrast with Perkins, therefore, my reading of abjectivity in Tertullian will not look primarily at what Tertullian *includes*. Rather, in keeping with the emphases of Butler and Grosz, I turn my attention to the corporeal attributes that Tertullian construes as absolutely outside of proper human corporeality, those constitutive border zones of the human body that are cast off and excluded in the creation of normative subjectivity.

In turning to Tertullian's writings, one need not look far for epitomes of abject embodiment. Throughout Tertullian's oeuvre, demons represent the nadir of corporeality, possessing bodies characterized by their excess heft, insatiable sexual appetites, and miserable restraint to the lower dregs of the cosmos. The most insidious activity of the demonic body, however, is its penchant for invading the human soul. According to Tertullian, such demonic inhabitation is endemic to the human condition, and can only be cured through the therapeutic waters of Christian baptism. By definition, therefore, Tertullian understands the demonic body to be the “excluded” aspect of Christian corporeality, an invasive body that Christians must “cast off” as part of their abandonment of their former Roman “selves” and taking up of new Christian bodies. This expulsion remains tenuous, however, and so the demon lingers as a permeating presence in the Carthaginian cityscape. In his treatise *On the Shows* (among others), Tertullian

implores his readers to maintain a strict regimen of bodily practices that will protect them from the (re-)invasion of the demonic body and so keep intact their Christian corporeality. These interrelated elements of the demonic body – its exemplification of improper bodily practices, ritual expulsion from the Christian body, and continued haunting of the Christian cosmos – demonstrate how Tertullian's demons function as “abject” bodies in his constructions of Christian (and non-Christian) corporeality.

### **Of Clay and Breath: The Body and Soul in the Writings of Tertullian**

Tertullian defines the human subject, in the words of Karen King, as a “dyadic being composed of body and soul in unified relation.”<sup>761</sup> In his dual treatises *On the Flesh of Christ* and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Tertullian counters negative views of the flesh by some of his contemporaries (e.g., Roman philosophers, Valentinian Christians) by insisting on its salvific value and close connection to the soul.<sup>762</sup> In *On the Flesh of Christ*, for example, Tertullian compares human flesh to the earthen clay out of which it was made at God's creation:

[The flesh] certainly testifies its own origin from the two elements of earth and water, - from the former by its flesh, from the latter by its blood...Consider the respective qualities, - of the muscles as clumps; of the bones as stones; the mammillary glands as a kind of pebbles. Look upon the close junctions of the nerves as propagations of roots, and the branching courses of the veins as winding rivulets, and the soft hair (which covers us) as moss, and the hair as grass, and the very treasures of marrow within our bones as ores of flesh.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>761</sup>King, “Prophetic Power and Women’s Authority,” 24. Here King cites *On Fasting* 1.1.

<sup>762</sup>According to Tertullian, such intellectuals launch “an invective against the flesh” (*Resurrection of the Flesh* 4). All translations of *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* adapted from Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

<sup>763</sup>*On the Flesh of Christ* 9. All translations of *On the Flesh of Christ* adapted from Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

Through this creative series of visual metaphors, Tertullian reminds his readers of the earthen origins of the human flesh, which, according to Tertullian, was combined with the “breath” or “spirit” of God in order to form the human body:

Remember, too, that the human is properly called flesh, which had a prior occupation in humanity’s designation: “And God formed the human in the clay of the ground.” He now became human, who was hitherto clay. “And he breathed upon his face the breath of life, and man (that is, the clay) became a living soul; and God placed the human whom He had formed in the garden.” *So that the human was clay at first, and only afterwards fully human.* I wish to impress this on your attention, with a view to your knowing, that whatever God has at all purposes or promised to humanity, is due not to the soul simply, but to the flesh also; if not arising out of any community in their origin, yet at all events by the privilege possessed by the latter in its name.<sup>764</sup>

Note here how Tertullian insists that “whole human” only comes into existence in the combination of the earthen flesh and spiritual “breath” of God. The human body, therefore, is defined by its dual composition of flesh and soul.

Tertullian emphasizes that these two aspects of human corporeality are intricately connected and therefore barely distinguishable: “So intimate is the union (of flesh and soul), that it may be deemed to be uncertain whether the flesh bears about the soul, or the soul the flesh; or whether the flesh acts as the *apparitor* to the soul, or the soul to the flesh.”<sup>765</sup> The corporeal

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<sup>764</sup>*Resurrection of the Flesh* 5. Emphasis mine.

<sup>765</sup>*Resurrection of the Flesh* 7. For additional evidence of the interconnection between the flesh and soul, Tertullian turns to the soul’s experience of sensory inputs: “For what enjoyment of nature is there, what produce of the world, what relish of the elements, which is not imparted to the soul by means of the body? How can it be otherwise? Is it not by its means that the soul is supported by the entire apparatus of the senses – the sight, the hearing, the taste, the smell, the touch? Is it not by means that it has a sprinkling of the divine power, there being nothing which it does not effect by its faculty of speech, even when it is only tacitly indicated? And speech is the result of a fleshly organ. The arts come through the flesh; through the flesh also effect is given to the mind’s pursuits and powers; all work, too, and business and office of life, are accomplished by the flesh” (Ibid). Tertullian stresses that even so-called cognitive acts, such as thoughts, should not be seen as taking place apart from the flesh. Rather, “the soul alone is so far from conducting (the affairs of life), that we do not withdraw from community with the flesh even our thoughts, however isolated they be, however unprecipitated into act by means of the flesh; since whatever is done in man’s heart is done by the soul in the flesh, and with the flesh, and through the flesh” (Ibid, 15). Through this arrangement, the soul is linked directly with the body’s outward senses; there is nothing which pertains to the outward body which does not impact the soul, and vice versa. Tertullian explicates this position further in his *On the Flesh of Christ*, where he states that “the soul, in my opinion, is sensual. Nothing, therefore, pertaining to the soul is unconnected with sense, nothing pertaining to sense is unconnected with the soul. And if I may use the expression for the sake of

entanglement of the psychic and fleshly body stems, Tertullian claims, from their shared genesis at both the primordial creation of humanity and the individual conception of each human:

In this usual function of the sexes which brings together the male and female in their common intercourse, we know that both the soul and the flesh discharge a duty together: the soul supplies desire, the flesh contributes the gratification of it; the soul furnishes the instigation, the flesh affords the realization. The entire man (*toto homine*) being excited by the one effort of both natures, his seminal substance is discharged, deriving its fluidity from the body, and its warmth from the soul (*habens ex corporali substantia humorem, ex animali calorem*)... This, then, must be the soul-producing seed, which arises at once from the out-drip of the soul, just as that fluid is the body-producing seed which proceeds from the drainage of the flesh.<sup>766</sup>

Tertullian connects human procreation, therefore, with the purported dual nature of the male orgasm; as the male sexual partner is aroused in both flesh and spirit, so also his discharged semen consists of both fleshly and psychic aspects that constitute the body of the nascent human embryo.<sup>767</sup> In an odd moment of interpretive juxtaposition, Tertullian argues that the male orgasm parallels God's molding of the human body in creation:

Adam's flesh was formed of clay. Now what is clay but an excellent moisture (*liquor opimus*), whence should spring the generating fluid? From the breath (*afflatus*) of God first came the soul... Forasmuch, therefore, as these two different and separate substances, the clay and the breath, combined at the first creation in forming the individual human, they then both amalgamated and mixed their proper seminal rudiments in one, and ever afterwards communicated to the human race the normal mode of its propagation, so that even now the two substances, although diverse from each other, flow forth simultaneously in a united channel; and finding their way together into their appointed

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emphasis, I would say, "Animae anima sensus est" – "sense is the soul's very soul" ( *On the Flesh of Christ* 12). The sensory experience of the human body, therefore, serves as witness to the close interconnection of the soul and flesh - both are implicated in the everyday experience of humanity, and neither can be separated from the other in experiencing the body's activities and thoughts.

<sup>766</sup>*On the Soul* 27. All translations of *On the Soul* adapted from Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

<sup>767</sup>Carly Daniel-Hughes points out that the close interconnection between flesh and body in Tertullian's anthropological schema "reflects how deeply Tertullian was informed by Stoic materialism. In contrast to Platonists who more starkly distinguished soul and body as belonging to opposed categories of immaterial and material, Stoics conceived of the human person, or self, as an entity comprised of both soul and body knitted intimately together" (Daniel-Hughes, "'Wear the Armor of Your Shame!': Debating Veiling and the Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 39.2 [2010], 179-201 [182]). For the close entanglement of the flesh and spirit in Tertullian's writings, see *On the Soul* 36, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 7-8, 41, 43, 54-55.

seed-plot, they fertilize with their combined vigour the human fruit out of their respective natures.<sup>768</sup>

According to Benjamin Dunning, Tertullian here “links the wet quality (*liquor opimus*) of clay (*limus*) to the sticky fluidity of semen's bodily substance and the force of God's breath (*afflatus*) to its soul-endowed heat.”<sup>769</sup> Through both the flesh and vital soul of the male semen, therefore, the human embryo finds its “seed-plot” in the female partner. Tertullian here reveals his ascription to the ancient “one-seed” theory of procreation, whereby male semen unilaterally provides the procreative elements while the female womb serves as the fertile “soil” for the embryo’s nourishment and growth.<sup>770</sup> In adapting this procreative model, Tertullian provides an androcentric “biological” foundation for the creation and perpetuation of humanity, tracing the genesis of humanity’s flesh-and-spirit body entirely to male procreative activity. By positing a male deity as the fountainhead of this physiological perpetuation, Tertullian inscribes the androcentric, biblical cosmogonic myth onto the contours of the human body.

The intricate “knitting” of soul and flesh, therefore, reflects the role of the male body as the creative power par excellence, both in divine and mortal procreative acts. The coextensive nature of the soul and body, moreover, stems from the breath of God pervading its fleshly vessel:

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<sup>768</sup>*On the Soul* 27.

<sup>769</sup>Dunning, *Specters of Paul*, 132.

<sup>770</sup>In building on the one-seed theory of procreation, Tertullian follows the Aristotelian intellectual tradition, over and against the Galenic and Hippocratic traditions, which typically ascribed to the “two-seed” theory (both male and female partners contributing seed). Tertullian diverges from Aristotle, nonetheless, in arguing that both the fleshly and psychic parts of the human body come from the male partner. Aristotle had argued, by contrast, that the flesh came from the female partner and the soul from the male (Aristotle, *Gen. An.* 2.740b9-11). For discussion of ancient theories of procreation, see Lynda Lange, “Woman Is Not a Rational Animal: On Aristotle’s Biology of Reproduction,” in Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel, 1983), 1-15; Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Helen King, “Making a Man: Becoming Human in Early Greek Medicine,” in Gordon R. Dunstan, ed., *The Human Embryo: Aristotle and the Arabic and European Traditions* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), 10-19; Ann Ellis Hanson, “Conception, Gestation, and the Origin of Female Nature,” *Helios* 19 (1992), 31-71.

For only carefully consider, after God hath breathed upon the face of the first human the breath of life, and the first human had consequently become a living soul, surely that breath must have passed through the face at once into the interior structure, and have spread itself through out all the spaces of the body; and as soon as by the divine inspiration it had become condensed, it must have impressed itself on each internal feature, which the condensation had filled in, and so have been, as it were, congealed in shape. Hence, *by this densifying process, there arose a fixing of the soul's corporeity*; and by the impression its figure was formed and molded. *This is the inner human, different from the outer, but yet one in the twofold condition*. It, too, has eyes and ears of its own...it has, moreover all the other members of the body by the help of which it effects all processes of thinking and all activities in dreams.<sup>771</sup>

The pervading of the soul through the fleshly body underscores the thoroughgoing interconnection between flesh and spirit. In this close entwining of soul and flesh, furthermore, the human body is designed to serve as the ideal instrument for worshipping the (male) deity who fashioned its substance:

And since the soul is, in consequence of its salvation, chosen to the service of God, it is the flesh which actually renders it capable of such service. The flesh, indeed, is washed, in order that the soul may be cleansed; the flesh is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is signed (with the cross), that the soul too may be fortified; the flesh is shadowed with the imposition of hands, that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may fatten on its God.<sup>772</sup>

Carly Daniel-Hughes notes that Tertullian's enmeshment of soul and flesh in this manner positions the human body and its senses as essential parts of Tertullian's construction of proper Christian life: "what is striking for considering Tertullian's understanding of the fleshly body in regard to this epistemology is that he grants the bodily senses a privileged access to the soul, by indicating that the senses deliver information directly to it."<sup>773</sup> Tertullian's ethical prescriptions for proper Christian living often highlight this flesh/soul exchange; he argues that improper

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<sup>771</sup>*On the Soul* 9. Emphasis mine.

<sup>772</sup>*Resurrection of the Flesh* 8.

<sup>773</sup>Daniel-Hughes, *Salvation of the Flesh*, 39.

activities performed in the flesh will have deleterious effects on the soul, and that, vice versa, inward sinfulness cannot help but eventually become manifest in the Christian's fleshly affect.<sup>774</sup> Because of this close interconnection in all human activities, both the flesh and the soul will be "co-heirs" of eternal reward or punishment.<sup>775</sup>

The enduring entangling of flesh and spirit within the human body has major implications for Tertullian's understanding of the soul. We see this especially in his wide-ranging treatise on the nature of the human soul, appropriately titled *On the Soul*. This treatise entails a complex, multi-layered attempt to demonstrate the simple and uncompounded nature of the soul, a position Tertullian takes against Platonic Christians (i.e., Valentinians) who often viewed the soul as consisting of multiple interconnected parts.<sup>776</sup> Toward the end of the treatise, Tertullian summarizes his definition of the soul:

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<sup>774</sup>As noted by Daniel-Hughes, this element of Tertullian's anthropology links up nicely with contemporary Roman moralist discourses, which often correlated outward beauty and appropriate conduct with proper inward disposition (Daniel-Hughes, *Salvation of the Flesh*, 99). Such assumptions often informed ancient practices of physiognomy; for more on this issue in the Roman world, see Tamryn S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); George Boys-Stones, "Physiognomy and Ancient Psychological Theory," in Simon Swain, ed., *Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19-124.

<sup>775</sup>*Resurrection of the Flesh* 7. See, for example, Tertullian's discussion of the endurance of the flesh: "We maintain, moreover, that what has been abolished in Christ is not *carnem peccati*, "sinful flesh," but *peccatum carnis*, "sin in the flesh," -- not the material thing, but its condition; not the substance, but its flaw (*culpam*)" (*On the Flesh of Christ* 16). For discussion, see Dunning, *Specters of Paul*, 133.

<sup>776</sup>Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 96. While *On the Soul* is a self-contained treatise in its own right, it also stands as Tertullian's second volume in a threefold set of treatises devoted to thwarting opponents with whom he sparred regarding the nature of the soul. The first treatise in this series is *Against Hermogenes* and the last is *On the Testimony of the Soul*, which is non-extant. For more on this, see Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 113. Tertullian portrays *On the Soul* as a "common sense" treatise which presents a "testimony of truth" regarding the nature of the soul, free of the convoluted intellectual frills of philosophical speculation. Tertullian claims, for example, that "most conclusions are suggested . . . by that *common intelligence* wherewith God has been pleased to endow the soul of man" (*On the Soul* 2, emphasis mine). Despite Tertullian's styling of *On the Soul* as "common wisdom," he nonetheless relies heavily on Roman medical and philosophical ideas, especially Stoic philosophical concepts and ideas drawn from Soranus' synonymous treatise *On the Soul*. For additional discussion on this issue, see Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 107.

The soul, then, we define to be sprung from the breath of God, immortal, *possessing body*, having form, simple in its substance, intelligent in its own nature, developing in power in various ways, free in its determinations, subject to be changes of accident, in its faculties mutable, rational, supreme, endued with an instinct of presentiment, evolved out of one (archetypal soul).<sup>777</sup>

For the purposes of the present inquiry, the most important aspect of this definition lies in its emphasis on the soul's corporeality. This point is essential for Tertullian's broader anthropology, in that it allows for an intimate connection between flesh and soul. Alongside other ancient thinkers, Tertullian classified cosmic denizens into two types of beings – corporeal and incorporeal. The categorization of entities into either of these camps is important in that corporeal entities intermingled exclusively with other corporeal entities, incorporeals solely with other incorporeals. Since Tertullian naturally held that the human body was an embodied organism, he needed to explain how the body could have relations with the soul, an entity whose invisibility implied incorporeality. Tertullian dedicates extensive space in *On the Soul* to resolving this issue, primarily by establishing and defining the corporeal nature of the soul. According to Tertullian, the soul's body consisted of an invisible, subtle, "spiritual" (i.e., pneumatic)<sup>778</sup> material substance that was "set in the mold" of the outer visible body.<sup>779</sup>

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<sup>777</sup>*On the Soul* 22. Emphasis mine.

<sup>778</sup>For the concept of "pneumatic" corporeality, see Chapters One and Four.

<sup>779</sup>*On the Soul* 9. Tertullian provides several details as to the soul's corporeal nature. Tertullian points, for example, to characteristics that the soul purportedly shares with other "bodies"; namely, finite length, breadth, and height: "the more usual characteristics of a body...belong also the soul - such as form and limitation; and that triad of dimensions - I mean length, and breadth, and height - by which philosophers gauge all bodies" (Ibid). Tertullian claims that the soul even possesses a particular color: "Since, then, the soul is a corporeal substance, no doubt it possesses qualities such as those which we have just mentioned, amongst them the property of colour, which is inherent in every bodily substance. Now what colour would you attribute to the soul but an ethereal transparent one? Not that its substance is actually the ether or air...nor transparent light...Since, however, everything which is very attenuated and transparent bears a strong resemblance to the air, such would be the case with the soul, since in its material nature it is wind and breath, (or spirit); whence it is that the belief of its corporeal quality is endangered, in consequence of the extreme tenuity and subtlety of its essence" (Ibid). With this line of argumentation Tertullian transforms what would normally be cited as evidence for the soul's incorporeality (invisibility) into evidence for a material nature; in short, the soul's "ethereal" nature is in fact its "color," and therefore evidence for its possession of corporeal properties. For additional discussion on these points, see Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, 77.

Tertullian cites evidence from a wide array of sources on this point, drawing on the writings of the Roman physician Soranus, the views of Stoic philosophers, and the visions of a local prophetess.<sup>780</sup> One of the major pieces of evidence that Tertullian cites for the soul's corporeality is its "sympathy" with the fleshly body:

The soul certainly sympathizes with the body, and shares in its pain, whenever it is injured by bruises, and wounds, and sores: the body, too, suffers with the soul, and is united with it (whenever it is afflicted with anxiety, distress, or love) in the loss of vigor which its companion sustains, whose shame and fear it testifies by its own blushes and paleness. The soul, therefore, is (proved to be) corporeal from this intercommunion of susceptibility.<sup>781</sup>

According to Tertullian, therefore, the inter-communication of the soul and body explains their shared experiences and provides proof for the corporeal nature of the soul.<sup>782</sup>

Tertullian acknowledges that while the soul possesses a certain kind of corporeality, it is different from the materiality of the fleshly body. He notes, for example, that the soul's body remains invisible to the "fleshly" senses,<sup>783</sup> and can only be apprehended by other "spiritual" entities. Tertullian claims that visions of the soul have occurred to humans, for example, who have temporarily experienced spiritual ecstasy.<sup>784</sup> Such spiritual testimony, in fact, lies at the root

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<sup>780</sup>For a discussion of Tertullian's variegated source tradition, see Karen King, "Prophetic Power," 24. For the connections between Tertullian and the physicians Soranus and Arius, see H. Karpp, "Sorans vier Bucher Peri psyches and Tertullians Schrift De anima," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 33 (1934), 31-47.

<sup>781</sup>*On the Soul* 5.

<sup>782</sup>The physicality of the soul, Tertullian continues, is necessary for the appropriate punishing of humans after their death, since "whatever amount of punishment or refreshment the soul tastes in Hades, in its prison or lodging, in the fire or in Abraham's bosom, it gives proof thereby of its own corporeality. For an incorporeal thing suffers nothing, not having that which makes it capable of suffering; else, if it has such capacity, it must be a bodily substance. For in as far as every corporeal thing is capable of suffering, in so far as that which is capable of suffering also corporeal" (Ibid, 7).

<sup>783</sup>Ibid, 8.

<sup>784</sup>Tertullian points to the example of John of Patmos, for example, who was able to see the souls of martyrs during the visionary experience which inspired his writing of the Book of Revelation (*On the Soul* 8).

of Tertullian's characterization of the soul; in *On the Soul*, he claims that much of his information comes from the witness of a female prophetess in his congregation who experienced a vision of the soul.<sup>785</sup> In relating her prophecy to Tertullian and other coreligionists, the prophetess claims that she saw a soul in human form:

Amongst other things...there has been shown to me a soul in bodily shape, and a spirit has been in the habit of appearing to me; not, however, a void and empty illusion, but such as would offer itself to be even grasped by the hand, soft and transparent and of an ethereal color, and in form resembling that of a human being in every respect.<sup>786</sup>

The appearance of a corporeal soul to the prophetess, therefore, undergirds much of Tertullian's discussion, especially regarding the soul's corporeality and coextensiveness with the outward human form, all of which accentuate Tertullian's overall point that the soul is not "a void and empty illusion."

The ability of the soul to "sympathize" with other bodies, as in the case of the disembodied soul's appearance to the prophetess, reveals an aspect of Tertullian's anthropology that carried ambivalent ramifications for the Carthaginian Christian community. On the one hand, the soul's potential interaction with other corporeal entities enabled important Christian practices, such as ecstatic prophecy, divinatory dreams, and the edification of the soul through fleshly practices. On the other hand, the corporeality of the soul meant that it could also interact with embodied entities that were hostile to the Christian cause. Of utmost danger to the human soul were evil demons, the minions of Satan and offspring of fallen angels who shared with the soul a "pneumatic" corporeality. As will become clear, Tertullian held that demons' subtle

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<sup>785</sup>Laura Nasrallah notes that Tertullian's citation of sense perception for knowledge regarding the soul is part of a larger emphasis within Stoic intellectual circles on empirical observations as the proper route for locating knowledge and medical cures. For discussion, see Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 108.

<sup>786</sup>*On the Soul* 9. The prophetess' comments regarding the soul's "ethereal color" form the basis for Tertullian's claim that the soul possesses a particular hue, as discussed previously.

bodies enable them to carry out covert attacks on human souls, imperceptibly infiltrating their human hosts and causing psychic harm. Such an attack would not merely entail impairment of humanity's psychic aspect. Rather, as traced at length thus far, the soul was intricately entwined with its fleshly vessel, and so the demonic infiltration of the soul would have ineludibly occasioned the corruption of the flesh to which it was attached. A demonic soul, in effect, entailed a demonic body.

### **The Soul and Demons**

Throughout Tertullian's writings, the Carthaginian layman continually reminds his audience of the dire dangers that demons pose to the human body. In *On the Soul*, Tertullian explains that there are three types of demonic spirits that can attack and attach themselves to humans: katabolic (spirits that cause fits), pythonic (spirits of divination), and paredral (attendant spirits).<sup>787</sup> Paredral demons specialize in attaching to the substance of the human soul. Tertullian cites the famous example of Socrates as evidence for this type of spirit: "On this principle of early possession it was Socrates, while yet a boy, was found by the spirit of the demon. Thus, too, is it that to all persons of their genii are assigned, which is only another name for demons."<sup>788</sup> Here Tertullian deftly combines two widely accepted Roman cultural traditions – the possession of Socrates by a (benevolent) "demon" and Romans by individual "genii" – and reads them through the lens of Christian demonology to argue that every human is indeed liable to pollution by an attendant (evil) demon.

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<sup>787</sup>*On the Soul* 28. Cf. Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 131 for discussion.

<sup>788</sup>*On the Soul* 39.

According to Tertullian, this demonic infiltration of the human body begins through the invocation of Roman deities as part of Roman parturition rituals, which, Tertullian claims, inevitably invite demons to attach themselves to newborn children: “For to what individual of the human race will not the evil spirit cleave, ready to entrap their souls from the very portal of their birth, at which he is invited to be present in all those superstitious processes which accompany childbearing?”<sup>789</sup> Once their presence has been summoned, demons are able to infiltrate the human soul because they share with it a pneumatic corporeal nature. In discussing demonic attacks, Tertullian attributes demonic potency to their “subtle and impalpable substance,” which serves them well in infiltrating the more “tangible” human body.<sup>790</sup> The subtlety of the demonic body keeps humans from perceiving demonic involvement in destructive calamities like crop destruction, sickness, pain, and attacks on human souls: “Much is possible to the might of these spirits, so that, undetected by sight or sense, they are recognized more in the consequences of their action than in their action itself.”<sup>791</sup> Demons are so effective, in fact, that humans often mistake their actions for those of the gods, apparently due to their quick undertaking: “Their swiftness passes for divinity, because their real nature is unknown.”<sup>792</sup> Again, Tertullian attributes the pervasiveness and rapidity of demons to their peculiar body, asserting, “every spirit

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<sup>789</sup>Ibid. Tertullian describes the purported invocation of the gods at length: “Thus it comes to pass that all men are brought to the birth with idolatry for the midwife, whilst the very wombs that bear them, still bound with the fillets that have been wreathed before the idols, declare their offspring to be consecrated to demons: for in parturition they invoke the aid of Lucina and Diana; for a whole week a table is spread in honour of Juno; on the last day the fates of the horoscope are invoked; and then the infant’s first step on the ground is sacred to the goddess Statina. After this does any one fail to devote to idolatrous service the entire head of his son, or to take out a hair, or to shave off the whole with a razor, or to bind it up for an offering, or seal it for sacred use - on behalf of the clan, of the ancestry, or for public devotion?” (Ibid).

<sup>790</sup>*Apology* 22 (Glover, LCL).

<sup>791</sup>Ibid.

<sup>792</sup>Ibid.

is winged; so it is with angels, so it is with demons. Thus in a moment they are everywhere; all the world is to them one spot; what is being done, and where, it is as easy for them to know as to tell.”<sup>793</sup> According to Tertullian, even private spaces are prone to demonic infestation; he warns Christians that they should not “doubt that our very homes lie open to these diabolical spirits, who beset their human prey with their fantasies not only in their chapels but also in their chambers.”<sup>794</sup> The subtle, swift, winged bodies of demons, then, allow them to penetrate the public and private spaces of Carthage, constantly threatening the human body with invasive corruption. It is no surprise, then, when Tertullian declares that “there is hardly a human being who is unattended by a demon.”<sup>795</sup> When contextualized within Tertullian’s broader emphasis on the interconnection between flesh and soul in the human body, it becomes clear that the demonic invasion of the soul invariably brought about the corruption of the entire human body. Spreading through the limbs of the flesh the same way that the “breath” of God pervaded the earthen body of Adam, the attendant demon spreads its wickedness like tentacles through the human physique. Through this infiltration, the primordial creation of the human is unraveled, as the demonic spirit displaces the divine soul and transforms the human flesh into a demonic body.

Tertullian underscores the disastrous consequences that could occasion such demonic usurpation. Tertullian claims that demons, for example, often drive their human hosts to premature deaths; thereafter, they disguise themselves as the souls of the dead and assist humans in so-called necromantic rites.<sup>796</sup> Tertullian cites biblical precedent for such demonic infiltration

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<sup>793</sup>Ibid. For more on the swiftness of demons, see Chapter One.

<sup>794</sup>*On the Soul* 46. On demons and dreams, cf. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol* 14; Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 18; Athenagoras, *Legatio\_27*; Cyprian, *De Idolorum Vanitate* 7.

<sup>795</sup>*On the Soul* 57.

<sup>796</sup>Ibid.

and harm. A demon turned the Israelite king Saul, for example, “into another man – in other words, into an apostate.”<sup>797</sup> Judas of Iscariot, moreover, transformed from the trusted treasurer of the apostles into a traitor by the indwelling of a satanic spirit.<sup>798</sup> In his treatise *On the Shows*, Tertullian claims that two women of his own time had attended Roman theatrical shows, been infected by demons, and died shortly thereafter.<sup>799</sup> With these examples, Tertullian highlights how demonic infiltration not only brought about psychic harm, but also caused a total transformation of the infected person and sometimes even occasioned premature death.

In Tertullian’s view, almost everyone involved in Roman culture stood in danger of contracting such disastrous demonic pollution, as evidenced by his “demonization” of the parturition rituals that accompanied the birth of Roman bodies. In laying out this vision of Roman culture, Tertullian utilizes Christian demonology to construct a particular version of the Roman body: one caught up in “superstitious” practices that mistakenly invoke evil demons under the guise of the Roman gods. Through these faulty ritual habits, Romans invariably come to possess bodies infected by demonic spirits, who, in turn, manipulate those bodies into paying continued reverence to the demonic Roman pantheon. The Roman body is ritualized, therefore, into a circular pattern of demonolatry and demonic contamination, doomed to perform ritual actions that will only bring about its own undoing.

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<sup>797</sup>Ibid, 11.

<sup>798</sup>Ibid.

<sup>799</sup>*On the Shows* 26.

## Expelling the Demon, Creating the Christian: Tertullian's *On Baptism*

The plight of the Roman body could only be remedied, Tertullian claimed, through the ritual power of the Christian body. This potency, Tertullian asserts, stems from the Christian's knowledge of demons' true nature and their ability to utilize the name of Jesus in their exorcistic rites. After a lengthy discussion of demons in his *Apology*, Tertullian explains Christians' potency over evil spirits:

Yet all this sovereignty and power that we have over them derives its force only from the naming of Christ, and the reminder of what they expect to come upon them from God at the judgment-seat of Christ. They are afraid of Christ in God, and of God in Christ; and that is why they are subject to the servants of God and Christ. Thus at a touch, by a breath from us (*afflatu nostro*), they are seized by the thought, by the foretaste of that fire, and they leave the bodies of men at our command, all against their will, in pain, blushing to have you witness it.<sup>800</sup>

Tertullian here connects the “breath” of God still present in the Christian psychic body with the Christian's exorcistic utterances (“by a breath from us”). Through ritualized exorcistic speech that “touches” the demonic body, the Christian could wield the “breath” of God against demonic foes.<sup>801</sup>

It is important to note, however, that some Christians, including Tertullian, held that the expulsion of demons took place not only in exorcism, but also as part of baptism, the primary initiatory rite of the Christian community. According to Tertullian, one of the important functions of baptism lay in its removal of demons from the soul and insertion of the Holy Spirit in their stead:

when the soul embraces the faith, *being renewed in its second birth by water* and the power from above, then the veil of its former corruption being taken away, it beholds the

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<sup>800</sup>*Apol.* 23 (LCL, Glover).

<sup>801</sup>For more on this passage in the context of broader exorcistic discourse and practice, see Chapter Two.

light in all its brightness. *It is also taken up (in its second birth) by the Holy Spirit, just as in its first birth it is embraced by the unholy spirit.*<sup>802</sup>

By casting off the “unholy spirit,” therefore, the baptizand is cleansed of their psychic corruption and enabled to take on the Holy Spirit, and thus forge a new Christian identity. As noted by Laura Nasrallah, in Tertullian's thought, “Baptism is the second birth, on which occasion the Holy Spirit pushes away the evil spirit that might have associated itself with one’s soul.”<sup>803</sup> The exorcistic nature of baptism seems to have been reflected in the baptismal practice of the Carthaginian community. In his treatise *On the Shows*, for example, Tertullian emphasizes that the expulsion of Satan and his demonic minions is an important aspect of baptismal recitation formulas: “When we enter the water and profess the faith in terms prescribed by its law, we profess with our mouths that we have renounced the devil, his pomp and his angels (*renuntiassent nos diabolo et pompae et angelis eius ore nostro contestamur*).”<sup>804</sup> Later in the same treatise, Tertullian emphasizes again the connection between the demon-inspired Roman entertainment spectacles and the activities that Christians forsake at their baptism: “we have established our point that spectacles one and all were instituted for the devil's sake, and equipped from the devil's stores...here you have that “pomp of the devil” that we renounce when we receive the “seal” of the faith (*hoc erit pompa diabolic, adversus quem in signaculo fidei eieramus*).”<sup>805</sup> Anyone who engages in activities typical of Roman “idolatry,” according to Tertullian, will in fact undo the work of their Christian salvation: “But what we renounce (*eieramus*), we have no business to

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<sup>802</sup>*On the Soul* 41. Emphasis mine.

<sup>803</sup>Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 131.

<sup>804</sup>*On the Shows* 4 (LCL, Glover). Emphasis mine. Here and throughout I use the translation of T.R. Glover from the Loeb Classical Library for *On the Shows*. Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

<sup>805</sup>*Ibid*, 24. Emphasis mine.

share, be it in deed or word, sight or anticipation. But by such acts we really renounce and unseal the “seal,” by unsealing our witness to it (*ceterum sic nos eieramus et rescindimus signaculum rescindendo testationem eius*).<sup>806</sup>

We should not read Tertullian’s language of “renouncement” and “unsealing” here as mere metaphors for purification; rather, Tertullian ostensibly understands these terms to indicate the actual physical status of the Christian body. Elsewhere in the same treatise, for example, Tertullian warns his readers that failure to uphold the high standard of behavior demanded of baptized Christians will result in the re-infiltration of demons: “what is to save such people from demon-possession (*Cur ergo non eiusmodi etiam demoniis penetrabiles fiant*)?”<sup>807</sup> T.R. Glover renders *demoniis penetrabiles* here as “demonic possession,” but a more literal translation of “demonic penetration” or “demonic infiltration” is more appropriate,<sup>808</sup> in that Tertullian’s language does not call to mind the “possession” of the human body such as is characteristic of katabolic spirits (see discussion above), but the “piercing” or “penetrating” of the inner soul typical of “attendant” demons. It is this type of demonic spirit that Christians cast off at their baptism, and thus the kind of evil spirit that Christians must eschew by avoiding Roman cultural activities. If they do not, the “seal” of baptism will be broken, and the Christian body will lie vulnerable to its insidious undoing.

The ritual context for the expulsion of demons within Tertullian's construction of baptism becomes clearer through a closer look at his writing *On Baptism*. This treatise was occasioned by

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<sup>806</sup>Ibid.

<sup>807</sup>*On the Shows* 26 (LCL, Glover).

<sup>808</sup>Lewis & Short s.v. *penetrabilis*.

the apparent abandonment of baptism as an integral Christian rite by certain “Cainite” Christians.<sup>809</sup> Against this development, Tertullian argues that the water of baptism is necessary because it is the place where the Christian body is “born” and protected: “We, little fishes, after the example of our IXTUS Jesus Christ, *are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water.*”<sup>810</sup> According to Tertullian, the birth of the Christian body in baptism entailed dipping in water, uttering the baptismal formula, and receiving a sprinkling of ointment.<sup>811</sup> The transformative powers of baptismal water, Tertullian claims, stem from God's primordial creation of the Earth, when the Creator ordered the waters to recede and used the resultant moistened clay to fashion the human body. This process, Tertullian argues, displays the power of water to give life and fashion bodies.<sup>812</sup> Tertullian asserts that the potency of water also stems from the “hovering” of God's spirit over the primordial waters, and argues that the divine spirit continues

to linger over the waters of the baptized. But a holy thing, of course, hovered over a holy; or else, from that which hovered over that which was hovered over borrowed a holiness, since *it is necessary that in every case an underlying material substance should catch the quality of that which overhands it, most of all a corporeal of a spiritual, adapted (as the spiritual is) through the subtleness of its substance, both for penetrating and insinuating.* Thus the nature of the waters, sanctified by the Holy One, itself conceived withal the power of sanctifying.<sup>813</sup>

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<sup>809</sup>According to Tertullian, a female Christian leader who taught against baptism brought about the Cainite heresy: “A viper of the Cainite heresy, lately conversant in this quarter has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy baptism. Which is quite in accordance with nature; for vipers and asps and basilisks themselves generally do affect arid and waterless places” (*On Baptism* 1; all translations of *On Baptism* are adapted from Roberts et al., eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, unless otherwise noted). Where appropriate, I have updated the translation for readability and inclusiveness.

<sup>810</sup>*On Baptism* 1. Emphasis mine.

<sup>811</sup>*Ibid*, 2.

<sup>812</sup>*Ibid*, 3.

<sup>813</sup>*Ibid*, 4. Emphasis mine. In order to underscore the importance of the baptismal water, Tertullian argues that demons have attempted to imitate the potency of Christian ritual by incorporating water into their own religious rites. Tertullian notes, for example, that Roman rituals often include the sprinkling or washing of water, which Tertullian attributes to Satan's deceptive imitation of Christian baptism (*Ibid*, 5). Interestingly, Tertullian also

Tertullian emphasizes here the “material” transferal of the divine spirit from God to the water primarily through the “subtleness of its substance,” which then enables the continued potency of the baptismal water to “penetrate” and transform the psychic and fleshly substance of the human body.<sup>814</sup> In this way, Tertullian showcases how Christian baptism, and its accompanying expulsion of demons, did not merely entail “metaphorical” washing, but the actual “physical” or “substantial” transformation of the Christian body.

In order to undergird this point, Tertullian explicates the cleansing of the flesh and spirit in baptism: “Since we are defiled by sins, as it were by dirt, we should be washed from those stains in water...Therefore, after the waters have been in a manner endued with medicinal virtue (*medicatis*) through the intervention of the angel, the spirit is corporeally washed in the waters, and the flesh is in the same spiritually cleansed.”<sup>815</sup> Note here how Tertullian stresses the dual

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suggests that demons are apt to “hover” over bodies of water in ways similar to God's Spirit at creation: “Are there not other cases too, in which, without any sacrament, unclean spirits brood on waters, in spurious imitation of that brooding of the Divine Spirit in the very beginning? Witness all shady founts, and all unfrequented brooks, and the ponds in the baths, and the conduits in private houses, or the cisterns and wells which are said to have the property of “spiriting away” (*rapere*), through the power, that is, of a hurtful spirit” (Ibid). Tertullian adds that bodies of water in which humans have drowned are often referred to as *nypheleptos* (“nymph-caught”), suggesting the infusion or presence of (harmful) spirits in the water which entrap humans (Ibid). According to Tertullian, these popular Roman customs can be cited as evidence that spirits can infuse and empower water such that it becomes a powerful agent in transforming human bodies (whether for good or ill). This stands as an important point for Tertullian, in that it undergirds his related contention that the baptismal waters become effectual because of their infusion with the divine spirit. Here Tertullian cites the stirring of the Bethsaida pool by the angel, which is told as part of the healing of a disabled man by Jesus (John 5:1-9); Tertullian argues that this “figure of corporeal healing sang of a spiritual healing, according to the rule by which things carnal are always antecedent as figurative of things spiritual” (Ibid). The “carnal” example of the healing of the disabled man, therefore, prefigures the “spiritual” healing of the Christian baptism, where the baptizand “receives again that Spirit of God which he had then first received from his afflatus, but had afterward lost through sin” (Ibid).

<sup>814</sup>We see this emphasis again in Tertullian's discussion of how contemporary baptismal waters come to be sanctified: “All waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heavens, and rests over the waters, sanctifying them from Himself; and being thus sanctified, they imbibe at the same the power of sanctifying” (*On Baptism* 4).

<sup>815</sup>Ibid. The sanctification of the water is brought about by the ritualized activities of Christian baptism, as explained by Tertullian: “In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy spirit through benediction... Then, over our cleansed and blessed bodies willingly descends from the Father that Holiest Spirit. Over the waters of baptism, recognizing as it were His primeval seat, He reposes: (He who) glided down on the Lord “in the shape of a dove,” in order that the nature of the Holy Spirit might be declared by means of the creature (the emblem) of

cleansing of spirit and flesh through the “medicinal” properties of the baptismal water: while the spirit is cleansed “corporeally,” the flesh is cleansed in “spirit.” The entwinement of the soul and flesh, therefore, entails the simultaneous purification of these two substances as part of the Christian baptismal rite.

Tertullian emphasizes that this transformation of human corporeality entails the extrication of demonic substance from the body. This point is explained by Tertullian's use of the story of the Exodus as a historical precedent for Christian baptism:

Indeed, when the people...escaped the violence of the Egyptian king by crossing through water, it was water that extinguished the king himself, with his entire forces. What figure is more manifestly fulfilled in the sacrament of baptism? The nations are set free from the world by means of water, to wit: and the devil, their old tyrant, they leave quite behind, overwhelmed in the water.<sup>816</sup>

Through the allegory of the Exodus, Tertullian positions the Christian body as the cleansed body of the “nations” that has escaped the bondage of its tyrannical demonic past through the transformative waters of baptism. By definition, therefore, the baptized Christian body is distinguished from its former Roman corporeality primarily through the abandonment of the demonic body that had pervaded its former flesh and soul.

It is in this sense, I argue, that the demon functions within Tertullian's writings as a kind of “abject” body. The practice of baptism expels and rejects the Roman body's attendant demonic spirit, and in so doing, creates a new, Christian mode of corporeality. In this reading,

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simplicity and innocence, because even in her bodily structure the dove is without literal gall” (*On Baptism* 8). Interestingly, Tertullian calls to mind here the apparent lack of “gall” in the dove, which is the purported foundation for the bird's “simplicity” and “innocence.” This connection between the anatomy of the dove and its peaceful symbolism was shared by Cyprian of Carthage, who likewise connects the simplicity and peacefulness of the dove with its apparent lack of gall (*On the Unity of the Church* 9). Despite this ancient association, contemporary studies of avian anatomy have affirmed the presence of bile (though not a gallbladder) in numerous species of doves. See, for example, Lee R. Hagey, Claudio D. Schteingart, Huong-Thu Ton-Nu, and Alan F. Hofmann, “Biliary bile acids of fruit pigeons and doves (Columbiformes): presence of 1 $\beta$ -hydroxychenodeoxycholic acid and conjugation with glycine as well as taurine,” *Journal of Lipid Research* 35 (1994), 2041-2048.

<sup>816</sup>*On Baptism* 9.

Christian baptism performs an exclusionary act whereby the Christian subject forms primarily through the removal and expulsion of certain elements of human corporeality. The excluded, abject body of the demon represents the foreclosed aspects of the Christian self, which are epitomized in the demon-infused activities of the Roman body. In the words of Butler, the abject demon comes to constitute the “defining limit of the subject’s domain” even as it is excluded from that subjectivity. This “defining limit” remains as a haunting reminder of the subject’s contingent creation and endurance, as well as its necessary identification within the exclusionary matrix that dismisses its abject self. As emphasized by Elizabeth Grosz, the threat of the abject is ultimately horrifying not because it is altogether alien, but because it consists of part of the (excluded) former self that continues to remind the subject of its contingency and fragmented corporeality. The abject demon, therefore, “hovers at the borders” of the Christian body, threatening its “unsettled unity” with disruption and possible disintegration.

### **Demons at the Games: Thwarting the Abject**

As noted previously, Tertullian portrays the Christian body as a “fish” which can only be “born” and “protected” in the potent waters of baptism. According to Tertullian, however, a Christian could repeat baptism only once (if at all),<sup>817</sup> and so the Christian body could not continuously rely on the ritual ablutions of baptism for corporeal exorcism. In order to undergird the bodily transformation brought about by baptism, then, Christians were compelled to take up an interrelated collection of ritualized actions designed to extend baptism’s protective powers.

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<sup>817</sup>Tertullian expresses different opinions on the repetition of baptism. In his *On Repentance* 8, he allows for the one-time repetition of baptism in the case of fornication. In his *On Modesty* 1, however, Tertullian claims that baptism cannot be repeated under any circumstances.

For Tertullian, such habits included fasting, sexual abstinence, proper bodily adornment, and appropriate partaking of ritual meals, among other ethical instructions.<sup>818</sup> It is through this interconnected set of bodily practices that the Christian body, in the words of Butler, comes to “materialize” through a “process of sedimentation” whereby the body simultaneously performs and enacts normative codes of subjectivity. The abject, therefore, serves not only to define the outer limits of Christian subjectivity, but informs and induces the ritualization of a particular type of Christian body.

In the writings of Tertullian, this intricate connection between the expulsion of the abject, the lingering threat of its reintegration, and the performative thwarting of its encroachment emerges most clearly in the treatise *On the Shows*.<sup>819</sup> In this writing, Tertullian reminds his readers that their baptism was an initiatory rite that entailed the expulsion and disavowal of Satan and his demonic minions. Tertullian adds, however, that such demons continue to lurk behind the cultural activities of their Roman neighbors, and that Christians who take part in such events endanger the tenuous solidity of their Christian bodies. According to Tertullian, therefore, the behavioral agenda set in place by baptism entails the eschewal of certain Roman cultural activities.<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>818</sup>See, for example, Tertullian’s treatises *On the Apparel of Women*, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, *On the Crown*, *To His Wife*, *On Exhortation to Chastity*, *On Monogamy*, *On Modesty*, *On Fasting*, *On Prayer*, *On Repentance*, and *Of Patience*.

<sup>819</sup>For a rhetorical analysis of *On the Shows*, see Robert D. Sider, “Tertullian, *On the Shows*: An Analysis,” *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 39.2 (1978), 339-365.

<sup>820</sup>For a similar connection between baptism and the disavowal of Roman cultural practices, see *On Idolatry* 6.

*Theatrical Demons and Christian Performativity: Tertullian's On the Shows*

In opening his treatise *On the Shows*, Tertullian implies that attendance at Roman spectacles, including gladiatorial battles, athletic events, and theatrical performances, had become quite popular among Carthaginian Christians. According to Tertullian, many of these Christians were justifying their participation by appealing to the apparently harmless nature of viewing such entertainment:

In this matter they commonly take this line of argument against us; *as that there can be no clash between religion, in your mind and conscience, and these great refreshments of eye and ear that lie outside us*; that God is not offended by people enjoying themselves, but that, so long as the ear of God and God's honour are unhurt, it is no guilt in its proper time and place to avail oneself of such enjoyment.<sup>821</sup>

As seen here, the dispute between Tertullian and fellow Christians rested primarily on a disagreement regarding the potential harm of activities “outside” the body on the “inner” soul. Tertullian’s dedicates *On the Shows* to proving that such “external” spectacles could indeed be harmful, or, perhaps more appropriately, that there is no such thing as a purely “external” activity. That is, all practices performed by the human body invariably had implications for the health of both the outer fleshly and inner psychic bodies, in part because of the intricate interconnection between these two parts of the human body.

Tertullian endeavors, therefore, to lay out a proper behavioral program for Christians that will keep their bodies and their faithfulness to God intact: “But it is exactly this which here and now we purposes to prove – that this [spectacle-watching] does not square with true religion (*verae religioni*) or with duty toward God.”<sup>822</sup> For Tertullian, “true religion” entails the

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<sup>821</sup>*On the Shows* 1 (LCL, Glover). Emphasis mine.

<sup>822</sup>*On the Shows* 1 (LCL, Glover).

refrainment from Roman spectacles in favor of activities that properly reflect the Christian's "duty toward God." Tertullian claims that Christians participate in Roman spectacles only because they do not understand the extent to which the world has been "perverted" by God's demonic adversaries:

*They are...unaware of the rival powers that confront God for the abuse of what divine creation has given for use. For where your knowledge of God is defective, you can neither know His mind nor His adversary. We have not then merely to consider by whom all things were created, but also by whom they are perverted.*<sup>823</sup>

According to Tertullian, therefore, the root of piety lies not only in proper "theological" knowledge, but also an apposite understanding of Satan and his minions, the "perverters" of God's creation. Here, therefore, Tertullian positions early Christian demonology as a necessary aspect of Christian theology – without knowing the adversary one could not truly know the divine protagonist.

Tertullian reinforces this point by calling to mind the ritual practice of the Carthaginian community. As discussed previously, Tertullian points out that it is these evil forces – Satan and his demons – that Christians renounce during their baptism, and thus it is these entities that Christians must continue to avoid if they are to remain pure:

*But lest anyone suppose us to be quibbling, I will turn to authority, the initial and primary authority of our "seal." When we enter the water and profess the Christian faith in the term prescribed by its law, we profess with our mouths that we have renounced the devil, his pomp, and his angels...this profession of renunciation made in baptism touches the public shows too, since they, being idolatry, belong to the devil, his pomp and his angels.*<sup>824</sup>

According to Tertullian, the renouncement of Satan and his "angels" during the baptismal ceremony ultimately entails not only the cleansing of the Christian body, but also the

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<sup>823</sup>Ibid, 2. Emphasis mine.

<sup>824</sup>Ibid, 4. Emphasis mine.

anticipatory eschewal of all activities associated with the adversary's wicked company. In order to establish that all Roman spectacles entail such idolatry, Tertullian details the involvement of the Roman gods in common Roman entertainments.<sup>825</sup> Tertullian argues, for example, that Roman athletic contests are always dedicated either to the gods or to the memories of dead humans (i.e., funereal games); in both of these scenarios, Tertullian asserts, honor is given to the evil spirits that Christians renounce at their baptism.<sup>826</sup> Tertullian characterizes the Roman circus similarly, claiming that its demonic infestation is established by its association with the Roman pantheon:

The games then of one kind or the other have a common origin, and names in common also, as the reasons for their being held are the same. So too their equipment must be the same, under the common guild of idolatry which founded them. But rather more pompous (*pompator*) is the outfit of the games in the circus, to which the name pomp properly belongs (*quibus proprie hoc nomen*). The pomp...comes first (*pomp praecedens*) and shows in itself to whom it belongs, with the long line of images, the succession of statues, the cars, chariots, carriages, the throne, garlands, robes. What sacred rites, what sacrifices, come at the beginning, in the middle, at the end; what guilds, what priesthoods, what offices are astir, - *everybody knows in that city where demons sit in the conclave* [i.e., Rome].<sup>827</sup>

Tertullian here highlights how the “pomp” of Satan, which Christians renounce as part of their baptismal formula, correlates to the idolatrous images of the Roman pantheon that are featured in the “pomp” (i.e., processions) of the Roman circus. Tertullian claims that the demonic pageantry of the circus can be traced to its origins in Circe, the goddess of magic, and her veneration of the Roman sun-god Helios:

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<sup>825</sup>As part of this line of argumentation, Tertullian draws especially from Suetonius' non-extant *Ludicra Historia*, as well as from other Roman writers such as Timeaeus, Stesichorus, Varro, and an otherwise-unknown author named Hermeteles (Barnes, *Tertullian*, 95).

<sup>826</sup>*On the Shows* 6.

<sup>827</sup>*On the Shows* 7 (LCL, Glover). Emphasis mine. For additional discussion of the ancient circus, see Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.4 and John of Patmos, *Revelation* 18.2.

Those who maintain that the first circus spectacle was produced by Circe in honor of the Sun her father (as they choose to hold), argue that the name of the circus is derived from hers. Obviously the enchantress carried the business through (no doubt about it) in the name of those whose priestess she was; she did it, that is, *for the demons and fallen angels*.<sup>828</sup>

Despite being instituted under the names of the Roman pantheon, therefore, Roman cultural entertainments are nothing more than demonolatry.

Through this equivalency, Tertullian creates a new category of “religious” practice by dichotomizing Roman and Christian cultural activities. As has long been noted in studies of the Roman world, worship of the gods was a practice embedded within the socio-political fabric of Greek and Roman cities. Whereas modern Western cultures often parse religious activities as separate and distinct from accompanying cultural, social, or political events, the ancient Mediterranean world knew no such distinction: the gods were inevitably involved in all matters, and thus had investments in all human activities. If a city and nation were to flourish, they needed to acknowledge the benefaction of the gods, both low and high, at all turns. In this sense, it would be a mistake to regard Roman spectacles as more or less religious – they were simply Roman civic activities, which, like almost all other Roman civic activities, entailed some form of acknowledgment of the Roman gods.

Tertullian’s fellow Carthaginian Christians, it seems, argued that participation in such events did not necessarily entail the abrogation of their Christian commitment; some Christians apparently viewed such activities as primarily entailing public entertainment, even if they involved some “religious” elements. Tertullian responds by asserting that these cultural activities are indeed part of a larger “religious” system that is dedicated to the worship of Satan and wicked demons: “Mark well, O Christian, how many unclean names (*nomina inmundata*) have

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<sup>828</sup>*On the Shows* 8 (LCL, Glover). Emphasis mine.

made the circus their own. It is an alien religion, none of yours (*aliena est tibi religio*), possessed by all those spirits of the devil (*diaboli spiritus*).”<sup>829</sup> Tertullian here argues that the implication of Roman gods in any activity effectively makes it “religious” and unsuitable for participation by the faithful.

Christians who participate in such activities not only annul their Christian commitment, but endanger the corporeal harmony of the Christian body. Interestingly, Tertullian emphasizes that the potential corruption of the Christian body by this “alien religion” is *not* due to the pollution of particular spaces in the Carthaginian cityscape. Rather, the danger of demonic infestation stems from the Christian body’s *performance* of certain activities that entail demonolatry. Tertullian explains:

And speaking of places, this will be the place for some words to anticipate the question that some will raise. What, say you, suppose that at some other time I approach the circus, shall I be in danger of pollution? There is no law laid for us as to places. *For not merely those places where men gather for the show, but even temples, the servant of God may approach without risk to his Christian loyalty*, if there be cause sufficient and simple, to be sure, unconnected with the business or character of the place. But the streets, the market, the baths, the taverns, even our houses, are none of them altogether clear of idols. *The whole world is filled with Satan and his angels*. Yet not because we are in the world, do we fall from God; *but only if in some way we meddle with the sins of the world*.<sup>830</sup>

Tertullian here emphasizes that potential corruption by evil spirits (“Satan and his angels”) does not come about because the Christian body enters into certain spaces, and even argues that “pagan” temples are of no danger in and of themselves. Later in *On the Shows*, Tertullian reinforces this point: “Thus, if, as a sacrificer and worshipper, I enter the Capitol or the temple of Serapis, I shall fall from God – just as I should if a spectator in circus or theatre. *Places do not of*

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<sup>829</sup>*On the Shows* 8 (LCL, Glover).

<sup>830</sup>*Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

*themselves defile us, but the things done in the places, by which even the places themselves (as we have argued) are defiled. We are defiled by the defiled (de contaminatis contaminamur).*"<sup>831</sup>

Through this emphasis on the corrupting nature of Roman religious *practice*, rather than sacred *spaces*, Tertullian centralizes the core of Christian identity in the proper ritualization of the Christian body. For Christians in Carthage, Tertullian claims, the danger is in the performance, not the place.

Tertullian warns his readers, moreover, that the enticements to perform demonolatrous rituals pervade Roman cultural activities. Tertullian declares that horseback riding, for example, is a demonic pastime: "Equestrian skill was a simple thing in the past; mere horseback riding; in any case there was no guilt in ordinary use of the horse. But when the horse was brought into the games, it passed from being God's gift into the service of demons."<sup>832</sup> Tertullian extends this demonic corruption to other venues: he argues that horses in general are attached to Castor and Pollux, the theater to Venus and Bacchus, depictions of gods to demonic spirits, and athletic contests to dead humans.<sup>833</sup> He also argues that the origins, names, equipment, location, and artistic accompaniments of Roman civic ceremonies are all dedicated to the Roman pantheon, which themselves are nothing more than the masks of demonic spirits.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>831</sup>Ibid. Emphasis mine. Tertullian underscores this point later in the treatise: "We have dealt above with the matter of the places, urging that *the places do not of themselves pollute us, but through the things done in them* -- things from which the places imbibe defilement and then spit it out again on others" (Ibid, 15; emphasis mine). It is for this reason that Tertullian refers to the Romans as the "lords of *what is done* in the places" (Ibid, 8; emphasis mine).

<sup>832</sup>Ibid, 9.

<sup>833</sup>Ibid, 9-12.

<sup>834</sup>Ibid, 9-13.

Tertullian stresses that demons “are at work under those names and behind the images” dedicated to the Roman gods.<sup>835</sup> According to Tertullian, these cultic “idols” possess no potency nor ability to harm the Christian body. Evil demons, however, use the idols as conduits for gaining access to the human body. Drawing on the witness of 1 Corinthians, Tertullian emphasizes that Christians who might participate in such activities risk commingling with demons:

So that we may be certain that in no aspect are the spectacles consonant with our twofold profession of the renunciation of idols. “Not than an idol is anything,” says the apostle, “but what they do, they do in honor of demons,” who plant themselves in the consecrated images of – whatever they are, dead men, or, as they think, gods. So on that account, since both kinds of idol stand on the same footing (dead men and gods are one and the same thing), we abstain from both kinds of idolatry. Temples or tombs, we abominate both equally; we know neither sort of altar; we adore neither sort of image; we pay no sacrifice; we pay no funeral rite. No, and we do not eat of what is offered in sacrificial or funeral rite, because “we cannot eat of the Lord's supper and the supper of demons.”<sup>836</sup>

Here we see Tertullian citing the example of activities he takes to be naturally forbidden to his Christian audience; funeral rites, sacrificial meals, and worship at the Roman altars are assumed by Tertullian to be outside the bounds of Christian practice. He uses this shared Christian attitude to build an *a fortiori* argument that Roman spectacles, since they likewise are associated with the demonic Roman pantheon, ought to be included in this larger set of prohibited practices:

If then we try to keep our gullet and belly free from defilement, how much more our nobler parts (*augustioria nostra*), our eyes and ears, do we guard from the pleasures of idol sacrifice and sacrifices to the dead – pleasures not of gut and digestion, but of spirit, soul (*spiritu et anima*) and suggestion – and it is purity of these far more than of the intestines that God has a right to claim of us.<sup>837</sup>

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<sup>835</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>836</sup>Ibid, 13.

<sup>837</sup>Ibid.

Tertullian's metaphor here is telling. He compares demonic spiritual defilement to the ingestion of food – the penetration of foreign elements that are then absorbed into Christian physiology. In similar ways to how food enters and then infiltrates the digestive system, so also demons can enter and infect the spirit. Whether by the eyes, ears, mouth, or nose, demons can infest the Christian body any time that it participates in activities dedicated to the Roman pantheon. Tertullian correlates the continued purity of the Christian body, therefore, to the maintenance of proper Christian bodily performance. Those who carry out appropriate bodily regimens will maintain their corporeal boundaries, while those who partake in unsuitable rites face the dire threat of demonic infiltration.

Tertullian closes this section by again reminding his readers that the reabsorption of the demonic would entail the undoing of their baptismal birth:

If we have established our point that the spectacles one and all were instituted for the devil's sake, and equipped from the devil's stores...here you have that "pomp of the devil" that we renounced when we received the "seal" of faith. But what we renounce, we have no business to share, be it in deed or word, sight or anticipation. But by such acts we really renounce and unseal the "seal," by unsealing our witness to it (*Ceterum sic nos eieramus et rescindimus signaculum rescindendo testationem eius*).<sup>838</sup>

According to Tertullian, therefore, improper performance of Christian embodiment risked rupturing the "seal" of Christian baptism that was designed to ensure the spiritual intactness of Christian corporeality. In rupturing this protective barrier, Christians risked the physical invasion of their bodies by the demons with which they commingled, and thus threatened to reabsorb the abject body that they had cast off at their baptism.

In Tertullian's view, such behavior robbed Christians of their distinctive "mark": "Why, it is above all things from this that they understand a man to have become a Christian, that he

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<sup>838</sup>Ibid, 24.

will have nothing more to do with games! So he openly “denies,” who get rids of the distinctive mark by which he is known.”<sup>839</sup> For Tertullian, therefore, the “mark” of the Christian body lay in its avoidance of demonic corruption through the eschewal of particular Roman cultural performances. By shunning the bodily performance of such activities, the Christian could remain free from demonic defilement and keep the Christian body intact. If a Christian participates in such activities, however, they begin to take on the “mark” of the Roman body, which, in Tertullian’s view, was entirely too focused on mundane matters at the expense of heavenly. And so Tertullian evocatively juxtaposes the habits of the Roman body at the shows with the dispositions he demands of his Christian readers:

Do you think that, seated where there is nothing of God, he will at that moment turn his thoughts to God? Peace of soul will be his I take it, as he shouts for the charioteer? With his mind on the acts, he will learn purity? No, in all the show there will be nothing more sure to trip him up than the mere over-nice attire of women and men. That sharing of emotions, that agreement, or disagreements in backing their favorites, makes an intercourse that fans the sparks of lust. Why, nobody going to the games thinks of anything else but seeing and being seen. But while the tragic actor declaims, he will think of the crying aloud of one of the prophets! Amid the strains of some effeminate flute player (*inter effeminati tibicinis*), he will muse in himself upon a psalm! When the athletes are at work, he will say that blow for blow is forbidden! Then he surely can be stirred by pity, with his eyes fastened on the bear as it bites, on the squeezed nets of the net-fighter! May God avert from His own such a passion for murderous pleasure! For what sort of conduct is it to go from the assembly of God to the assembly of the devil (*ecclesiam diaboli*)? From sky to sty (*de caelo...in caenum*), as the proverb has it? Those hands you have uplifted to God, to tire them out clapping an actor? With those lips, with which you have uttered Amen over the Holy Thing, to cheer for a gladiator? To say for ever and ever to any other whatever but to God and Christ?<sup>840</sup>

Through this series of appositions, Tertullian constructs a corporeal binary of Roman and Christian bodies, stressing the incompatibility of their two modes of behavior. The Christian body seeks peace, the Roman the fights of the gladiator. The Christian is concerned with the

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<sup>839</sup>Ibid.

<sup>840</sup>Ibid, 25.

chants of the psalms, the Roman with the music of the “effeminate” flute players. While the Romans clap their hands to laud the exploits of humans, Christians lift their hands in praise of God. The lips of the Christian body utter prayer, the Romans a cheer for athletes.

Through this dichotomy between Roman spectacles and Christian piety, Tertullian unfolds a set of interrelated behavioral expectations that ultimately stem from the Christian body’s ritual initiation in baptism. In effect, Tertullian extends the ritualization of the Christian body from the baptismal font to the streets and stadia of Carthage, where Christians are enlisted in an interconnected set of corporeal expectations that diverge from their (demonic) Roman past. The exorcistic efficacy of Christian baptism, therefore, rests on the continued ritualization of the Christian body whereby the follower of Jesus can keep the demons at bay by avoiding the bodily habits associated with their “alien religion.”

In order to underscore the threat that such demons represented to the Christian body, Tertullian cites an example of a woman who experienced such an invasion:

For we have in fact the case (and the Lord is witness) of that woman, who went to the theater and returned demon-possessed (*cum demonio*). So, when the unclean spirit was being exorcised and was pressed with the accusation that he had dared to enter a woman who believed; “...and I was quite right, too,” he said boldly; “for I found her on my own ground.”<sup>841</sup>

Tertullian here appeals to the witness of the demon himself to substantiate the demonic dominion over the theater and other spectacles. Christians who attend such entertainment risk becoming “demon-possessed” (*cum demonio*) to the extent that they require exorcism and might even face death. Tertullian provides another example to similar effect: “It is credibly affirmed, too, that to another woman, on the night following a day when she had listened to a tragic actor, a linen

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<sup>841</sup>Ibid, 26. An unresolved tension exists between the demon’s claim that that the woman was on his “ground” and Tertullian’s earlier claims that demons do not inhabit particular spaces.

sheet was shown in a dream, the actor was named, and she was rebuked; nor was that woman alive in the world five days later.”<sup>842</sup> With both of these examples, Tertullian threatens his readers with the subtle undermining of their Christian corporeality, a kind of bodily pollution that might not be discernible on the surface (neither of these women seem to have had the outward appearances of being demon-possessed) and yet could nonetheless bring about the most severe degree of bodily dissolution and harm. Tertullian claims that these are just two examples, and that he could indeed provide more: “How many other proofs indeed can be drawn from those who, by communion with the devil in the shows (*cum diabolo apud spectacula communicando*), have fallen from the Lord?”<sup>843</sup> Against those who would claim that attending the shows was merely a leisurely activity, therefore, Tertullian argues that such “communion” with the devil brings about a “falling away” from the Lord, a transformation that severs ties between the bodies of Christians and Christ by renewing the demonic pollution of the human body.

In Tertullian’s detailing of the threat that demons pose to the Christian community, we see the continual “haunting” of the borders of the Christian body by its abject demonic foe. The demonic body, hovering at the very edges of Christian subjectivity, exemplifies the contingent limits and contours of Christian corporeality. In its embodiment of the “shameful” and “idolatrous” activities of the Roman spectacle, the demon represents the epitome of non-Christian corporeality; and yet, it simultaneously demonstrates the repressed “underside” of Christian embodiment, the expelled “remainder” that the Christian body cast off in the baptismal font. In order to keep this abject body at bay, Tertullian prescribes an interrelated set of ritual

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<sup>842</sup>Ibid. According to Artemidorus, the second century interpreter of dreams, the appearance of a linen sheet in dreams could sometimes signal to the dreamer their impending death (*Oneirocritica* 2.3).

<sup>843</sup>*On the Shows* 26 (LCL, Glover).

behaviors designed to shape the “sedimentation” of the Christian body as a repudiation of its former demonic (and Roman) self.

*Tertullian's Apocalyptic Spectacle: Torturing the Roman Body*

Having established at length the ways in which Roman entertainment spectacles are corrupted with demonic influence, Tertullian closes his treatise *On the Shows* by widening the narrative framework and reminding his audience of the cosmic consequences of abandoning their Christian way of life. He notes, for example, that those who participate in the games will not necessarily have to endure human scorn, but the shameful gaze of their cosmic judges:

What will you do when you are caught in the heaving tide of guilty voices? I do not suggest that you can run any risk there of suffering from humans – nobody recognizes you for a Christian; but think well over it, what it means for you in heaven. Do you doubt but that at that very moment when the devil is raging in his assembly, all the angels look forth from heaven, and mark down person by person, how this one has spoken blasphemy and that has listened, the one has lent his tongue, the other his ears, to the devil, against God?<sup>844</sup>

Tertullian warns his audience, therefore, that while they partake of the devil’s “assembly” they are under the watchful gaze of heavenly angels, who serve as the celestial bookkeepers of divine judgment. Through this warning, Tertullian uses visual and positional metaphors to create what Elizabeth Clark calls a “disciplinary apparatus” whereby the Christian is shamed by the gaze of the “Divine Other” into taking up particular modes of normative behavior.<sup>845</sup> The Christian body,

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<sup>844</sup>Ibid, 27. Tertullian extends this critique later in the treatise by juxtaposing the peacefulness of philosophy with the din of the entertainment spectacles: “Philosophers have given the name “pleasure” to quiet and tranquility; in it they rejoice, take their ease in it, yes, glory in it. And you - why, I find you sighing for goal-posts, the stage, the dust, the arena” (Ibid, 28).

<sup>845</sup>Elizabeth Clark, “Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: En-Gendering Early Christian Ethics,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59:2 (1991), 221-245.

by intermingling with the evil elements of the mundane realm, places itself beneath the divine beings that sit above in the heavens, a visual representation that reinforces the subjugation of the human body to the divine powers responsible for its creation and judgment.

The angels' watchful accounting of the Christian body's movements, moreover, remind Tertullian's readers of the coming judgment. (As noted previously, one of the hallmarks of the New Prophecy was an expectation of an imminent end to this cosmic world). Tertullian undergirds this eschatological framework by tracing out a visual representation of the judgment of Roman bodies, and, in so doing, posits a series of Christian "counter-spectacles" designed to serve as enticements for Christians to keep their entertainment choices "in-house." Rather than seeking out entertainment that puts them under the control of demonic spirits, Tertullian argues, Christians ought to take enjoyment in the ritual activities of Christians, which entail the vanquishing of Satan and his minions: "What has more joy in it than...to find yourself trampling underfoot the gods of the Gentiles, expelling demons, effecting cures, seeking revelations, living to God? These are the pleasures, the spectacles of Christianity, holy, eternal, and free."<sup>846</sup> Tertullian asserts that Christians have sufficient materials for entertainment within the Christian community, citing diversions such as apocalyptic countdowns, Christian literature, and Christian ritual as worthy of his readers' time:

Here find your games of the circus - watch the race of time, the seasons slipping by, count the circuits, look for the goal of the great consummation, the battle for the companions of the churches, rouse up at the signal of God, stand erect at the angel's trump, triumph in the psalms of martyrdom...if the literature of the stage delight you, we have sufficiency of books, of poems, of aphorisms, sufficiency of songs and voices, not fable, those of ours, but truth; not artifice but simplicity...would you have fightings and wrestlings? Here they are - things of no small account and plenty of them. See impurity overthrown by chastity, perfidy slain by faith, cruelty crushed by pity, impudence thrown

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<sup>846</sup>*On the Shows* 29 (LCL, Glover).

in the shade by modesty; and such are the contests among us, and in them we are crowned. Have you a mind for blood? You have the blood of Christ.<sup>847</sup>

In this way, Tertullian creates a Christian “counter-culture” aimed at incentivizing his readers to eschew “external” entertainments and instead take up intra-Christian leisurely diversions.

Such Christian spectacles are a mere foreshadowing, however, of the “great consummation” that will bring about the exaltation of Christ: “But what a spectacle is already at hand – the return of the Lord, now no object of doubt, now exalted, now triumphant! What exultation will that be of the angels, what glory that of the saints as they rise again! What the reign of the righteous thereafter! What a city, the New Jerusalem!”<sup>848</sup> As Christ is exalted, his enemies will be judged and punished, a “spectacle” to which Tertullian draws the eyes of his readers: “Yes, and there are still to come other spectacles – that last, that eternal Day of Judgment, that Day which the Gentiles never believed would come, that Day they laughed at, when this old world and all its generations shall be consumed in one fire. How vast the spectacle that day, and how wide!”<sup>849</sup> Sparring few details, Tertullian fixes the reader’s gaze on the tortured bodies of the Christian’s Roman enemies:

What sight shall wake my wonder, what my laughter, my joy and exultation? As I see all those kings, those great kings, welcome (we were told) in heaven, along with Jove, along with those who told of their ascent, groaning in the depths of darkness! And the magistrates who persecuted the name of Jesus, liquefying in fiercer flames than they kindled in their rage against the Christians! Those sages, too, the philosophers blushing before their disciples as they blaze together, the disciples whom they taught that God was concerned with nothing, that men have no souls at all, or that what souls they have shall never return to their former bodies!<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>847</sup>Ibid.

<sup>848</sup>Ibid, 30.

<sup>849</sup>Ibid.

<sup>850</sup>Ibid. For an analysis of this passage through the lens of imperial viewing, see Christopher Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 62-3, and Simon Goldhill, “The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict,” in idem and Robin Osborne, eds., *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity*,

Through this apocalyptic counter-spectacle, Tertullian plunges the Roman body into the tortuous fires of the eschaton, assigning to each a punishment that is in accord with Tertullian's mocking stereotypes. Thus kings, so used to their perch atop civic society and thought to have inherited divine status in heaven, will instead groan in the "depths of darkness." The jurists who sentenced Christians to the flames will "liquefy" in a much fierier conflagration, while philosophers will "blush" as they are punished in the bodies and souls they disavowed as part of their intellectual deliberations.

With this visual detailing of tortured Roman bodies, Tertullian's *On the Shows* exhibits features of the Christian "tours of hell" motif, of which the *Apocalypse of Peter* is the most prominent example.<sup>851</sup> A particularly conspicuous feature of this literary theme is the detailing of eschatological punishments that are enacted in accord with the sins for which the punished individual is most notorious. Thus blasphemers in the *Apocalypse of Peter* are hanged by their tongues, while women who beautified their appearance to seduce men are suspended by their hair and neck.<sup>852</sup> For Tertullian's part, he does not localize punishment to particular parts of the body, but highlights the reversal of fortunes that will accrue to the unrighteous. Prominent Roman citizens who had opposed or enticed Christians will be punished in ways that invert their

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*the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 159-194 [182-4].

<sup>851</sup>On this, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983). The *Apocalypse of Peter* was widely popular in early Christianity, and was being read as early as the late second century (a quotation in Clement of Alexandria's *Eclogae Propheticae* [41.1-2] provides a *terminus ad quem*). Hence, the tours of hell motif will have already gained popularity among Christian readers by the time of Tertullian and may have influenced the concluding "apocalypse" in *On the Shows*. For similar descriptions of the Day of Judgment and the punishment of sinners, see also the *Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah* and the *Christian Sibylline Oracles*.

<sup>852</sup>*Apocalypse of Peter* 7.

stereotypical activities. Take, for example, Tertullian's condemnation of participants in the Roman spectacles:

And then there will be the tragic actors to be heard, more vocal in their own tragedy; and the players (*histriones*) to be seen, lither of limb by far in the fire; and then the charioteer to watch, red all over in the wheel of flame; and, next, the athletes to be gazed upon, not in their gymnasiums but hurled in the fire.<sup>853</sup>

Note here the highlighting of the tragic actor's voice, the stage-player's agility, the charioteer's command of the wheel, and the athlete's physique, all of which are transmuted so that they contribute to the visualization of the Roman's body's torture. Through this evocative scene, Tertullian casts the Roman body from the seats of the coliseum into the arena itself, where they become the spectacle of punishment that they had enjoyed for earthly entertainment. The Christian body, through the eyes and imagination of Tertullian, takes the place of its Roman persecutors, watching with laughter and joy as the Roman body is tortured and the imperial gaze of punishment is reversed.

The final spectacle for Christians, according to Tertullian, will be the triumphant return of Jesus, the figure whom they had been forced to defend from the mocking insults of their Roman neighbors:

"This is he," I shall say, "the son of the carpenter or the harlot, the Sabbath-breaker, the Samaritan, *who had a demon*. This is he whom you bought from Judas; this is he, who was struck with reed and fist, defiled with spittle, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is he whom the disciples secretly stole away, that it might be said he had risen – unless it was the gardener who removed him, lest his lettuces should be trampled by the throng of visitors!" Such sights, such exultation, - what praetor, consul, quaestor, priest, will ever give you of his bounty?...I believe [these are] things of greater joy than circus, theater, or amphitheater, or any stadium.<sup>854</sup>

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<sup>853</sup>*On the Shows* 30 (LCL, Glover).

<sup>854</sup>*Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

With one final flourish, therefore, Tertullian mocks his Roman opponents by highlighting the triumphant exaltation of Jesus, the one whom had been accused of being demonically possessed. In the final tally, however, it is the Roman body that will have been afflicted by demonic infestation, and it is the Roman body that will be forced to endure the punishments that are due for the demonic life that it lived.

Tertullian's treatise *On the Shows*, therefore, serves not only as a forewarning to Christians about the dire corporeal threats that lurked behind the images of the gods. Rather, it is just as much an imaginative redescription of the current and future states of the Christian cosmos. At the moment, Tertullian claims, the world is infested by demons who constantly threaten to reintegrate themselves into their former abodes, the Christian body, and so imperil the very bodily identities of Christ's followers. In this atmosphere, the spectacles of Roman entertainment are perilous to the Christian body. In the future, however, the Second Coming of Jesus will transform this world; Christians will then indeed be able to enjoy the "shows." But these eschatological entertainments will not be the declamations of tragic actors nor the battles of gladiators. The spectacles will entail the triumphant return of Christ and his judgment of humanity. As part of this transformation, the Christian and Roman bodies will trade places, the Romans from tormentors to the tortured, the Christians from abused to amused. Tertullian's treatise *On the Shows*, therefore, shifts the Christian body by averting its gaze: away from the casual spectacles of everyday Carthage, and toward the eschatological entertainments to come.

## Conclusion

For Tertullian, the danger of the reintegration of the abject, demonic body represented the ultimate threat to the viability of Christian identity. By exposing themselves to demonic corruption and risking the penetration of the Christian soul by its foreclosed former identity, the Christians risked the dissolution of the Christian body. This reintegration of the abject had dire consequences, as it threatened to unravel the salvific effects of baptism and even bring death to its human host. This thin boundary between the human and demonic informs Tertullian's prescription regarding Christian ritual activity, and thus plays a major role in the "materialization" of the Christian body.

Yet, despite the weight of Tertullian's argumentation on this issue, the viability of his construction of the demon-infused cosmos relies on a presumed Christian agreement regarding proper Christian doctrine and practice. By centering demonic pollution in the particular *activities* of Christian bodies, rather than the "religious" *spaces* of Carthage, Tertullian blurs the boundaries between Christian and Roman space and burdens the body with surplus soteriological weight. If the true danger to the Christian body is its performance of activities and ritual that are outside the bounds of proper Christian practice, then how was one to adjudicate between the varying Christian positions on ritual and ethical practice? Tertullian exacerbates this tension by extending demonic pollution to activities that many of his readers likely viewed as innocuous; horseback riding, theatrical performances, and other leisurely activities are positioned by Tertullian to be just as threatening as participation in Roman sacrifices. In such a demon-infested cosmos, where nearly any activity could be construed as idolatry – and thus, demonolatry – Tertullian's anthropological and demonological projects are left resting on an elusive Christian consensus. In this way, close attention to the function of the demonic body in Tertullian's

writings reveals the “constitutive instability” of the bodies that populated the Carthaginian cosmos – whether human or demonic, Christian or Roman. Because of the permeable boundaries between these entities and the disruptive demonic forces that constantly threatened to upset corporeal equilibrium, Tertullian’s articulation of proper Christian corporeality is destabilized even as it attempts to establish clearer boundaries between Christian and Roman bodies. This is perhaps best exemplified in Christian critiques of the New Prophecy, the movement to which Tertullian claimed allegiance. Ironically, the thoroughgoing criticism of the movement by fellow Christians entailed not the claim that it was fabricating prophecies, but the assertion that demonic spirits had duped its prophets and “inspired” them to propagate heretical teachings.<sup>855</sup> In his determination to construct a demon-infested cosmos, therefore, Tertullian inadvertently provided support for the cosmic context that would underwrite the repudiation of the New Prophecy by other Christians. Despite his best efforts at keeping them at bay, then, it seems that in the end Tertullian’s demons came home to roost.

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<sup>855</sup>See, for example, the comments of Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea (ca. 230-268), who claims that a Montanist woman claimed to be in a state of ecstatic prophecy, but was in Firmilian’s view inspired by evil demons (ap. Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.10). See also Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, wherein there are repeated instances that Montanist prophetesses are accused of demonic possession, resulting in attempted exorcisms performed by anti-Montanist bishops (5.16.6, 5.18.13, 5.19.3). For discussion, see Marjanen, “Montanism,” 185-212.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion: Christians Among Demons and Humans

In the closing to his landmark 1966 work *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*,<sup>856</sup> Michel Foucault remarked that the concept of the “human” was “an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.”<sup>857</sup> Through this critique of contemporary humanism, Foucault heralded both an end and a beginning: the end of “human” as an assumed universal category, and the beginning of the reconsideration of the thin boundaries between humanity and the nonhuman elements of its surrounding world. Over a half-century after Foucault’s groundbreaking work, at a time when humanity’s interimplication with various medical, technical, economic, and ecological networks is increasingly apparent, scholarship that probes the murky borderlines between the human and nonhuman is becoming ever more pertinent. Contemporary approaches to such issues, often grouped under the rubric of “posthumanism,” have largely looked to futuristic tech-centered theorizations of humanity’s “cyborg” future in order to probe the increasingly entangled fates of humanity with other entities, ecosystems, and technologies.

This project, by contrast, has looked in a very different direction, toward the ancient past, where the human body similarly found itself enmeshed with a host of nonhuman things. The Christian body’s propinquity with demons is one example of such entanglement, as seen especially through the ideological and ritual interimplication of Christian and demonic bodies.

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<sup>856</sup>*Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*

<sup>857</sup>Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 387.

Through four case studies on Christian demonologies in the first three centuries of the Common Era, I have demonstrated that early Christians held to a wide variety of views on the demonic body. The Gospel of Mark and Ignatius of Antioch, for example, highlight early Christian understandings of demons as primarily “bodiless” entities, though perhaps still possessing some kind of “materiality.” Other early Christian witnesses, including the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* as well as the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage evince demonologies where the demonic body is seen as particularly corpulent, if nonetheless still more ethereal than its human counterpart. Such Christian divergences regarding the demonic body speak to the thoroughgoing diversity of early Christian communities – a point that has been increasingly emphasized by scholars of this period of Christian history.<sup>858</sup>

Despite these demonological discrepancies, I noted that in each case differences in demonic corporeality run parallel to divergences in Christian characterizations of the ideal Christian body. And so the Gospel of Mark’s depiction of demonic bodies as invasive relates to prevailing anthropologies where the Christian body is prone to possession by divine entities. Likewise, Ignatius of Antioch’s emphasis on the lack of flesh in the demonic body intersects with his claim that the ideal Christian body consists of both flesh and spirit. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage both cite the demonic body as representative of the activities they call Christians to eschew (excessive consumption and Greco-Roman cultural activities, respectively). All of these examples demonstrate how early Christian disagreements regarding demonic bodies are tied up with related differences among Christians in their conceptions of ideal *human* embodiment. The hybridity of the demonic body, then, reflects broader multiplicities in Christian modes of corporeality. This suggests, in turn, that the bodies

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<sup>858</sup>On this, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

of demons served as fruitful sites of negotiation and invention for Christians as they fashioned the contours of human corporeality within and among other cosmic forces.

The propinquity between demonic and human corporealities, moreover, materialized in the ritual activities of early Christians. I pointed out, for example, that narratives of demonic possession and expulsion informed early Christian exorcistic practices. In similar fashion, Ignatius of Antioch's strict dichotomy between "orthodox" and "docetic" Christologies, articulated in part through portrayals of the demonic body, were ritualized as part of exclusive Christian Eucharistic ceremonies. Clement of Alexandria called on Christians to abnegate the cumbersome corporeality of the demon through regimented diets and contemplation of the divine, two ritual activities that would bring about the shedding of fleshly integuments. In the final chapter, I explored how the "abject" demon served Tertullian's effort to steer fellow Christians away from participating in the demon-infused cultural activities of Carthage. In all of these cases, then, the demonic body came to play a central role in what Catherine Bell calls the *ritualization* of Christian corporeality; that is, the manufacturing of a distinct Christian body through repetitive and regulated ritual activities. As such ritual procedures were enacted (or contested) among early Christians, they will have shaped the materialization of Christian identity as an embodied repudiation of demonic assailants. In this way, therefore, the contours of the demonic body both *reflected* and *reproduced* Christian corporeal ideologies.

The tandem construction of demonic and human corporeality demonstrates the way in which early Christian authors constructed the bodies that populated their cosmos – human, demon, and otherwise – as part of an "interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity."<sup>859</sup> Configurations of the human body, on the one hand, took shape in light of the many bodies and

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<sup>859</sup>Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 31.

objects adjacent to it. Similarly, the cosmos and its denizens were fashioned relative to ideals regarding the makeup and performance of Christian embodiment. By tracing this close interconnection, my project serves the broader purposes of re-centering the nonhuman in our study of early Christianity while enriching the cosmic contexts in which the Christian body took shape. What is more, my research underscores a point made two decades ago by Dale Martin in his analysis of Greco-Roman views of the body:

The self was a precarious, temporary state of affairs, constituted by forces surrounding and pervading the body, like the radio waves that bounce around and through the bodies of modern urbanites. In such a maelstrom of cosmic forces, *the individualism of modern conception disappears*, and the body is perceived as a location in a continuum of cosmic movement. The body – or the “self” – is an unstable point of transition, not a discrete, permanent, and solid entity.<sup>860</sup>

The recognition of the “precarious” placement of human subjectivity within this cosmic “maelstrom” has the potential to reorient our understandings of ancient bodies, away from anthropocentric models where human bodies stand in isolation from their surrounding environments, and toward more nuanced approaches that view humanity as an entity molded by and enmeshed within cosmic ecosystems of “multiple interacting agents.”<sup>861</sup> Tracing ancient constructions of the body as an unstable “location” in a “continuum of cosmic movement,” therefore, aids in confirming Foucault’s hypothesis: the idea of a distinct and individualistic “human” subjectivity resides much more easily in Enlightenment thought than it does in the writings of antiquity.

Beyond corroborating Martin’s and Foucault’s insights, what might looking to the ancient past contribute to ongoing posthumanist discussions? In other words, how can the past shape our future? I suggest that within such discussions, intellectual traditions of antiquity can serve as

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<sup>860</sup>Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 25. Emphasis mine.

<sup>861</sup>Chin, “Cosmos,” 100.

fruitful “prehuman” alternatives to Enlightenment-era intellectual paradigms. In the phrasing of Donna Haraway, thinking with ancient demons can “dilate” the range of alternative potentialities regarding the human body and its implication in networks of nonhuman entities.<sup>862</sup> Through this approach we will be able to provide not only a more accurate representation of the bodies and cosmologies of ancient Christians, but also new resources for reimagining the enlivened “materiality” that surrounds and intersects with our modern corporeal “self.” Though some contemporary readers might find it unthinkable to imagine a demon inhabiting a human body or evil spirits causing illnesses, they can nevertheless more carefully consider the impact of the nonhuman, and thus be better able to detect – see, hear, smell, taste, feel – a wider assortment of the nonhuman entities that circulate around and within our bodies.<sup>863</sup> If such posthuman subjectivities are possible, then our ancient past might come to play an important role in promoting more harmonious and constructive relationships between humans and the nonhuman ecosystems with whom we share this cosmos.

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<sup>862</sup>Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 126-7.

<sup>863</sup>For this phrasing, I am indebted to Jane Bennett (*Vibrant Matter*, ix).

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