

CONFLICTS OF ΜΑΓΕΙΑ AND MIRACLE IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:
SOCIAL DISCOURSE ON LEGITIMATE AND DEVIANT
USE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

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LISTS ADDITIONAL ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations in this dissertation are from the *SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, eds. Patrick H. Alexander and others (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999). The following abbreviations are used in addition to those found in the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

<i>Africa</i>	<i>Africa: Journal of the International African Institute</i>
ASAM	A.S.A. Monographs
BCENT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ELH</i>	<i>ELH: English Literary History</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
JPTSup	Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series
<i>JRAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i> , formerly <i>Man</i> (1901–1994)
<i>JRAIGB</i>	<i>The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland</i> (1907–1965), absorbed into <i>Man</i> in 1965
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>RAIN</i>	<i>Royal Anthropological Institute News</i>
<i>TPAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i> , former name of <i>Transaction of the American Philological Association (TAPA)</i>

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PREFACE

Much hard work and sacrifice has gone into the production of this dissertation. The majority of the sacrifices were made by many whose names are not listed on the title page. The initial ideas for this study developed in the fall of 2007 during two classes taught by Dr. Carolyn Osiek, my faculty advisor at the time. Papers in these classes formed the basis for chs. 6 and 8. Following Dr. Osiek's retirement at the end of my coursework, I asked Dr. Warren Carter to serve as my dissertation director. I hoped that Dr. Carter's attention to detail and excellence that were characteristic of his own academic writing instruction would carry over into his role as dissertation director, and this certainly has been the case. Thus, I would like to thank Dr. Carter for his diligence and his endurance in reading and commenting on the unpolished, initial drafts of each chapter of this study. Furthermore, Dr. Carter has my deepest gratitude for his desire to see excellence in my work and for his immense patience over the last few years. I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Shelly Matthews and Dr. Francisco Lozada, for their time in reading and commenting on this project. Dr. Matthews, whose own work concentrates on the book of Acts, has provided very valuable, albeit at times challenging insights. I would like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Willaims, Dean of Academic Affairs at Brite Divinity School, for his encouragement and prodding aimed at making sure that I finish. In addition, Brite Divinity School's NT Testament colloquium discussed ch. 6 in the fall of 2012, and that discussion not only strengthened ch. 6 but the entire dissertation. Many thanks go to the Context Group, who have always supported and contributed to my development as a social-scientific critic of the Bible. Among my fellow students that have provided valuable support,

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Ronald Dennis Roberts

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCING ΜΑΓΕΙΑ-MIRACLE CONFLICTS IN ACTS

Why does the Acts of the Apostles present Simon of Samaria “practicing magic” (μαγεύων) (Acts 8:9) and amazing the people with “magical acts” (μαγεΐαις) prior to Philip’s arrival in Samaria (Acts 8:11) yet does not label Philip’s wonder-working as μαγεία? Likewise, Acts neither calls Peter a μάγος nor associates him with μαγεία; nevertheless, why does Acts grant this worker of profound wonders (Acts 3:6–8; 5:1–11, 14–16) the authority to describe Simon of Samaria as “in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness”? Similarly, why does Acts depict Elymas as a μάγος and a “son of the devil” (Acts 13:8, 10), while Acts never labels Paul a μάγος, although he is under the influence of an empowering spirit (Acts 13:9) and curses Elymas with blindness (Acts 13:11)? These are important questions when we consider that many of Peter’s and Paul’s “miracles” do not look much different from magic.¹ Two telling examples of Peter and Paul’s miracles will suffice for the moment:

More than ever, a crowd of both men and women that trusted in the Lord were being added with the result that they even carried the sick out into the streets and placed them on couches and pallets in order that when Peter came, even his shadow might overshadow some of them. Even the crowd from the cities surrounding Jerusalem was coming together in order to bring sick people and people troubled by unclean spirits, all of whom were being healed. (Acts 5:14–16)²

¹ Although Acts provides no detailed narration of Philip’s wonder-working, Acts 8:6 does refer to “signs” (σημεῖα) performed by Philip. In the NT, σημεῖον often refers to a miracle (δύναμις) or wonder (τέρας). A particular relevant example is the appearance of σημεῖον in Acts 4:22 as a reference to Peter’s healing of a lame man at the Temple (Acts 3:1–10). It is safe to assume that Acts presents Philip’s σημεῖα as similar in kind and method to the wonders that Acts attributes to Peter and Paul. See BDAG, s.v. “σημεῖον”; Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “σημεῖον, σημαίνω, σημειώω, ἄσημος, ἐπίσημος, εὐσημος, σύσημον,” *TDNT* 7:229–261, especially 230, 239–240.

² In this study, translations of biblical texts are mine, unless otherwise noted.

God did many uncommon miracles through Paul's hands with the result that even handkerchiefs and aprons were carried away from his skin to the sick and the diseases were released from them and evil spirits proceeded out. (Acts 19:11–12)

To these miraculous healings and exorcisms, we could add several other extraordinary activities in which Acts presents Paul and Peter engaging, particularly Peter's healing of a lame man (Acts 3:6–8), Peter's lethal proclamation of Ananias and Sapphira's deaths (5:1–11), Paul's healing of a lame man (14:8–10), Paul's resuscitation of Eutychus (20:9–12), and Paul's survival of a venomous snake bite (28:3–6).

Acts provides four episodes (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–18; 19:13–16) in which $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -working characters perform extraordinary deeds similar to those of Peter and Paul. Although these four episodes depict Peter and Paul as legitimate prophetic witnesses to Jesus Christ, they present several $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -working characters in a negative light. In Acts 8:23, Peter ultimately describes the worker of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ Simon of Samaria as caught “in the chains of bitterness and the chains of wickedness.” Later, in Acts 13:10, Paul slanders the $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ Elymas as a “son of the devil.” The prophetic slave in Acts 16:16–18 is an annoyance for Paul, who exorcises the prophetic spirit possessing the slave. Lastly, the Sons of Sceva, who unsuccessfully attempt an exorcism by the name of Jesus and authority of Paul, are comically assaulted in Acts 19:16 by the very evil spirit they attempt to exorcise.

The following study focuses on the competitive interaction in Acts between certain leaders of the Christ-movement and several “magical” characters. These interactions occur in Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–18; 19:13–16. The ultimate goal of the study is to understand the theological-ideological significance of these competitive interactions. Particularly problematic for this study is the rhetorical separation that Acts creates between the Christ-following miracle-workers (Peter, Philip, and Paul) and the non-Christ-following “magicians” (Simon of Samaria,

Elymas/Barjesus, the divinatory slave in Acts 16, and the Sons of Sceva). This distinction creates two groups: legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers and illegitimate magicians outside the Christ-movement. Employing the so-called “sociological” approach to magic³ (which considers magic to be a form of social deviance) along with a symbolic interactionist approach to social deviance, I will argue that the interactions between Christ-following protagonists and μαγεία-working characters are conflicts over authority, in which Acts portrays its miracle-working heroes (Peter and Paul) as legitimate employers of divine power and their magical competitors as either employers of illegitimate spiritual power or usurpers of legitimate divine power. Ideologically, the result is the creation and maintenance of a unique group identity for the early Christ-movement, in which the early Christ-followers are the only legitimate human channels for the divine power of God’s Holy Spirit.

I. Studying Μαγεία and Magic

Modern biblical scholars and historians of religion translate numerous ancient words, particularly μάγος and *magus* as “magician,” and they render μαγεία and *magia* as “magic.”⁴ For example, Acts 8:9 indicates that prior to Philip’s arrival, Simon of Samaria was ἄνθρωπος δὲ τις ὀνόματι Σίμων προὔπηρχεν ἐν τῇ πόλει μαγεύων καὶ ἐξιστάνων τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας, which the NRSV translates as “Now a certain man named Simon had previously *practiced magic* in the city and amazed the people of Samaria.” Two verses later, the NRSV translates ταῖς μαγείαις as “with his magic,” and the NASB with a bit more grammatical accuracy renders the phrase as “with his magic arts” (Acts 8:11). Similarly, Acts 13 introduces Elymas/Bar-Jesus as ἄνδρα

³ David E. Aune, “Magic in Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 1513–1516.

⁴ Yuval Harari, “What Is a Magical Text? Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic,” in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. Shaul Shaked, IJS Studies in Judaica 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 109.

τινὰ μάγον ψευδοπροφήτην Ἰουδαῖον, and the NRSV translates this description as “a certain *magician*, a Jewish false prophet” (13:6; cf. 13:8).

Although English-language speakers and writers use “magic” to translate μαγεία, this does not guarantee that “magic” is an exact conceptual equivalent for the ancient concept μαγεία.⁵ Put simply, μαγεία did not always mean exactly the same things to ancient Greek speakers as “magic” does for modern English speakers. This is not to say that similarities between the ancient concept μαγεία and the modern concept “magic” do not exist. For instance, just as with the modern concept of “magic,” some ancient writers treated μαγεία as if it were often mere illusion.⁶ In addition, many ancient writers conceived of μαγεία as the manipulation or coercion of superhuman and natural forces.⁷ Under the influence of the modern social-sciences, the modern use of magic also covers the ritual manipulation of material objects and verbal formulas to cause empirical results, especially when such practices are found within religious rituals and more traditional societies. This understanding of magic occurs also among ancient writers.⁸ Even the conception of μαγεία as “superstition” (that is, out-dated or excessive ritual) occurs among both ancient and modern writers.⁹ In actuality, neither ancient μαγεία nor modern magic is a single monolithic concept; instead, they are both composite cognitive categories containing several concepts that are not always mutually compatible.

As for the differences between ancient μαγεία and modern “magic,” two are particularly important. First, the Greek word μάγος derives etymologically from the name for Medeo-

⁵ Likewise, *Magie* and *magique* are used for inexact modern translations of μαγεία and *magia*, and the same is true of *Zauberer* and *magicien* for μάγος and *magus*. Even the similarity of spelling between the modern Spanish word *magia* and the Latin *magia* does not ensure exact conceptual equivalence.

⁶ E.g., Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 30.6; cf. Lucian, *Alex.* 12, 20.

⁷ E.g., Lucian, *Lover of Lies*, 13; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 222–229.

⁸ E.g. Lucan, *Civil War (Pharsalia)* 6.507–830; Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 11, 13–15.

⁹ E.g., Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 37. For more on the Greco-Roman concept of “superstition” (δεισιδαιμονία; *superstitio*), see Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Persian fire cult priests (*magush*).¹⁰ Later as the rituals of the Persian priests became popularized in Hellenistic society, especially among itinerant priests, the term μαγεία was developed to describe the practices of the μάγοι. Although the concept of μαγεία took on additional nuances over time, one meaning of μαγεία that continued well into the Roman Empire was the practices of Persian priests.¹¹ The English concept of magic does not contain this meaning.

Second, the modern Western concept of magic, unlike the concept of ancient μαγεία, has been significantly influenced by the social-scientific study of magic. Especially influential for modern understandings of magic are the early social-scientific theories developed by James George Frazer and Emile Durkheim.¹² Thus, most modern approaches to magic, especially scholarly ones, are influenced by a heavy dose of rationalist skepticism, which denies the efficacy of magic from a modern secularist perspective on natural and social phenomena.¹³ As will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, Frazer's description of magic is that of "pseudoscience," which like modern science conceives of the world as operating by predictable laws. The predictability of their respective natural laws allows magicians and scientists to develop technologies to manipulate the environment around them.¹⁴ Frazer considers magic to be a fallacious science because it operates on the law of sympathy, rather than the laws of the modern sciences. Thus, we may infer that Frazer understands the universe to be a closed system operating according to predictable laws, whose effects are empirically observable.

Skepticism toward magic existed in the ancient world, as exemplified by the writings of Lucian of Samosata, who described several wonder-workers of his time as con artists that use

¹⁰ Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 55; Bruce J. Malina, "Magi," in *NIDB* 3:766.

¹¹ Apuleius, *Apol.* 25.9–11; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 20.

¹² James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Touchstone / Simon & Schuster, 1996), 1st ed. originally published in 1890 and abridged ed. originally published in 1922; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, 1915).

¹³ John Middleton, "Magic (Theories of Magic)," *ER* 9:82.

¹⁴ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 22–23.

illusion to deceive gullible followers.¹⁵ Thus, like modern rationalists who are skeptical about magic's efficacy, Lucian denies the efficacy of ancient *μαγεία*; however, the reason for this denial rests on grounds quite different from that of modern skepticism. First, he follows the philosophies of the Epicureans and the Cynic Demonax, who had no use for *μάγοι* because they considered the persuasion of divine forces unnecessary for the achievement of happiness.¹⁶ In a particularly relevant passage, Lucian writes of Demonax: "When a fellow claimed to be a sorcerer (*μάγος*) and to have spells so potent that by their agency he could prevail on everybody to give him whatever he wanted, Demonax said: 'Nothing strange in that! I am in the same business: follow me to the breadwoman's, if you like, and you shall see me persuade her to give me bread with a single spell and a tiny charm'—implying that a coin is as good as a spell" (Lucian, *Demonax* 23 [Harmon, LCL]). Second, as a result of Lucian's philosophical perspective, he typically considers anyone who gains income or fame by means of wonder-working as most likely being a fraud. For example, he paints the wonder-working Alexander of Abonoteichos as nothing more than a greedy, fame-seeking charlatan that preys upon the gullible masses.¹⁷ Thus, even Greco-Roman skepticism toward magic is not identical to the rationalist skepticism of Frazer, Durkheim, and other modern social scientists. The former relies on ancient philosophical cosmologies, and the latter on the modern scientific cosmology.

Lucian's portrayal of the masses and other philosophers as accepting the efficacy of *μαγεία* suggests that such skepticism was not shared within popular Greco-Roman culture. The acceptance of the efficacy of *μαγεία* among the majority of people in Greco-Roman society is further illustrated by the existence the *Greek Magical Papyri* (*PGM*) and the traditional healing

¹⁵ E.g. Lucian, *Alex.*; Lucian, *Peregr.*

¹⁶ Lucian, *Alex.* 17, 25, 38, 47; Lucian, *Demonax* 23, 27, 37.

¹⁷ Lucian, *Alex.*

techniques in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*.¹⁸ Even more significant for this present study is that such skepticism is not part of Act's narrative world. In particular, Acts does not demonstrate any skepticism about whether Simon of Samaria or Elymas can perform efficacious μαγεία. In fact, Acts attests to the efficacy of their actions (Acts 8:10–11; 13:6). Instead, Acts condemns the legitimacy of their practices. As will be discussed later, denial of the theological legitimacy of such acts and inter-group competition lie at the heart of much Greco-Roman skepticism toward magic.¹⁹

Between Lucian and Acts are competing understandings of magic. Lucian appears to consider any form of wonder-working to be μαγεία. However, Acts presents Simon's and Elymas' wonders as μαγεία and does not portray the wonders performed by Philip, Peter, and Paul as μαγεία. Thus, in Acts, μάγος appears to function as a label for wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement, whose wonder-working activity is labeled μαγεία. Additionally, the reader may assume that just as in Lucian's writings, μαγεία and μάγος in Acts are pejorative terms because they are associated with antagonist characters (Simon of Samaria and Elymas) (Acts 8:9–24, 13:4–12).

Ultimately, no single Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία exists, instead, there are two basic definitions that are not completely compatible. Apuleius of Madaura provides us a succinct explanation of these basic definitions of μάγος. In Apuleius' *Apology*, the rhetor and philosopher defends himself against the charge that he himself is a *magus*. Well into his defense,

¹⁸ Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Anne Bäumer, "Die Macht des Wortes in Religion und Magie (Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 28, 4–29)," *Hermes* 112 (1984), 99.

¹⁹ Fritz Graf, "How to Cope with a Difficult Life: A View of Ancient Magic," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, SHR 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 109–112.

Apuleius simply asks, “What is a *magus*?”²⁰ In response, he gives two definitions for *magus*. First, a *magus* is a Persian priest, or at least one trained in Persian religion. Apuleius considers this the *proper* sense of the word *magus*.²¹ Second, the *vulgar* or *popular* sense of *magus* is a person who is able to cause any wonder he or she desires by means of communication with deities and recitation of powerful incantations. Additionally, a *magus* in the popular sense is capable of rendering revenge by means of his spiritual powers upon his enemies.²² According to the first and proper definition of *magus*, this ritual figure is a member of an honorable religious tradition, but the popular definition of *magus* describes a disreputable character quite capable of not only ostentatious wonder-working but also malevolent ritual acts. Apuleius’ second and popular definition of *magus* considers the *magus* a charlatan, of which a subset is the sorcerer, or worker of malevolent wonders.²³

In addition to these popular notions of magic are the academic understandings of magic, particularly those developed by social scientists. These academic theories of magic are often incompatible with one another, in particular the neo-intellectualist and symbolist theories, which I will discuss more thoroughly in the second chapter. Yet, at this point, it is necessary to introduce the more significant social-scientific theories of magic. Frazer, as noted, considers magic a pseudo-science, commonly found among tribal and traditional societies, operating by the sympathetic principles of similarity and contagion.²⁴ Durkheim, however, views magic as the individualistic practices of deviant ritual specialists operating outside the structure of organized

²⁰ Apuleius, *Apol.* 25.8.

²¹ *Ibid.* 25.8–11.

²² *Ibid.* 26.6–9. It is interesting that Apuleius, unlike Lucian, does not deny the efficacy of such popular μαγεία/magia.

²³ Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, Gender, Theory, & Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 33.

²⁴ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 10–69.

religious institutions.²⁵ Bronislaw Malinowski's emotionalist view of magic understands it to be a ritual means of dealing with the uncertainties of life through ritual manipulation of words and objects.²⁶ Symbolists like Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah understand magic as persuasive rituals involving the manipulation of words and objects that communicate messages to the ritual participants.²⁷

A similarity between some of these social-scientific understandings of magic and ancient *μαγεία* is that they both include rituals involving some sort of persuasion or coercion. However, three things are different. First, no modern conception of magic, popular or social-scientific, has retained the understanding of magic as the religion of Persia. Second, for most social-scientific theories, "magic" is not an explicitly pejorative term, as it is with the popular definition of *μαγεία*. Third, more variety exists among modern understandings of magic than among ancient understandings of *μαγεία*. In the Greco-Roman world, *μαγεία* can be broken down into three basic elements, which are Persian religion, charlatanism, and sorcery. While *Persian religion* is the key element of the *proper* *μαγεία*, *charlatanism* and *sorcery* are the primary elements of *popular* *μαγεία*.

Many historians of religion will provide a fourth definition of *μαγεία*, which is similar to Apuleius' popular definition without the pejorative connotations. Thus, under this supposed fourth definition, *μάγος* is a self-proclaimed title adopted by traditional healers and wonder-workers that operate outside traditional religious organizations and do not claim any direct affiliation to Persian religion. The common evidence for the existence of such *μάγοι* is the

²⁵ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 57–63.

²⁶ Graham Cunningham, *Religion and Magic: Approaches and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), Netlibrary e-book, 23, 28–30; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 39–40;

²⁷ Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts," in *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 60–86; S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man*, n.s., 3 (1968), 175–208.

PGM. However, three problems exist with this fourth understanding of *μαγεία*. First, the overwhelming majority of the texts in the *PGM* never explicitly claim to be descriptions of *μαγεία* nor to be from a *μάγος*, and the few texts that do explicitly refer to *μαγεία* or *μάγοι* come from only two papyri dating from the fourth to fifth centuries CE, several centuries after the composition of Acts.²⁸ The characterization of the *PGM* as *μαγεία* is primarily the work of modern scholars, who have accepted as social fact the definitions of *μαγεία* offered by elitists like Lucian and Apuleius. However, it is inappropriate to assume that those whom elite writers labeled *μάγοι* actually considered themselves *μάγοι*. Second and more importantly, many of the scholars who propose this fourth understanding of *μαγεία* do not actually define ancient conceptions of *μαγεία*; instead, they have categorized various ancient ritual practices and practitioners as ancient “magic” and “magicians” using a modern theory of magic such as those developed by Frazer, Durkheim, or Marcel Mauss.²⁹ Thus, they have not really succeeded in defining the ancient concept of *μαγεία*; instead, they have categorized several ancient ritual practices, many of which may have been categorized as *μαγεία* by ancient Greeks and Romans, into a modern cross-cultural category of “magic.” Put simply, the *PGM* as a published collection of ritual texts is a modern construction, that is, a modern anthology of ritual texts that fit into the modern category of “magic.” While this approach is certainly valid and informative, it does not provide us with a fourth ancient understanding of *μαγεία*; instead, the postulation of this fourth ancient understanding of *μαγεία* is actually a retrojection of a modern understanding of “magic” onto ancient phenomena.

²⁸ *PGM* I.127, 331; IV.210, 2319, 2449, 2453; cf. Alan F. Segal, “Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition,” in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Giles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, eds. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren, *EPRO* 91 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 351, 356. According to Segal, the *PGM* contains six instances of *μαγ*-root words (*PGM* I.127, 331; IV.210, 2319, 2449, 2453). These six instances of *μαγ*-root words occur in only two papyri, namely *P.Berol.* inv. 5025 (fourth/fifth century CE) and *P.Bibl.Nat. Suppl.* gr. no. 574 (fourth century CE).

²⁹ Cf. Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 27.

Therefore, studies of ancient magic, including the present study, should recognize a distinction between modern, academic understandings of magic and the ancient conception of μαγεία. Magic and μαγεία may be related concepts, but they are not identical. Studying ancient μαγεία using modern social-scientific theories of magic is a valid academic approach to μαγεία. Nevertheless, it is still good to maintain a distinction between modern understandings of magic and the ancient category of μαγεία. Although overlap will occur between the two categories, they are not equivalent.

To avoid confusion, I will reserve modern English terms relating to magic for references to modern concepts. Thus, I will use μαγεία to refer to so-called “emic” Greco-Roman conceptions of the wonder-working practices in question; however, I will use “magic” to refer to the modern categorization of such wonder-working practices. Although this is very much a heuristic distinction, it is done to highlight that modern and ancient categorizations of such ritual practices are not identical. Put simply, Greek μαγεία and modern conceptions of “magic” may be similar, but they are not identical. An ancient practice that a modern scholar may consider to be magic may not have been considered μαγεία by the ancient observer, ritual actor, or writer.

It is also necessary to recognize that just as there are competing modern theories on defining and categorizing certain ritual acts as magic, not all ancient Greco-Romans agreed on the exact definitions of the labels μαγεία and μάγος, but even more important is that ancient Greco-Romans did not always agree on the application of these terms to actual ritual practices and their practitioners. While the Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία divides into two subordinate concepts (proper and popular), the application of the labels μαγεία and μάγος to actual ritual practices and their practitioners is even more ambiguous.

Apuleius explains that often the uneducated accuse esteemed philosophers of being *magi*.³⁰ Of course, he would include himself in the list of philosophers falsely accused of being *magi*. According to Philostratus, however, not only the uneducated were susceptible to accusing philosophers of μαγεία. The emperor Nero considered philosophers to be practitioners of *magia* and divination.³¹ Furthermore, Philostratus explains how on several occasions his protagonist Apollonius of Tyana, whom the author considers a true philosopher, is accused of being a *magus*.³² Most significantly, Domitian accuses Apollonius of being a *magus* and has him arrested.³³ In *Alexander the False Prophet* 5, Lucian informs that Alexander of Abonoteichos, whom he considers a charlatan, studied under another charlatan from Tyana who practiced μαγεία. Alexander's charlatan teacher was also an associate of Apollonius for whom Lucian seems to hold no regard. Thus, Lucian quite likely considered Apollonius a popular *magus*, just as Apuleius seems to have considered him a popular *magus*.³⁴ In addition, Origen considers Apollonius to be a popular μάγος.³⁵ However, Philostratus refutes accusations that Apollonius was a μάγος, and he claims that Apollonius was a wonder-working philosopher.³⁶

Therefore, the application of the labels μάγος and *magus* in the Greco-Roman world was not a matter of applying universally agreed upon criteria; instead, it was actually the subjective application of negative stereotypes. Thus, Apollonius was a reputable philosopher in the eyes of Philostratus, but Lucian and Apuleius considered him a charlatan. Thus, concerning Simon of Samaria and Elymas, I cannot assume that an ancient reader would have understood that Simon

³⁰ Apuleius, *Apol.* 27.1–3.

³¹ Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.* 4.35.

³² *Ibid.* 1.2; 4.18; 5.12; 8.19; 8.30.

³³ *Ibid.* 7.17.

³⁴ Apuleius, *Apol.* 90.6.

³⁵ Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.41.9–18.

³⁶ Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.* 1.2; 5.12; 7.34; 8.6; 8.7.9–10; 8.19, 30–31.

and Elymas identify themselves as μάγοι or that their respective followers would have identified either of the two wonder-workers as μάγοι.

As seen in the example of Apollonius, Philostratus a follower of Apollonius lauds the wonder-worker as a philosopher and not a μάγος. On the other hand, Domitian,³⁷ several Greek priests,³⁸ and Apuleius consider Apollonius to be a μάγος.³⁹ Similarly, Celsus accuses Jesus Christ of being a μάγος, an accusation that Origen vehemently refutes.⁴⁰ Thus, I understand that within Acts, μάγος and μαγεία are pejorative labels that portray the activities of these two wonder-workers as deviant behavior. Thus, I will employ the term “wonder-working” as a neutral designation for the ancient performance of extraordinary acts by means of superhuman power, and “wonder-worker” will be a neutral designation for the performer of such acts.⁴¹ Thus, the value-laden terms δύναμις (miracle) and μαγεία are both forms of wonder-working, along with the labels for their corresponding practitioners— μάγος and miracle-worker.⁴² δύναμις and miracle-worker are positive labels, and μαγεία and μάγος are negative labels. To understand better Act’s use of such pejorative labeling in the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, I will turn to the social-scientific study of magic.

³⁷ Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.* 7.11, 20;

³⁸ *Ibid.* 4.18; 8.19.

³⁹ Apuleius, *Apol.* 90.6.

⁴⁰ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30.

⁴¹ As Remus explains, a “wonder” in ancient Greco-Roman culture, regardless of whether observers identify the event as “miracle” or μαγεία, was characterized by the defying of the human observers’ expectations of ordinarily plausible phenomena and ordinary human behavior. In particular, Greco-Romans understood wonders of miracle and μαγεία to be extraordinary phenomena occurring through spiritual or divine power (δύναμις) typically unavailable to humans. Therefore, a wonder-worker is a person who enacts or closely participates in occurrences or behavior that not only defies expectations of what is “ordinary” but also occurs through wonder-workers access to extraordinary spiritual or divine power, that is, power that is typically not inherent to a human being (Harold E. Remus, “Miracle,” *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, 2nd ed. [New York: Garland, 1998], Routledge Religion Online edition; Harold E. Remus, “Miracle [New Testament],” *ABD* 4:856–858; Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*, Patristic Monograph Series 10 [Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983], 3–47).

⁴² Acts contains no direct positive counterpart for the negative label μάγος; thus, for heuristic purposes, I will use the English word “miracle-worker” as a positive label for one who performs a δύναμις.

II. Magic in the Social Sciences

Beyond mere rationalist skepticism, the modern academic study of magic is a complex field of competing theories concerning numerous aspects of magic, including its definition, ritual procedures, theoretical bases, and social significance. The most fruitful theories of magic have been those of the social-sciences; however, this is where the most variety of and competition between theories of magic have occurred. In addition, although progress has been made in this field with regard to the abandonment of the ethnocentric theory of social evolution and the acceptance of social constructionism by most social scientists studying magic, the overall result has been the multiplication of theories.

As Yuval Harari explains, in order to study ancient μαγεία, modern scholars must first understand their own modern conceptions of “magic.”⁴³ Heeding Harari’s advice, the present study of magic in Acts will begin in ch. 2 by coming to grips with the social-scientific approaches to magic, which will in turn lead us to a more adequate understanding of μαγεία and ultimately to an understanding of μαγεία in the narrative world of Acts. Five perspectives on magic are predominant in the social-sciences: the intellectualist, emotionalist, functionalist, symbolist perspectives, and the neo-intellectualist. Much variety occurs *within* each of these broad theoretical perspectives. Moreover, much overlap exists *among* each of these theoretical perspectives, especially between the functionalist and the symbolist perspectives. Overlap among these four perspectives highlights that theoretical approaches to magic are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although their respective opponents may portray them as mutually exclusive, as is the case sometimes with proponents of the neo-intellectualist and symbolist approaches.⁴⁴

⁴³ Harari, “What is a Magical Text,” 109.

⁴⁴ See Robin Horton, “Back to Frazer?” in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 105–137.

To a large degree, the aim of the present study influences the choice of theoretical approach that I will use. The majority of the social-scientific theories on magic focuses on magic as ritual, and then from this, the social aspects of magic are addressed. However, my concern in this study is the analysis of the social interactions that Acts portrays among those characters that perform miracles and μαγεία. In particular, I will pay special attention to how Acts' characterization of some characters as popular μάγοι functions in the narrated social interactions between miracle-workers and popular μάγοι within Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–18; 19:13–16. Therefore, some form of a functionalist approach seems most useful. The most favorable functionalist approach to the present study is the so-called “sociological” approach recommended in David E. Aune’s 1980 article “Magic in Early Christianity.”⁴⁵ The adjective “sociological” is quite appropriate in describing such an approach to magic because it is more concerned with social interactions than ritual analysis. The key to the “sociological” approach is the treatment of “magic” as a form of social deviance.

However, there are two significant impediments to adopting Aune’s approach. The first impediment is that functionalist approaches are not much in vogue in current scholarship for several reasons. Conflict theorists, for instance, claim that since functionalism treats society as a collective organism aimed at social stability, it fails to account for social changes within societies.⁴⁶ Another criticism is that functionalism rests upon theoretical tautology in which functionalism posits that social stability produces social institutions that produce social stability. Thus, the effect of social institutions is also their cause. The tautologous aspect of functionalism, according to some critics of the method, also manifests in a failure to deal adequately with individual human agency. In one sense, functionalism treats individuals as actors playing a role

⁴⁵ Aune, “Magic in Christianity,” 23.2:1513–1516.

⁴⁶David Downes and Paul Rock, *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule Breaking*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 85, 101–102.

dictated by the society, thus paying little attention to human agents as rational, conscious actors.⁴⁷ With the decline of the functional approach to magic, the debates between the neo-intellectualists and the symbolists have dominated the social-scientific study of magic since the 1980's. Therefore, any analysis favoring functionalism must also be well-informed by more recent insights, which focus on magic as ritual. Prior to beginning my analysis of the magical conflicts in Acts, I will address in chs. 2 and 3 the criticism directed toward the functionalist approach and will adjust my analytical methods accordingly.

The second impediment to adopting Aune's approach is four critical shortcomings within Aune's presentation of the "sociological" approach. First, his so-called "sociological" approach is not a thoroughly unified theory of magic as deviance; instead, Aune gleans pieces primarily from the works of Durkheim, Mauss, and to some extent E. E. Evans-Pritchard. However, much diversity exists among the theories of these scholars. Second, Aune criticizes older theories, such as Frazer's, which dichotomizes religion and magic; however, Durkheim's foundational explication of the "sociological" approach in his book *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* dichotomizes magic and religion as much as Frazer's theory does. Third, Aune oversimplifies the variety of theoretical approaches to social deviance. Although Aune claims only two primary theories of deviance exist (functionalism and labeling theory), several other approaches exist, including anomie theory, control theory, and phenomenological approaches.⁴⁸ Finally, Aune does not adequately explain why the functionalist approach to deviance is most appropriate for studying magic in the Greco-Roman context. As I will demonstrate in chs. 5–10, the symbolic interactionist approach and related approaches that extensively utilize the labeling perspective

⁴⁷ Downes and Rock, *Understanding Deviance*, 97–99; Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton, ASAM 3 (New York: Praeger, 1966), 118–119.

⁴⁸ Aune, "Magic in Christianity," 23.2:1514–1515.

are just as helpful as, if not more helpful than, the functionalist approach to deviance in analyzing magic in Acts. Accordingly, from a classic functionalist approach to deviance, the characterization of Elymas as a μάγος presents Elymas as an individualistic, even anti-social, ritual practitioner that adopts sacred elements of organized religion and employs them for profane individualistic purposes. A methodology employing the labeling perspective would understand Acts to be using the pejorative label μάγος to portray the character Elymas as an illegitimate religious specialist by characterizing him according to negative Greco-Roman stereotypes of a μάγος. Acts' portrayal of Elymas as stereotypical popular μάγος functions to discredit the rival of his wonder-working hero Paul.

The labeling perspective, which reached its first substantive form in Howard S. Becker's *Outsiders*,⁴⁹ developed into a central tenet of the symbolic interactionist approach to deviance.⁵⁰ As Robert Prus and Scott Grills explain, the symbolic interactionist approach focuses on the ways in which people as minded agents make sense of the world and develop lines of action toward all objects of their awareness, including people who in one or other ways are linked to the notions of deviance that particular sets of people develop within the context of ongoing community life."⁵¹ A symbolic interactionist approach to Acts' μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes will allow me to deal with social conflict and change in the narrative, to avoid the tautologous relationship between social stability and social institutions in functionalism, and, finally, to analyze the possible motives and effects of this negative characterization of Elymas in the

⁴⁹ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

⁵⁰ Cf. Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 73.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

narrative in order to understand better the deviance-labeler, namely the writer Luke,⁵² as a conscious and rational social actor in Greco-Roman society.

III. The Social-Sciences and Ancient Texts

The use of *modern* social-scientific theories and models to discuss *ancient* narratives is not without its problems. Fundamental discrepancy exists not only between the research methods of social scientists and biblical scholars but also between the different subjects being studied in the two fields. Most social scientific study focuses on historical socio-cultural groups and depends upon field research, case studies, and experiments involving historical persons who at some point have been personally available to a modern researcher. However, biblical scholars focus on written ancient texts produced by ancient writers within ancient socio-cultural contexts. The ancient writers, any historical persons represented in the texts, and the ancient historical socio-cultural contexts are completely unavailable to the biblical scholar for any first-hand ethnographic or sociological observation. Nevertheless, it is still possible to apply social-scientific theories and models to ancient narrative texts in order to understand better the narrative from the perspective of ancient readers.

When writing a narrative, an author interacts with his or her socio-cultural context to create a narrative world in which the narrative characters interact and with which the narrative characters interact. The narrative, including the narrative world in which the characters exist, are what Samuel Taylor Coleridge refers to as a “dramatic illusion.” Commenting on Coleridge’s understanding of “dramatic illusion” within prose fiction, Charles I. Patterson explains that narrative as a dramatic illusion “gives the illusion that we are looking directly on the scene rather

⁵² Throughout this study, I will refer the writers of the four canonical gospels and Acts by the names traditionally identified as the writers of these texts, namely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. My use of these names, however, does not indicate that I understand these to be the actual names of the authors of these texts. Instead, the names Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John simply function as convenient heuristic devices.

than reading it in a novel.”⁵³ It is the writer’s and reader’s interactions with their cultures, including their symbolic universes, that permits the dramatic illusion of the narrative world. As a dramatic illusion, the narrative world resembles to varying degrees the historical world in which the reader lives.

Coleridge’s understanding of “dramatic illusion” ultimately derives from Aristotle’s claim that the elements of a drama are imitative of the actual historical world, in which the reader lives, not to the extent that they represent “objective” reality, but to the extent that they represent that which is plausible. Extending this insight to narrative, the author attempts to create a plausible narrative world in which the narrative characters appear to exist and interact with one another and the narrative environment in a way that the author and, more importantly, the reader would expect them to interact.

Building on Seymour Benjamin Chatman’s claim that narrative characters are “autonomous beings” that the audience “reconstruct[s]” from explicit and implicit information in the text,⁵⁴ Coleman A. Baker claims, “Therefore, not only do readers construct their image of characters by what they perceive in the text, as Chatman argued, but also by combining this information with their own knowledge and experience of people.”⁵⁵ A reader’s “knowledge and experience of people” is nothing less than a reader’s understanding of culture and society. The reader interprets and evaluates the narrative world, including the characters and their experiences, much in the same way he or she interprets and evaluates actual people and events, that is, the reader interacts with his or her symbolic universe. Accordingly, a reader is able to understand a deviant character and his or her deviant behavior because of his or her culturally

⁵³ Charles I. Patterson, “Coleridge’s Conception of Dramatic Illusion in the Novel,” *ELH* 18 (1951), 132.

⁵⁴ Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 119; see also Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 21.

⁵⁵ Baker, “Identity, Narrative, and Memory,” 21–22.

mediated understandings of and personal experiences with actual deviants. Therefore, theory and insights from the social-sciences, which are the modern study of culture and society, can be extremely valuable for studying the narrative world and the characters within a narrative, including the book of Acts, because Acts presumably presents its narrative world as a plausible imitation of the actual historical world of ancient Greco-Roman society. In result, the same social-scientific insights and theories used to study historical humans can be utilized, with some necessary adjustments, to study characters in narratives, including within Acts.

John H. Elliott's classic exposition of social-scientific criticism of the Bible in *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* is primarily concerned with biblical texts as historical documents to the extent that he sees the "aim" of social-scientific criticism as "the determination of the meaning(s) explicit and implicit in the text."⁵⁶ My approach, which treats the book of Acts as primarily as a literary text within socio-historical significance, locates the construction of a text's "meaning" primarily with the reader. Nevertheless, I concur with Elliott that biblical texts are "vehicles of social interaction" in that they are "units of meaningful social discourse in either oral or written form." From a more reader-oriented perspective, Baker describes how readers engage in a dynamic process within a text that involves "the preunderstanding the reader/hearer brings to the text," "the author's construction of the text," "the reader's interaction with the text," and finally "the fusion of the world of the text and the world of the reader." The author engages his or her socio-cultural context in order to create a narrative that will provide a plausible dramatic illusion for the reader, who is interacting with his or her own socio-cultural context. A difficulty for modern readers of NT texts is that the author and the modern reader live within different socio-cultural contexts, thus the narrative draws upon a cultural and symbolic universe much different from that in which the modern reader lives. One primary benefit of social-

⁵⁶ John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* GBS, NT ser. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 8.

scientific criticism, particularly in regards to the use of cultural anthropology, is that it allows the modern reader, especially modern biblical scholars, to become more familiar with the socio-cultural context of Greco-Roman society in order to understand the NT texts more in the way that ancient Greco-Roman readers would have understood them.

Despite the increased familiarity with Greco-Roman culture that social-scientific criticism provides, this hermeneutical approach does not provide the modern reader direct access to any particular ancient person's thoughts on a narrative text, particularly the intentions and thoughts of the author of a narrative text, such as Acts. Instead, social-scientific criticism best assists the modern reader in understanding how ancient readers in a particular socio-cultural context would have typically understood the narrative. Thus, social-scientific critics should be cognizant of three factors when engaging in a reading of a narrative text. First, the social-scientific critic must recognize that the narrative text is just that a narrative, which should not be analyzed in the same way as a person would read a social-scientific field report, findings of a social-scientific experiment, a personal letter, or any other written genre. Thus, the social-scientific critic must approach the narrative accounts as containing narrations depicting social interactions among *characters*, not actual social interactions among historical humans.

Second, the social-scientific critic needs to locate the abstract ancient reader for whom the social-scientific critic is attempting to develop a plausible socio-culturally contextualized reading of the text. In my study, I will explore how a Greco-Roman, Christ-following Gentile being of non-elite social status and living at least around or above the subsistence level might read the four $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes in Acts. This reader is, of course, my own heuristic construct, but it is a heuristic construct that takes into account several sustainable variables. The broad socio-economic range that I have chosen for my ancient reader includes

people who are relatively poor, those who are quite wealthy, and everyone in between. This range of people includes all urban non-elites who do not live in abject poverty. In reference to Steven J. Friesen's poverty scale, which I will discuss with detail in ch. 5, the socio-economic range I have chosen for my ancient reader includes people primarily from levels PS4–PS6 with the possibility of some non-elite members of the PS3 being included.⁵⁷ Furthermore, this broad range of social and economic statuses represents the bulk of the *urban* population within the advanced agrarian society of the Roman Empire in the first-century CE.⁵⁸ Moreover, as I will explain at points later in my study, this is the socio-economic range into which Acts appears to place the majority of its Christ-following characters, with three notable exceptions—the poor Christ-followers within the early Jerusalemite church (Acts 6:1; 11:27–29), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27–39), and Sergius Paulus the elite governor of Cyprus (Acts 13:7, 12).

Two factors lead me to restrict the geographical location of my ancient reader to that of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia. First, these areas represent the predominantly Greek regions of the early Roman Empire. Secondly, these are the regions in which Acts places the bulk of Paul's missionary career.⁵⁹ Although a reading from a primarily Roman, Palestinian, or

⁵⁷ Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004), 341, 344–347. In Friesen's economic scale, PS3 includes the moderately rich (local elites, the wealthiest non-elites, wealthy freedpersons, moderately wealthy retainers, wealthy veterans, the wealthiest merchants). PS4 includes non-elites with a substantial amount of surplus wealth (successful merchants, traders, freedpersons, artisans ["especially those who employ others"], veterans). PS5 includes non-elites with minimal surplus income to the extent that they have "reasonable hope of remaining above the minimum level to sustain life" (some merchants, some traders, some laborers, some artisans, "large shop owners," some freedpersons, "some farm families"). PS6 includes non-elites at the subsistence and "often below the minimum level to sustain life" (most small farm families, artisans, laborers, merchants, traders, shop owners, and tavern owners).

⁵⁸ Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, McGraw-Hill Series in Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 243–280; Gerhard Lenski and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 189–192; 202–204; Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 11–14, 67–93.

⁵⁹ I use the word career here in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Becker, *Outsiders*, 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-

even Samaritan perspective would be significant and insightful, I have chosen to focus on a primarily Greek perspective because of the explicitly Pauline focus of the second half of Acts and because of the rich variety of ancient and modern resources for studying ancient μαρτυρία from a Greek perspective. Although my choice of ancient reader places my analysis at a relatively high level of abstraction, it includes a sufficient amount of specification to produce a meaningful reading of Acts.

Finally, I will chronologically locate my ancient reader to approximately 80 CE–135 CE. I admit that this is a rather broad range of dates, encompassing roughly fifty-five years. Nevertheless, the nature of my study does not require an exact dating of Acts, especially since the socio-economic, political, and religious dynamics of the eastern half of the early Roman Empire do not vary significantly across this time span. Although this chronological range excludes the earliest and latest dates that biblical scholars have proposed for the composition of Acts,⁶⁰ the date range of 80–135 CE covers the most commonly accepted dates for the composition of Acts, including most of the intermediate date of 75–100 CE and the increasingly popular later date of 115–135 CE.⁶¹

Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

⁶⁰ For examples of arguments for the earliest dates for the composition of Acts (60s–70s CE), see F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 17–24; I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1980), 46–48. For an example of arguments for the latest dates for the composition of Acts (120–150 CE), see Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online E-book, 27–53; Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 22–23, 76–78.

⁶¹ For examples of the intermediate dating of Acts (75–100 CE), see Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xxxiii; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 60–63. For examples of arguments for dating Acts between 115–120 CE, see Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 27–53; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 5. In relation to my study, the dating of Acts to the second century CE is quite tempting for several reasons. First, as I will demonstrate throughout this study, Acts' development of the *miracle-worker* character type and social identity is very much concerned with identifying legitimate leaders and constructing a hierarchy of leadership within the Christ-movement, just as second-century Christ-follower writings demonstrate a preoccupation with defining and defending the hierarchy of

From the above description, it should become clear that my “reader” is a composite figure embracing differences of status, gender, geographical region, and social power. Nevertheless, the construction is a useful heuristic tool for accomplishing the purposes of this study, specifically the analysis of the narrated social interactions in Acts’ four *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes in the context outlined above.

Third, the third factor of which social-scientific critics should recognize is the inherently a cross-disciplinary nature of social-scientific criticism that requires the critic to be sufficiently knowledgeable in several fields of study, including biblical studies, the social sciences, and the history of Greco-Roman religion. The critic’s knowledge of the social sciences will shape how he or she understands Greco-Roman culture and society and, in turn, how the critic understands a biblical text. Moreover, the critic’s knowledge of Greco-Roman history and literature also provides him or her the necessary resources to adjust adequately social-scientific theory for application to biblical texts.

Since cultural anthropology primarily focuses on extant societies and cultures, the application of anthropological theories to biblical texts is a comparative and cross-cultural endeavor. Nevertheless, cultural anthropology itself is essentially a comparative and cross-cultural discipline, as will become apparent in my discussion of social-scientific theories of

leadership within the Christ-movement. Second, just as the early anti-Marcionite writings demonstrate a concern for delineating what sectors of the Christ-movement were legitimate and which were deviant, the *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts in Acts also demonstrate a concern for drawing boundaries between legitimate and deviant Christ-followers (Cf. Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 27–53; Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*). Third, just as second-century Christ-following writings were prone to label “heretics” as popular *μάγοι*, the book of Acts, as my study will demonstrate, also depicts deviant wonder-workers within the Christ-movement as popular *μάγοι*. (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 3.4.3–4; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.7.1, 9.1, 19.5, 20.1–2, 39.1–3; 7.32.5; 9.14.2–3; 10.29.3 [6.2, 4, 14, 15, 34; 7.20; 9.9; 10.25 ANF]; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.13.1–7; 1.14.1; 1.15.6; 1.23.1–5; 1.24.5, 7; 1.25.3–5; 2.preface.1; 2.31.2–3; 2.32.3; Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 18.1–3, 26.1–8, 56.1–4; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.57.39–40; Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 4.2; Tertullian, *Prescript. against Heretics* 43.1). Nevertheless, Acts’ concerns with defining legitimate leadership, distinguishing between legitimate and deviant in-group members, and labeling rivals as popular *μάγοι* does not necessarily require a late dating of Acts (115–120 CE); however, these factors certainly strengthen the case for dating Acts to the first two decades of the second century CE.

magic in ch. 2. Thus, the function of the use of cultural anthropology in studying ancient NT texts is two-fold. Cultural anthropology provides the modern reader a better means for understanding the ancient texts within the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context in order to avoid analyses of biblical texts that function as if ancient readers and writers thought and acted just as modern readers do and in order to understand the ancient socio-cultural aspects of a text in an intentional and scholarly way that moves beyond unsupported assumptions, hunches, and guesses on the part of the modern reader.

Another benefit of social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that the use of sociological and social psychological research aids the modern reader in better understanding the dynamics and significances of social interactions within the plausible dramatic illusion of the narrative world of the ancient text. In the same way that sociology and social psychology have helped modern people better understand the social interactions and symbolic universes within modern society, these two social-scientific disciplines can aid in understanding the social interactions and symbolic universe of ancient Greco-Roman society. Of course, sociology and social psychology, which are primarily focused on modern Western society, are only useful to biblical scholars when adjustments are made to the theories of these modern disciplines in order to account for the differences between modern Western society and ancient Greco-Roman society. However, insights from the application of cultural anthropology to Greco-Roman society can aid in the proper application of sociological and social psychological theories to ancient Greco-Roman society.

IV. A Symbolic Interactionist Approach to Μάγεία in Acts

I agree with Aune that a sociological approach to magic that focuses on magic as ritual deviance is a productive means of analyzing μάγεια in the NT, but I, however, prefer symbolic

interactionist theories of deviance, such as labeling theory. In particular, symbolic interactionism helps account for the subjective way in which the labels *μαγεία*, *μάγος*, and related terms are applied to various ritual activities and their practitioners. Symbolic interactionist studies of deviance have tended to focus on modern Western forms of social deviance, such as illegal drug use; however, this approach to deviance is thoroughly applicable to Greco-Roman *μαγεία*.

Despite being primarily a functionalist analysis, Evans-Pritchard's study of magic and witchcraft has led me to consider the symbolic interactionist theory of deviance appropriate for studying magic as deviance in certain socio-cultural contexts. According to Evans-Pritchard, although magic may be a cross-cultural phenomenon, magic can only be defined and described with any usefulness within specific social contexts.⁶² Thus, within his study of Zande witchcraft and magic, he provides definitions of witchcraft and magic that are specific to Zande culture.⁶³ Magic in another culture may or may not be like magic in Zande culture. Of course, problematic with Evans-Pritchard is that although at times he speaks of magic as a cross-cultural phenomenon, he never provides a cross-cultural definition of magic. Nevertheless, his work does suggest that similarities between different cultures' magic may exist, but if one uses magic in one culture as a paradigm to describe magic in another culture, that paradigm must be flexible and subject to adaptation for it to fit the specific cultural context.⁶⁴

Evans-Pritchard's description of witchcraft and magic in Zande culture has become a paradigm for understanding cross-culturally witchcraft and to a lesser degree magic, especially

⁶² Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Religion*, 111.

⁶³ Mary Douglas, "Thirty Years after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*," introduction to *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas, ASAM 9 (London: Tavistock, 1970), xiii–xiv; Mary Douglas, "Witch Beliefs in Central Africa," *Africa* 37 (1967), 72; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), 8. "Zande" is the singular noun and adjectival form of the plural noun "Azande."

⁶⁴ Douglas, "Witch Beliefs," 72–80; Maxwell Gay Marwick, "Witchcraft (African Witchcraft)," ER, 15:425.

as these phenomena occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. Evans-Pritchard's model of witchcraft and magic, however, cannot be transferred unmodified from Zande culture to any other culture, including Greco-Roman μαγεία. Nevertheless, a significant aspect of Evans-Pritchard's model does seem appropriate for μαγεία.

Evans-Pritchard treats Zande witchcraft (*mangu*) and sorcery (*gbegbere ngua, kitikiti ngua*) as deviant activities in Zande society, and he explains that accusations of witchcraft and sorcery are frequently involved in already strained social relations, including intergroup rivalries.⁶⁵ Suspicions of witchcraft are confirmed by material divination before the accuser confronts the supposed witch. No other evidence than a divinatory oracle is needed. Social rivals' names are the first to be placed before the oracles; therefore, rivals are more susceptible to oracularly confirmed accusations of magic.⁶⁶

Similarly, Acts consistently portrays wonder-working rivals to its wonder-working protagonists as workers of popular μαγεία. Nevertheless, Greco-Roman culture contained no unambiguous criteria for determining whether someone is a popular μάγος, which is quite unlike the situation that Evans-Pritchard describes in regards to witchcraft in Zande culture. An unambiguous criterion exists in Zande culture for identifying witches, namely identification of a witch through material divination. Instead, within Greco-Roman society, subjectively applied stereotypes typically determine to whom the label μάγος is applied. For example, although Acts presents the Samaritans praising Simon as “the power of God that is called great” (Acts 8:9, 10) and Elymas as a trusted associate of Sergius Paulus, Acts portrays its miracle-working protagonists describing the μάγος Elymas and the μαγεία-working Simon of Samaria as unrighteous deceivers. In Acts 8:23, Peter tells Simon, “For I see that your are in the gall of

⁶⁵ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 25–26, 170–171.

bitterness and the chains of wickedness (ἀδικίας).” Paul even more harshly rebukes Elymas, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10). Through Peter’s rebuke of Simon and Paul’s curse against Elymas, Acts characterizes Simon and Elymas as deviant wonder-workers involved in popular μαγεία, deceit, and unrighteousness.

Of the two basic conceptual elements of Greco-Roman popular μαγεία—charlatanism and sorcery, Acts seems to draw heavily upon the identification of popular μαγεία as charlatanism; thus, characters that Acts depicts as popular μάγοι appear primarily as charlatanic deceivers, not malevolent sorcerers. In particular, Acts seems to present wonder-working antagonists as popular μάγοι that lead people from seeing the truth of the Way. Therefore, μάγος functions as a label for a wonder-worker whose actions are opposed to the Way and its mission. Therefore, μάγος and μαγεία function respectively as Christ-follower labels for rival wonder-workers and their activities. Just as accusations of witchcraft among the Azande can be representative of conflict among rivals, accusations of μαγεία in Acts are representative of competition and conflict between Acts’ wonder-working protagonists and their wonder-working rivals. Thus, by depicting Simon of Samaria and Elymas as deceptive popular μάγοι, Acts presents Simon and Elymas not only as opponents of the Christ-movement but also as religious deviants in general. I contend that the labeling and characterizing of antagonists in Acts as μάγοι is a rhetorical maneuver within Acts that simultaneously discredits the rival wonder-workers and defines the character of Christ-follower miracle-working. Such an analysis of accusations of μαγεία in Acts relies upon the symbolic interactionist study of deviance, especially labeling theory. Therefore, the present study will analyze interactions among miracle-workers and μάγοι in Acts as competitive interchanges of deviance labeling.

A further benefit resulting from the use of symbolic interactionism is that it is not only an effective means of analyzing the interaction between characters in the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts, but it also appears to be a way of explaining the importance of these episodes in their broader Greco-Roman context. As I will discuss in ch. 4, a common means of countering deviance labeling involves the person being labeled as deviant to deflect charges of deviance back onto his or her accusers.⁶⁷ Evidence exists from the second century CE that Jesus Christ and early Christ-followers were sometimes characterized as popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$ by opponents of the Christ-movement.⁶⁸ Often second-century Christ-followers writers deflected these accusations of popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ back onto their accusers.⁶⁹ I will argue that the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes in Acts are first-century examples of an early Christ-following text deflecting accusations of popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ back onto opponents and rivals of the Christ-movement. This response to deviance labeling has the two-fold effect of discrediting opponents and defining early Christ-following group identity in respect to wonder-working.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Becker, *Outsiders*, 15.

⁶⁸ E.g., Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 30; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 69.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.17; 23.1–9; 35.12.

⁶⁹ Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict*, 48–82; e.g., *Acts Pet.* 5, 6, 17, 23, 25, 28, 31, 42, 43; Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 26.1–5; 56.1–4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.13; 2.31.2–3; 2.32; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 1.3–4; 2.11, 18–19; 4.52; *Mart. Pet.* 1–3; Tertullian, *Apol.* 23.1–9.

⁷⁰ Cf. Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 209–229, 237–239, 247–249. As Twelftree notes, most of the extant Christ-follower writings from the first half of the second century show little or no interest in miracle-working (e.g., Gospel of John; 1–3 John; Revelation; Athenagoras, *Embassy for Christians*; Athenagoras, *On Resurrection of Dead*; *Didache* [especially 11–13; 16:6, 8], *Letter of Barnabas*, *Letter to Diognetus*, *Preaching of Peter* [Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.29.182; 2.15.68; 6.5.39–41, 43; 6.6.48; 6.7.58; 6.15.128], and *Shepherd of Hermas*). However, for whatever reason, Acts retains the miracle-working traditions known to its author. Although Twelftree argues that Christ-following writers from roughly the second half of the second century, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Origen, demonstrate a renewed interest in miracles (*In Name of Jesus*, 286–288), Acts' apparent refutation of accusations of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ against Jesus Christ and the Christ-movement and the reappearance of refutations of such accusations within the Christ-follower writings from the middle and latter half of the second century suggest to me that interest in miracle-working and miracle-working traditions did not disappear completely from the Christ-movement during the first half of the second century.

V. Wonder-Working Competitions for Legitimacy and Authority

Typically competition results in a reward or benefit exists for the successful competitor(s), even if the result is merely honor and bragging rights for the winner(s). The $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts are no exception, and the reward for the Christ-following miracle-workers who are successful in their conflicts with magicians is legitimacy for their claims that they perform wonders by means of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, these narratives of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict contain more than theological significance. They also help define Christ-follower identity in regards to wonder-working. In short, legitimate wonder-working, according to Acts, is performed only by Christ-followers by means of the Holy Spirit in order to confirm the gospel message. Anything beyond this is illegitimate $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$.

VI. Outline of the Study

In order to conduct successfully this analysis of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts, a careful and detailed sequence of steps is necessary. In the following chapter, the interdisciplinary nature of the historical study of Greco-Roman magic necessitates that I review the leading theories on magic in the modern social sciences. In particular, I will focus on the intellectualist approach (Frazer), sociological approach (Durkheim, Mauss), the functionalist approach of Evans-Pritchard, the symbolist approach (John H. M. Beattie, Tambiah), and neo-intellectualist approach (Horton, Melford Spiro). In ch. 3, I will discuss previous scholarship on Greco-Roman magic and magic in the NT that is pertinent to my study of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts. As I will show, historians of Greco-Roman religion and biblical scholars explicitly and implicitly rely on certain social-scientific theories of magic, even when they intend to ignore such theories. Furthermore, the modern cross-cultural theory (or theories) of magic adopted by a historian or

biblical scholar will affect his or her overall understanding of Greco-Roman *μαγεία*.⁷¹ Chapter 3 will conclude with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the previous historical and biblical scholarship that I will have discussed.

Building upon the insights from chs. 2 and 3, the fourth chapter concentrates on the development of a theory and methodology to be used in the analysis of the *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts in Acts. In particular, my methodological approach builds upon the previous work of Harold E. Remus and Kimberly B. Stratton, who ultimately consider *μαγεία* to be a relative term applied to ritual actions by those other than the practitioners themselves, who instead would label themselves “healers,” “priests,” or some other positive label.⁷² Such an understanding of ancient magic coincides nicely with social-scientific theories of magic in which magic functions as a form of social deviance. I will employ insights from the symbolic interactionist study of deviance in order to study Greco-Roman *μαγεία* as a socially constructed concept of ritual deviance, in which *μαγεία* and *μάγος* function as negative rhetorical labels that create boundaries between unacceptable and acceptable ritual practice.⁷³ I will argue that the categorization of some wonder-workers as *μάγοι* and others as miracle-workers ultimately involves the drawing of boundaries between wonder-workers who are inside the Christ-movement and those who are outside.

The methods and models developed in ch. 4 will facilitate the analysis of social interactions among *μαγεία*-working and “miracle-working” characters in Acts. This analysis will focus on understanding how Acts employs these social interactions to develop an ideology concerning wonder-working, to develop Christ-follower identity in relation to wonder-working,

⁷¹ For example, this is seen in Stratton’s characterization of Greco-Roman magic as social deviance, which relies upon the work of Evans-Pritchard (Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 6).

⁷² Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict*, 54–57, 80–82; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 15, 107–141.

⁷³ See Becker, *Outsiders*; Downes and Rock, *Understanding Deviance*, 177–201, 225–260.

and lastly to develop a response to possible accusations made by opponents of the Christ-movement that Jesus Christ and some Christ-followers are magicians.

The fifth chapter initiates the actual analysis of the texts in Acts. My starting point is a study of the presentation of the origins of Christ-following miracle-working in Acts 2. This starting point is necessary because the Pentecost narrative indicates that the spiritual power source for Christ-follower miracles is the Holy Spirit through whom God's divine power is distributed to Christ-followers legitimately acting by the delegated authority of Jesus. Chapter 2 engages and utilizes the social-scientific study of spirit-possession to understand better the relationship between wonder-workers and the spiritual power sources, in particular the relationship between Christ-followers and the Holy Spirit. The ultimate premise derived from the social-scientific study of spirit possession is that possession and exorcism involve the procurement and negotiation of social power.

Next in chs. 6–9, I will use the previously developed methods, models, and theories from ch. 4 to analyze the four focal episodes involving conflicts between μαγεία-working characters and miracle-workers (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–18; 19:13–16). Chapters 6–9 will pay particular attention to the negotiation of social power, especially as it pertains to the development of social boundaries and identity for the early Christ-movement.

The final chapter will draw conclusions and implications based on the results of the analysis within chs. 5–9. Once again, particular attention is paid to the negotiation of social power and the development of group boundaries and group identities. Furthermore, I discuss how Acts not only employs the rhetorical deviance process of labeling rivals as popular μάγοι but also how Acts participates in the historical social discourse in which Greco-Roman Christ-followers encountered and reacted to accusations of magic against Christ and the Christ-

movement. The study now begins in chapter two with a review of relevant previous scholarship within the social sciences, elements of which will form the theoretical and methodological basis for the analyses and conclusions in chs. 5–10.

CHAPTER 2 SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES TO MAGIC

An explosion of interest in ancient magic occurred among historians of religion and biblical scholars in the 1990s and has continued until the present. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, both biblical scholars and historians of religion have relied upon the study of magic within the social sciences in order to understand better Greco-Roman μάγοι and μαγεία.

Therefore, this chapter will review five major social-scientific approaches to magic as expressed in the work of some of their major representatives:

- Intellectualist: James George Frazer
- Sociological: Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss
- Functionalist: E. E. Evans-Pritchard
- Symbolist: John H. M. Beattie and Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah
- Neo-intellectualist: Robin Horton and Melford Spiro.

In ch. 3, the discussion of the social-scientific approaches here in ch. 2 will guide the review of historians' and biblical scholars' treatments of Greco-Roman magic, particularly in relation to Acts.

The history of the social-scientific study of magic does not easily divide into chronological phases; instead, it more naturally divides into various categories of theory, including the intellectualist, sociological, functionalist, symbolist, and neo-intellectualist theories. Social scientists and historians of religion typically understand the social-scientific

study of magic to have begun with the intellectualists of the nineteenth century, with whom I also will begin my study of social-scientific theories of magic.

I. James George Frazer's Intellectualist Theory of Magic

Although the intellectualist theory of magic did not originate with James George Frazer, its first truly systematic expression occurs in Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, which is heavily influenced by the work of nineteenth-century intellectualist Edward B. Tylor.¹ In relation to magic and religion, Tylor's most notable influences on *The Golden Bough* are his definition of religion as "the belief in Spiritual Beings," his description of magic as "occult *science*," and the "cultural evolution of religious ideas."²

Frazer, like most of the early social scientists, was a sort of "armchair" anthropologist, who conducted no fieldwork.³ Furthermore, Frazer often arranges his borrowed ethnographic evidence into a cross-cultural bricolage with little critical comparison.⁴ Additionally, Frazer provides ethnographic material to explain his theory, rather than developing theory to explain the ethnographic evidence. Nevertheless, Frazer's impact on the social-scientific study of magic is

¹ James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Touchstone / Simon & Schuster, 1996), 1st ed. originally published in 1890 and abridged ed. originally published in 1922; see also Jan N. Bremmer, "Magic and Religion," appendix to *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 270; Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, 6th ed. (London: Murray, 1920), 1st ed. originally published in 1871. Interestingly, the initial edition of *Golden Bough* (a two-volume work first published in 1890) is an account of the ancient Italian Nemi ritual, rather than an explication of Frazer's theory of religion and magic. As subsequent editions of the work appeared, Frazer slowly moved toward describing religion and magic in general. The largest edition is the third, which contained twelve volumes published from 1906–1915. The abridgement from 1922 is still in publication (Jonathan Z. Smith, "When the Bough Breaks," in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 23 [Leiden: Brill, 1978], 208–239). Chapters 3 and 4 of the 1922 edition are most pertinent to my discussion because it is here that Frazer lays out most succinctly his theory of magic. All subsequent references to *Golden Bough* will be to the 1996 Touchstone publication of the 1922 abridged edition.

² Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 112, 424–425 (italics added).

³ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford, 1997), 48; Gilbert Lewis, "The Look of Magic," *Man*, n.s., 21 (1986), 415; Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 14; John Middleton, "Magic (Theories of Magic)," *ER* 9:83.

⁴ Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 35–36.

monumental. He, like most classic intellectualists, describes magic as automatically efficacious ritual that attempts observable change through the coercion of superhuman force(s). He adds to this understanding of magic the claim that magic achieves such coercion through material and verbal manipulations, which operate according to the cosmological principle of sympathy.

Frazer's Theory of Magic, Religion, and Science

According to Frazer, magic, science, and religion are related, but distinct, socio-cultural phenomena, and each one operates according to a unique cosmology that requires different means of dealing with problems, needs, and desires.⁵ A magician conceives of the world as operating according to certain impersonal forces, which he or she coerces through ritual manipulations. The magician's rituals operate according to the law of sympathy, which subdivides into the law of similarity and the law of contagion. In explaining these laws, Frazer writes "From the first of these principles, namely the Law of Similarity, the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires by imitating it: from the second he infers that whatever he does to a material object will affect equally the person with whom the object was once in contact, whether it formed a part of his body or not."⁶ Frazer refers to magic operating primarily by similarity as "homeopathic magic," whose techniques are primarily imitative. Contagious magic, however, "assum[es] that things which have once been in contact with each other are always in contact."⁷

While Frazer characterizes magic as manipulation of superhuman forces, he describes religion as conciliation of superhuman forces. Thus, an inherent animosity exists between

⁵ Cf. I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson, Key Concepts in the Social Sciences (Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970), 174, 184; Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 13; Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton, A.S.A. Monographs 3 (New York: Praeger, 1966), 101. Spiro prefers to speak of cognitive systems rather than cosmologies.

⁶ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

magicians and priests because of the priests' disapproval of the magicians' manipulation of superhuman powers. Likewise, the flexibility of the priest's cosmology, in which deities operate by personal will, is diametrically opposed to the highly predictable cosmology of the magician.⁸ Thus, magic is more akin to science than to religion.⁹ Unlike the religionist, the scientist and the magician understand laws or principles to govern the operation of the universe, and both magician and scientist exploit these laws or principles to solve human problems and fulfill human desires.¹⁰ Frazer, however, calls magic a "pseudo-science" because he considers the magician to be completely mistaken in his or her identification of sympathy as the ultimate cosmological principle.¹¹

The last element of Frazer's theory is an evolutionary scheme of three stages: the Age of Magic, the Age of Religion, and the Age of Science.¹² However, these three stages do not necessarily follow one another in a perfectly ordered train of succession.¹³ Frazer himself writes in conclusion to the 1922 abridged version of *Golden Bough*, "Thus in the acuter minds magic is

⁸ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 58–60; Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion* (New York: Liveright, 1948), 138, originally published in 1924.

⁹ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 825; Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 175; Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 13; Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts," in *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 83; S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man*, n.s., 3 (1968), 176.

¹⁰ Cf. Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 14.

¹¹ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 23, 53; cf. J. H. M. Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson, *Key Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970), 244–245; Graham Cunningham, *Religion and Magic: Approaches and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), Netlibrary e-book, 77; Fritz Graf, "Excluding the Charming: The Development of the Greek Concept of Magic," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 34–35. In spite of the occasional claim that Frazer portrayed religion as passive acceptance of divine will (e.g., Cunningham and Graf), the ultimate difference between magic and religion in the *Golden Bough* is that, while magic considers change to be the guaranteed result of properly performed rites, religion considers change to be only a *possibility*. For instance, Frazer writes, "By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man [*sic*] which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life" (*Golden Bough*, 58–59).

¹² Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 12–13; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 63–67.

¹³ Stephen Sharot, "Magic, Religion, Science, and Secularization," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 263.

gradually superseded by religion, which explains the succession of natural phenomena as regulated by the will, the passion, or the caprice of spiritual beings like man [*sic*] in kind, though vastly superior to him in power.”¹⁴ Therefore, magic only survives into the Ages of Religion and Science as the beliefs and practices of the ill-educated.

Critiques of Frazer’s Theory of Magic, Religion, and Science

Each element of Frazer’s theory has drawn criticism from various segments of cultural anthropology. I will briefly look at some of these critiques starting with criticism of Frazer’s understanding of sympathetic magic.

By the start of the twentieth century, French social scientist Marcel Mauss already was challenging Frazer’s view that all magic is automatically efficacious ritual operating according to the principle of sympathy. Mauss, instead, claims that magic *in certain socio-cultural contexts* may operate as a cosmology employing automatically efficacious rituals of sympathy; however, not all magic everywhere throughout all human existence has functioned thus.¹⁵

In regards to the relationships between magic, religion, and science, neo-intellectualist Robin Horton judges Frazer’s understanding of science, which Frazer considers similar to magic, to be an outdated, idealized picture of Western, post-Enlightenment science, in which scientists appear united in a constant process of developing and testing hypotheses that are in turn either accepted as reliable theory or abandoned completely for a new hypothesis.

[Modern science] is also increasingly seen as a process that involves, not absolute judgement on a single theory, but judgement of the relative merits of alternative theories. As such, with the best will in the world, it may be virtually impossible where only a single theory holds sway. Even where there are alternative theories, moreover, the proponents of each one tend to

¹⁴ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 824.

¹⁵ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 12–13, 20–21; see also Beattie, “On Understanding Ritual,” 254–255; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 145–146, 221.

hang on to it as long as possible despite adverse evidence hurled at them by proponents of its rival.¹⁶

Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, a proponent of symbolic anthropology, is even more critical of Frazer's description of the relationships between magic, science, and religion. Tambiah also argues that Frazer has incorrectly described magic as being more similar to science than to religion.¹⁷ For instance, Tambiah claims that the real mechanics of modern scientific experimentation with its preoccupation with constant experimental testing is very different from the procedures of the magician,¹⁸ who is more concerned with tradition than experimentation.¹⁹

Gilbert Lewis argues that the overall result of Frazer's evolutionary scheme, thus, is a profound project in early modern, Western ethnocentrism and scholarly elitism.²⁰ Even if such ethnocentrism and elitism are merely the effect of Victorian culture on an otherwise earnest scholar,²¹ his evolutionary theory is still unacceptable not only for what it has to say about the history of human intellect but also for its disparagement of the rationality of pre-modern and non-Western societies. Ethnographic evidence, furthermore, simply does not support Frazer's evolutionary scheme.²²

¹⁶ Robin Horton, "Back to Frazer? (The Sir James Frazer Memorial Lecture, Cambridge, 1987)," in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 126.

¹⁷ Tambiah, "Form and Meaning," 77–84"; Tambiah, "Magical Power," 176; see also, Horton, "Back to Frazer," 105; Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 21–23; contra Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 175–176.

¹⁸ Horton, "Back to Frazer," 127.

¹⁹ Tambiah, "Form and Meaning," 60–61, 69, 84; see also Horton, "Back to Frazer," 127.

²⁰ Lewis, "Look of Magic," 421–422; see also Bremmer, "Magic and Religion," 265–271; Tambiah, "Magical Power," 18–19.

²¹ Horton, "Back to Frazer," 108; cf. Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 177–178.

²² Bell, *Ritual*, 48; Cunningham, "Religion and Magic," 77; Horton, "Back to Frazer," 105–107; Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 177; Susan J. Rasmussen, "'Magic,' Power, and Ritual in Shamanism," in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: AFL-CLIO, 2004), 1:162.

Despite the numerous criticisms of Frazer's theory, nearly every element of his theory still has some proponents,²³ and his evolutionary scheme is the only element of his theory that social scientists have completely abandoned.²⁴ The intellectualist approach to magic has been one of the most enduring scholarly explanations of magic not only in the social sciences but also in the history of religions and biblical studies. Nevertheless, application of Frazer's theories to the descriptions of μαγεία and μάγος in Acts is difficult because Acts' portrayal of the early Christ-followers' religious wonder-working (miracles) is often very similar to Acts' portrayal of the μάγοι and μαγεία that the early Christ-followers encounter in Acts. For instance, the Samaritans, on the one hand, claim that Simon is the power of God (Acts 8:9) seems very religious. On the other hand, it appears very magical how the Ephesian Christ-followers in Acts 19:11 heal their sick and spirit possessed by laying upon them pieces of clothing that were once in physical contact with Paul. Despite Acts' treatment of the Ephesian Christ-followers' wondrous healings and exorcisms as religious miracles and not as μαγεία, they seem to fit Frazer's description of contagious magic perfectly.

II. The Sociological Approach to Magic

Due to the difficulties in Frazer's intellectualism, many social scientists, historians, and biblical scholars rely on the sociological approach to magic. Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* and Marcel Mauss' *A General Theory of Magic* form the basis of the sociological approach to religion and magic. Despite the fact that Mauss' book appeared first

²³ Part of Frazer's immediate legacy is his influence upon Bronislaw Malinowski's emotionalist theory of magic (Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Redfield [Boston: Beacon; Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1948], 51–55, 59–70). The emotionalist theory of magic argues that magical rituals are expressions of deep-seated emotions within the ritual performer or the one who hires the performer. Such emotions include love, hatred, anxiety, and fear. Current anthropology has abandoned the emotionalist approach to magic. See Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 23–32; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 33–34, 43–44; Jesper Sørensen, *A Cognitive Theory of Magic*, Cognitive Science of Religion Series (Lanham, MD: AltaMira, 2007), 24–28.

²⁴ Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Religion*, 28.

(French 1902–1903), it is Durkheim’s book (French 1912), which social scientists and historians more frequently associate with the sociological approach. The sociological approach to magic is a functionalist theory; thus, it concentrates on magic’s role in the operations of a society. In regards to magic in Acts, two aspects of the sociological approach are particularly important: (1) the characterization of magic as individualistic and immoral and of religion as communal and sacred and (2) the essentially Western character of the sociological model, which allows for application of the model to the Greco-Roman world.

Emile Durkheim’s Explanation of Magic

In accordance with Durkheim’s early functionalist perspective, his explanation of magic is more concerned with how magic functions within society than with how magical ritual operates.²⁵ Durkheim’s definition of magic, like Frazer’s, relies on a sharp distinction between magic and religion. Durkheim, however, is critical of the intellectualist claim that the primary aspect of religion is belief in deities or spirits.²⁶ Durkheim, instead, sets up a dichotomous classification of religious belief and ultimately of all reality: “All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all things, real and ideal, of which men [*sic*] think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words *profane* and *sacred* (*profane*, *sacré*).”²⁷ According to Durkheim, a religion is a system of beliefs, rites, culture, and social structures that are preoccupied with the sacred.²⁸ Although magic is concerned with the sacred, Durkheim explains, “Magic takes a sort of professional pleasure in profaning holy things; in its

²⁵ Middleton, “Magic (Theories),” 9:85. For more information on Durkheim’s relationship with functionalism, see Bell, *Ritual*, 27, 42.

²⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, 1915), 44–50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 52 (italics in the original).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

rites, it performs the contrary of the religious ceremony.”²⁹ From this point forward, Durkheim characterizes magic as “thoroughly anti-religious.”³⁰

The respective social structures of magic and religion are the ultimate difference between magic and religion.³¹ Religion comes in the form of a “church,” in which the activities of priests and other religionists relate primarily to the needs of the religious system.³² Magicians, however, operate on an individualistic basis. Thus, Durkheim explains, “The magician has a clientele and not a Church . . .”³³ Although magicians and cultists may band together in groups, they are still not a religion so long as they are not a group-focused, unified, socio-cultural system.³⁴

Durkheim’s moral universe is a dichotomy consisting of the sacred and communal on one side and the profane and individualistic on the other. As the opposite of the “one single moral community called the Church,”³⁵ magic is individualistic and immoral.³⁶ Thus, magic in sociological terms, is a form of deviant ritual practice. Social scientists, since the middle of the twentieth century, have rejected Durkheim’s sacred-profane dichotomy as universal;³⁷ however, they understand the primary distinction between magic and religion in the sociological approach to be the characterization of religion as communal and magic as individualistic.

²⁹ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 58.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Jack Goody, “Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problem,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 12 (1961), 145.

³² Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 56–57.

³³ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁴ Contra Goody, “Religion and Ritual,” 146.

³⁵ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 63.

³⁶ Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 44; Murray Wax and Rosalie Wax, “The Notion of Magic,” *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963), 497.

³⁷ Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*; Goody, “Religion and Ritual,” 149; Bronislaw Malinowski, “Science and Religion,” in *Sex, Culture, and Myth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 267; Spiro, “Religion,” 95–96.

Critique of Durkheim's Functionalism

Many of the critiques of Durkheim's characterization of magic are the result of a more general critique of functionalism as a whole. Three common criticisms of classic functionalism exist, which I will name and then elaborate. First, functionalism is predominately conservative. Second, functionalism is tautological. Third, functionalists treat society as a mechanistic system, thus leaving little room for societal diversity and change.³⁸

First, Durkheim's assumption of an analytical perspective that conservatively favors the dominant religious institution(s) results in his failure to consider a society's religious context from a minority tradition's perspective. Second, conflict theorists and neo-intellectualists demonstrate that Durkheim's conservative perspective tautologically forces minority ritual traditions into the role of profane, individualistic magic.³⁹ Thus, a magical tradition is not inherently individualistic or immoral; instead, the dominant tradition may merely force the minority tradition to function individualistically and immorally according to the dominant tradition's socio-cultural norms.⁴⁰ Third, Durkheim does claim that some cults and magic are former religions that have fallen into disfavor;⁴¹ yet, he addresses neither how such disintegration may occur nor how a minority ritual tradition, which starts as either a cult or magic, might ultimately ascend to the status of "religion."

Finally, although Durkheim attempts to define both religion and magic according to their respective roles in society, some neo-intellectualists claim that Durkheim's theory does not

³⁸ Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance: Moral Panics, Drug Abuse, Deviant Science, and Reversed Stigmatization*, SUNY Series in Deviance and Social Control (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), Netlibrary e-book, 260–262; see also John Beattie, *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1964), 217; Spiro, "Religion," 100, 118.

³⁹ Bell, *Ritual*, 38; Robin Horton, "A Definition of Religion, and Its Uses," *JRAIGB* 90 (1960), 215; Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 30–31, 260.

⁴⁰ Cf. Goody, "Religion and Ritual," 146–147.

⁴¹ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 56–57.

provide definitions of magic and religion; instead, it merely demonstrates how Durkheim understands the ways in which magic and religion operate in certain socio-cultural contexts.⁴²

Ethnocentrism of Durkheimian Religion

Durkheim's choice of the word "church" (*église*), which is a Christian social institution, along with his description of religion, strongly suggest that the model for and epitome of Durkheimian religion is Christianity.⁴³ Of course, any ritual tradition that does not share a similar organizational, moral, or ritual perspective as Christianity, particularly Western Christianity, risks being defined as "magic." Subsequently, the Durkheimian characterizations of magic and religion are rather ethnocentric,⁴⁴ and doubt exists as to whether magic is always as individualistic as Durkheim claims.⁴⁵

Marcel Mauss' Theory of Magic

Similar to Durkheim, Mauss states, "A magical rite is *any rite which does not play a part in organized cults*—it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limit of a prohibited rite."⁴⁶

Mauss, like Durkheim, conceives of magic as individualistic ritual.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Mauss does not describe magic as being without a "Church"; instead, he describes it as merely unorganized.

Mauss also introduces the notion of a continuum with "magic" and "religion" as its poles. The religion end of the continuum contains organized, public ritual traditions that petition the deities and spirits for the benefit of the entire community, particularly through ritual sacrifice. At

⁴² Horton, "Definition of Religion," 201–204; Spiro, "Religion," 89.

⁴³ Wax and Wax, "Notion of Magic," 497; cf. Horton, "Definition of Religion," 212, 215, 218. It is interesting that although Durkheim uses the word "church" (*église*) to describe the institutional structure of religion, he was actually a Jew; nevertheless, the historically community-oriented nature of Jewish synagogues certainly allows the placement of Judaism within Durkheimian religion.

⁴⁴ Cf. Thomas Luckmann, comments on "Malinowski's Magic: The Riddle of the Empty Cell," by Karl Erik Rosengren, *Current Anthropology* 17 (1976), 678–679; Goody, "Religion and Ritual," 146–147.

⁴⁵ Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," 38–41.

⁴⁶ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 24 (italics in the original).

⁴⁷ Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 47; Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 57–58.

the extreme of the magic end of the continuum stand malevolent spells, which are individualistic, anti-social, and secretive. In summing up his description of this continuum, Mauss writes:

We have, in other words, two extremes which form the differing poles of magic [and] religion: the pole of sacrifice and the pole of evil spells. . . . Between these two poles we have a confused mass of activities whose specific nature is not immediately apparent. . . . We have religious practices which are private and voluntary, as well as magical practices which are licit. On the one hand, we have the occasional actions of private cults; on the other, there are magical practices associated with technical skills, such as those of the medical profession.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Mauss is more concerned with the differences between magic and religion than with their similarities.

According to Mauss, the two main differences between magic and religion concern personnel and location. Religious functionaries (priests) engage in public, community-oriented acts. Mauss admits that priests occasionally may engage in magic, that is, individualistic and secretive ritual. Nevertheless, the performance of magical acts is atypical of a priest's behavior, and the priest will normally employ a ritual gesture that is not typical of his or her ordinary ritual actions, such as turning away from an altar or using the left hand. As for the second difference, the proper location for religious ritual is within a public temple, shrine, or church, as opposed to the remote and secret locations where magic occurs. Mauss concedes that magicians may sometimes operate in public places, but when they do so, they employ confusing and indistinct words and gestures.⁴⁹

Magical actions themselves symbolically represent a "change of state." Mauss explains, "We are prepared to claim that all magical acts are represented as producing one of two effects: either the objects or beings involved are placed in a state so that certain movements, accidents or phenomena will inevitably occur, or they are brought out of a dangerous state."⁵⁰ Furthermore,

⁴⁸ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 22.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

Mauss explains that as representational phenomena, magical rituals require the ritual actors, and sometimes their opponents, to believe in the efficacy of the rituals. The overall result of Mauss' analysis of the representational quality of magic is the declaration that it rests upon a cosmology entirely different from that held by modern Westerners. The main difference between these two cosmologies is their respective understandings of causality.⁵¹

According to Mauss, the epitome of the magical understanding of causality is the Melanesian concept of *mana*, an impersonal force that a ritual actor manipulates in order to effect change.⁵² Ultimately for Mauss, *mana* is a natural, sacred force that pervades all of nature. Since *mana* itself is impersonal force, practitioners of magical ritual operate as if they are able to possess *mana* and to wield it like an invisible instrument in order to effect or hinder a change of state.⁵³ Thus, Mauss' cross-cultural theory of *mana* bears some resemblance to Frazer's theory of magic. As with Frazer, Mauss explains that magicians claim to cause change through ritual exploitation of a single universal principle of power.⁵⁴ Frazer considered this principle to be the law of sympathy; however, Mauss argues that it is *mana*. Despite this difference between Frazer's and Mauss' concepts of magical power, the result is that magical ritual in both their theories operates according to a false, even irrational, mentality.⁵⁵

Invalidity of Mana as Cross-Cultural Concept

Most of the major criticisms of Durkheim's theory of magic apply also to Mauss' theory of magic. Mauss' theory is a functionalist approach that privileges dominant religious traditions and tautologically places rival traditions into the role of anti-social magic. Although Mauss describes

⁵¹ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 91–97, 107.

⁵² Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 47.

⁵³ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 108–121.

⁵⁴ Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 47; Tambiah, "Magical Power," 202.

⁵⁵ Tambiah, "Magical Power," 202.

many magical cults as the remnants of religions that become unpopular or illicit,⁵⁶ he treats society as primarily a stable system and fails to discuss adequately magic's role in social change.

In addition to these criticisms are critiques of Mauss' understanding of *mana* as the basis of magic. Claude Lévi-Strauss, in particular, argues that after Mauss has adapted the Melanesian concept of *mana* for universal application, *mana* becomes nothing more than a generic mystical force.⁵⁷ Mauss' concept of *mana*, thus, adds little to the social-scientific understanding of magic because no one would disagree that every form of magic in its own socio-cultural context is a matter of harnessing power, regardless of whether the ritual actor consciously names or recognizes the power. Mauss' concept of *mana* tries to group all these different culturally specific understandings of magical power into a single cross-cultural category; however, such generic categorization risks ignoring the importance of the details within each culture's particular understanding of magical power.

An informative example of the role of power in magic exists in Greco-Roman magic. Mauss considers φύσις and δύναμις to be Greco-Roman forms of *mana*.⁵⁸ However, on closer inspection, both φύσις and δύναμις are used in Greek literature to describe power outside a magical context. φύσις itself is a complex concept that involves much more than magical power. δύναμις is simply the generic Greek word for *power*,⁵⁹ and only in certain contexts does δύναμις refer to *magical* power. Therefore, Mauss' identification of φύσις and δύναμις as *mana* is, in my opinion, unacceptable.

⁵⁶ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 18, 136, 117–118.

⁵⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss," in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, by Marcel Mauss (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), xlv; see also E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Morphology and Function of Magic: A Comparative Study of Trobriand and Zande Ritual and Spells," *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 31 (1929), 622; David Pocock, foreword to *A General Theory of Magic*, Marcel Mauss, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 5–6; Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," 57–58.

⁵⁸ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 117–118.

⁵⁹ LSJ, s.v. "φύσις" and "δύναμις."

Inconsistency in Mauss' Theory of Magic

I have found no scholar yet who explicitly states that Mauss' theory of magic is generally inconsistent. I, however, think that he fails to integrate adequately his conception of magic as unorganized ritual tradition with his theory of *mana*. At the end of Mauss' *General Theory of Magic*, I am left asking whether Mauss considers magic to be primarily individualistic ritual or primarily ritual operating by *mana*. Mauss does not explain which of these two aspects of magic take priority. Furthermore, Mauss introduces the concept of a magic-religion continuum, which indicates that he recognizes similarity between magic and religion; however, he also claims that magic and religion are distinct phenomena. Thus, I am also left asking what ultimately determines whether an observer should place a particular activity exhibiting both magical and religious qualities either just slightly to the magical side of the continuum or just slightly to the religious side of the continuum, so that the observer labels the activity as either *magic* or *religion*. I think that the inconsistencies within Mauss' theory have contributed significantly to scholars treating Durkheim as the true originator and best representative of the sociological approach to magic.⁶⁰ Durkheim's theory as a whole is much more unified and more succinct than Mauss' theory.

William J. Goode and the Relationship between Magic and Religion

Although Frazer and Durkheim consider magic and religion to be related but distinct phenomena, Mauss and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown cast doubt on drawing a clear distinction between magic and religion.⁶¹ During the middle of the twentieth century, an intense debate ensued among social scientists over whether magic and religion are distinct socio-cultural institutions, and this debate

⁶⁰ Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 24.

⁶¹ Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 22; A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Taboo," in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses* (London: Cohen & West, 1952), 138.

has never reached a definitive solution. At one end of the debate stand those anthropologists, such as Frazer and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, who insist that magic and religion are distinct social institutions.⁶² The basis for such sharp distinctions between magic and religion varies depending on the particular anthropologist's theoretical inclinations. Accordingly, anthropologists that follow the intellectualist approach categorize the ritual coercion of impersonal superhuman force as "magic" and the petitioning of superhuman beings as "religion." Those anthropologists that follow the sociological approach designate "magic" as immoral, individualistic, secretive ritual and "religion" as sacred, communal, public ritual.

Radcliffe-Brown and Robert H. Lowie, who best represent the extreme opposite position in the debate over whether magic and religion are distinct social institutions, claim that absolutely no difference exists between magic and religion. In particular, these two anthropologists provide two primary reasons for abandoning the distinction between magic and religion. First, among those anthropologists who maintain a distinction between magic and religion, no consensus exists concerning the essential difference between magic and religion. Disagreement over the essential criteria for distinguishing between magic and religion is most noticeable in the differences between the intellectualist approach and the sociological approach. Second, too many exceptions to both intellectualist and sociological characterizations of magic exist. Lowie, in particular, draws attention to examples of "magical" religion and "religious" magic.⁶³

Between these two extremes are numerous scholars who have sought to create a solution to the problem of exactly how magic and religion relate. In the middle of the twentieth century,

⁶² Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 56–69; Evans-Pritchard, "Morphology of Magic," 619–621; Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Religion*, 3–4; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), 8.

⁶³ Radcliffe-Brown, "Taboo," 138; Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, 136–151.

sociologist William J. Goode revised Mauss' magic-religion continuum. He concludes that magic and religion are both similar in many respects and different in other respects.⁶⁴ As for the similarities, Goode provides seven similarities between magic and religion:

- Magic and religion are “both *concerned with the nonempirical.*”
- Magic and religion “both stand in somewhat the *same relationship to Western science.*”
- Magic and religion “both are pervasively *symbolic.*”
- Magic and religion “both deal with nonhuman forces, sometimes called the sacred.”
- Magic and religion are both “*a ritual system.*”
- Magic and religion “contain many ‘anthropopsychic’ entities.”
- Magic and religion typically have “a specialized (a) *set of skills*, and (b) *a select group* holding those skills, for dealing with such forces.”⁶⁵

Goode also lists eleven differences between magic and religion, which serve as the criteria for determining where particular ritual practices lie on the magic-religion continuum:

- “*Concrete specificity of goal* relates most closely to the magical complex. . . .However, religious goals lean more heavily in the direction of ‘general welfare,’ health,’ good weather,’ and eschatological occurrences.”
- “The *manipulative attitude* [that is, the coercion of superhuman forces] is to be found most strongly at the magical pole as against the supplicative, propitiatory, or cajoling, at the religious pole.”

⁶⁴ William J. Goode, *Religion among the Primitives* (New York: Free Press, 1951), 50–54.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 50–51 (italics in the original).

- “The *professional-client relationship* is ideally-theoretically to be found in the magical complex. The shepherd-flock, or prophet-follower, is more likely in the religious.”
- “*Individual ends* are more frequently to be found toward the magical end of this continuum, as against groupal ends toward the other.”
- “The magical practitioner or his ‘customer’ *goes through his activities as a private individual*. . . . At the religious extreme pole, groups carry them out, or representatives of groups.”
- “With regard to the process of achieving the goal, in case of magical failure, there is more likely to be a *substitution or introduction of other techniques* [such as, stronger magic, counter-magic, a different magician]. . . . [S]uch substitution is far rarer in the area of the religious pole.”
- “Although the practitioner may feel cautious in handling such powerful forces, a *lesser degree of emotion* is expected at the magical end of this continuum. . . . At the religious end, one expects a greater degree of emotion, possibly awe or worship.”
- “The *practitioner decides whether* the process is to start at all, toward the magical pole. Toward the religious, the ritual *must* be carried out.”
- “Similarly, the *practitioner decides when* the process is to start, in the case of magic, more often than in the case of religion. Toward the latter end of the continuum the time relationships of rituals are fairly fixed, within rough limits, even when not calendrical.”
- “Defined as instrumental by the society, magic is thought of as at least *potentially directed against the society*. . . . Religious rituals are not thought of as even potentially directed against the society. . . .”

- “As a final, ideally distinguishing characteristic, magic is *used only instrumentally*, i.e., for goals. The religious complex may be used for goals, but at its ideal pole, the practices are ends in themselves.”⁶⁶

Of course, the differences represent the ideal poles on the continuum; thus, no culture contains an ideal form of either magic or religion. Nevertheless, this continuum supposedly allows social scientists to make heuristic distinctions between magic and religion on the basis of whether a particular socio-cultural ritual practice exhibits more magical or more religious characteristics.⁶⁷

Goode’s proposal, however, provides little that is new. His collection of similarities and differences is a bricolage of intellectualist and sociological characteristics of magic and religion that do not easily fit together. Goode attempts to create a bridge between intellectualist and sociological approaches to magic and religion; however, he provides no actual answers to the questions raised by each approach.

Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge: Example of Durkheim’s Legacy

A full survey of all social scientists that follow the sociological approach to magic is unnecessary; however, a brief discussion of a sociological approach to magic by more recent scholars is informative. The influential sociologists Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge include within their *A Theory of Religion* discussions of magic. Of course, Stark and Bainbridge’s concern with the relationships between magic, religion, and science derives more from the intellectualist approach to religion; nevertheless, their overall theory of magic relies heavily upon Durkheim, as they themselves claim. However, they go beyond Durkheim by

⁶⁶ Goode, *Religion among Primitives*, 52–54 (italics in the original).

⁶⁷ Cf. Stephen D. Ricks, “The Magician as Outsider in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 143, n. 36.

offering a reason for magic's individualistic character. In particular, they claim that magic is individualistic because it addresses specific, individualistic needs, whereas religion focuses more on general human needs.⁶⁸

Summary

The common element within all variations of the sociological approach to magic is the characterization of magic as individualistic, secretive, and immoral. Two aspects of the sociological approach have proven attractive to social scientists. First, the sociological approach attempts to understand magic not only as a ritual activity but also as a significant social institution, particularly within ancient and traditional cultures. Second, the sociological approach to magic is easily applicable to Western socio-cultural contexts. As we will see in the next chapter, the sociological approach has proven quite attractive to historians of Greco-Roman religion and biblical scholars.

Nevertheless, limitations in the sociological approach have caused some social scientists to reject the sociological approach. In particular, Durkheim's nascent functionalism and ethnocentrism have led many social scientists to abandon the sociological approach. In addition, outside the Durkheim's *Elementary Forms*, most examples of the sociological approach supplement the basic sociological description of magic with other elements. Thus, Mauss includes in his description of magic a problematic theory of magical *mana* that does not always merge well with the other elements of his theory of magic. Goode, also, brings together the various elements of the sociological and intellectualist approaches, but he fails to merge them into a coherent theory. Stark and Bainbridge achieve a coherent theory of magic that supplements the sociological approach with elements of the intellectualist approach. Finally,

⁶⁸ Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, Toronto Studies in Religion 2 (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 36, 39–42, 83–84, 103, 107–108, 109, 118.

although the sociological approach fits Western socio-cultural contexts well, it does not always work well for non-Western contexts. For instance, one historical socio-cultural setting that seems to disprove the universality of the sociological approach is ancient Egypt, particularly prior to Roman occupation, where magic was a prominent aspect of the established Egyptian religious system.⁶⁹ In addition, Evans-Pritchard's study of Zande magic, which I will discuss in the next section, provides an early twentieth century example of non-Western magic that the indigenous population does not consider immoral and that functions as a primary component of that society's indigenous healthcare system.

III. E. E. Evans-Pritchard's Approach to African Witchcraft and Magic

Like the sociological approach to magic, Evans-Pritchard's approach to magic belongs to the broader methodological category of functionalism, in which social-scientific analysis focuses on how social and cultural phenomena contribute to the operation and stability of a society. However, Evans-Pritchard's approach to magic is much different from that of Durkheim's and Mauss' sociological approaches. In particular, Evans-Pritchard concentrates on the ethnographic study of a single social group, while Durkheim and Mauss concentrate primarily on the exposition of universal theories, which are applicable to any socio-cultural context.⁷⁰ For the

⁶⁹ Jan Assmann, "Magic and Theology in Ancient Egypt," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, SHR 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1–18; David Frankfurter, "Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt and the Problem of the Category 'Magician,'" in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, SHR 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 115–135; Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), 9–60; Robert K. Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and their Religious Context," *ANRW* 18.5 (1995), 3333–3379.

⁷⁰ Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 34–35; Michael F. Brown, "Thinking about Magic," in *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 124; Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 49–52; Mary Douglas, "Thirty Years after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*," introduction to *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas, A.S.A Monographs 9 (London: Tavistock, 1970), xv; Edwin M. Lemert, *The Trouble with Evil: Social Control at the Edge of Morality*, SUNY Series in Deviance and Social Control (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), Netlibrary e-book, 19.

study of magic and religion, Evans-Pritchard's most influential work is *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, a 1937 ethnography of Zande witchcraft, magic, and divination.⁷¹

Zande Witchcraft and Magic

In *Witchcraft among Azande*, Evans-Pritchard attempts to translate the Zande cultural phenomena of *mangu*, *ngua*, and *soroka* into the English language and Western cognitive categories. He candidly advises that his definitions of *mangu*, *ngua*, and *soroka* are nothing more than approximate English translations of specific Zande cultural institutions. He explicitly notes that he does not intend for these definitions to function as universal definitions of magic and witchcraft.⁷² Furthermore, by treating these definitions as approximate translations of Zande cultural institutions, Evans-Pritchard makes a distinction between his heuristic, social-scientific definitions and the actual cultural phenomena that he labels as “magic.”⁷³

The primary subject in *Witchcraft among Azande* is Zande *mangu*, for which Evans-Pritchard provides three related definitions: (1) witchcraft-substance, (2) witchcraft, and (3) witchcraft-phlegm. The Azande claim that within the body of some people is a “material substance,” which the Azande call *mangu*. A witch (*boro mangu*) is one whose body possesses witchcraft substance. *Mangu* also refers to “psychic emanations” produced by the witchcraft substance that go out into the physical world and cause misfortune and illness for others.⁷⁴ Lastly, Zande witch-doctors (*boro ngua*)⁷⁵ claim to possess a form of *mangu* (witchcraft-phlegm) in his body that is different from the *mangu* in a witch; however, many Azande are skeptical that

⁷¹ “Zande” is the singular noun and adjectival form of the plural noun “Azande.”

⁷² Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 10–11.

⁷³ Cf. Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1973), 15; Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World, Gender, Theory, & Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 6.

⁷⁴ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 9, 21, 33–39.

⁷⁵ Although most anthropologists now avoid the term “witch-doctor,” I will retain it only in my discussion of Evans-Pritchard's work.

there is any difference between the witch's *mangu* and the witch-doctor's *mangu*.⁷⁶ For *ngua*, Evans-Pritchard provides four definitions: (1) magic, (2) medicines, (3) leechcraft, that is, the removal of pathological substances from patients, and (4) closed associations for the performance of magic.⁷⁷ *Soroka*, according to Evans-Pritchard, is a general word for material divination, which he calls "oracles."

The Azande often attribute accidents, misfortune, and illness to witchcraft, and occasionally to sorcery (malevolent magic). Witchcraft, thus, is both a psychic power and a cosmological principle.⁷⁸ Witchcraft is the cause not only of events typically unexplainable through empirical causation, but the Azande also subscribe to a notion of double causation in which unfortunate events can be explained by both physical causes and witchcraft.⁷⁹

The Azande detect the presence of witchcraft by two means: (1) post-mortem autopsy on a suspected witch and (2) oracles, particularly the poison oracle.⁸⁰ In the poison oracle, the "operator" of the oracle pours a poisonous solution by small amounts into the gullet of a chicken, at which time the ritual "questioner" announces a person's name before the poison. The ritual actors repeat this procedure several times with the questioner announcing a different person's name. If the chicken dies, the Azande consider the person that the questioner last named before the poison to be the witch responsible for the misfortune afflicting the person for whom the ritual actors consult the oracle.⁸¹

When the death of a chicken during a poison oracle indicates a certain person is a witch, the Azande confirm the oracle by conducting a second poison oracle in which the second chicken

⁷⁶ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 10, 187.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 9–10. Furthermore, in an earlier article, Evans-Pritchard notes that the most common definition of *ngua* is "wood"; thus, only in certain contexts does *ngua* even refer to magic (Evans-Pritchard, "Morphology of Magic," 626).

⁷⁸ Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," 254–255; cf. Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 192.

⁷⁹ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 148.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 25–26, 40–49.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 94–96, 121–129, 218–312.

must survive the poison. After the poison oracle is confirmed, the ritual actors remove a wing from the dead chicken and place it on a stick. A messenger presents the wing to the person that the oracle has indicated is a witch. The expected ritual response from the accused witch, which he or she nearly always performs, requires the witch to spit a mist of water over the wing, to confess the witchcraft, and to promise to stop harming the victim. Even if the accused witch does not believe that he or she is a witch, he or she will typically perform the ritual anyway. The only time that this ritual is not performed is when the victim has already died, and in such situations, the victim's family must engage in magical vengeance against the witch.⁸²

Typically, a witch who has performed the proper ritual response experiences no lingering stigma from the rest of the village. On occasion, the Azande may demonstrate much fear and respect toward a person they consider a powerful witch. Nevertheless, the villagers typically dislike these feared witches already for other reasons; thus, the villagers place the names of these disliked people before the oracle more frequently. Witchcraft accusations are a means of dealing with strained social relations in the village, according to Evans-Pritchard. Witchcraft accusations become an indirect means of addressing conflict in Zande villages, where direct confrontation would disrupt village life.⁸³

Unlike witchcraft, which is an inherited psychic power, Zande magic (*ngua*) is a learned ritual technique, which the witch-doctor performs. After consuming the proper medicines (also *ngua*), witchcraft-phlegm comes to reside in the witch-doctor's body. The main functions of the witch-doctor are healing and divination.⁸⁴ Sorcerers, for whom Evans-Pritchard has no proof of their actual existence, are witch-doctors who specialize in malevolent magic.⁸⁵ Evans-Pritchard

⁸² Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 94–96, 98, 119–120.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 105–117; see also Douglas, "Thirty Years," xvii–xviii, xxv; cf. Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 209.

⁸⁴ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 148–257.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 391–392.

also indicates that sometimes what essentially distinguishes beneficent magic from sorcery is the intention of the magician, not his method or his materials.⁸⁶

Despite the brilliance of Evans-Pritchard's monumental ethnography on Zande magic and witchcraft, his critics have pointed to some weaknesses in the work. The first critique results from Evans-Pritchard's overall functionalist perspective. He approaches the Zande culture as if it is relatively static, despite the fact that the Sudan prior to and contemporary with Evans-Pritchard's fieldwork had experienced numerous political changes because of British colonization. Mary Douglas suggests that the political changes significantly altered the function and operational details of both witchcraft beliefs and oracles in African societies, including among the Azande.⁸⁷ Second, according to Douglas, Evans-Pritchard's accuser-focused approach, which assumes that no self-proclaimed Zande witches actually exist, makes it "difficult" for anthropologists to analyze "a person [who] may sincerely believe himself a witch and go[es] to the diviner to be cured of his state."⁸⁸ Third, in Evans-Pritchard's conception of the double causation of empirical phenomena, the *true* cause of an unfortunate event is the physical cause. The secondary, or mystical, cause is witchcraft, and it accounts for why the unfortunate event occurred at a specific moment to a specific person.⁸⁹ Peter Winch, however, claims that the Azande would not think of witchcraft as an explanation of only the social meaning of misfortune and that Evans-Pritchard fails to recognize witchcraft as an explanation of how an empirical event occurs because it does not fit the modern Western sense of rationality.⁹⁰ Fourth, Evans-

⁸⁶ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 406.

⁸⁷ Douglas, "Thirty Years," xix-xx; Mary Douglas, "Techniques of Sorcery Control in Central Africa," in *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, eds. John Middleton and E. H. Winter (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 141; Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among the Azande*, 516; Lemert, *Trouble with Evil*, 20.

⁸⁸ Douglas, "Thirty Years," xxxiv.

⁸⁹ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 67-72.

⁹⁰ Peter Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964), 311; cf. Robin Horton, "Professor Winch on Safari," in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 143; Tambiah, "Form and Meaning," 62.

Pritchard's lack of an explicit cross-cultural theory on magic and witchcraft eventually created serious disagreements among anthropologists on the proper application of Evans-Pritchard's taxonomy of witchcraft and magic to other cultures.⁹¹

The Legacy of *Witchcraft among Azande*

The impact of *Witchcraft among Azande* upon the social sciences is immeasurable. First, although Evans-Pritchard does not intend to create a cross-cultural paradigm,⁹² his description of Zande witchcraft and magic has become a model for understanding similar phenomena, most especially within other African societies, in which witchcraft is a psychic emanation and magic is a ritual technique.⁹³ Douglas shows much apprehension over applications of this model to socio-cultural contexts outside Africa, but she leaves open the possibility of developing truly universal theories of witchcraft and sorcery.⁹⁴ The limited cross-cultural applicability of Evans-Pritchard's description of Azande witchcraft and magic does not mean that it is useless in understanding magic outside Africa; however, in such cases, Evans-Pritchard's study should not be used as a paradigm but as valuable example of how witchcraft and magic may operate in certain socio-cultural contexts. Ethnographical evidence from a particular socio-cultural context must thoroughly support any insights that Evans-Pritchard's study of the Azande may provide for understanding magic in that culture.

⁹¹ Yuval Harari, "What is a Magical Text? Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic," in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. Shaul Shaked, IJS Studies in Judaica 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 102–103.

⁹² Victor W. Turner, "Witchcraft and Sorcery: Taxonomy versus Dynamics," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34 (1964), 318–319; see also Mary Douglas, "Witch Beliefs in Central Africa," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 37 (1967), 72; cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among Azande*, 8, 11.

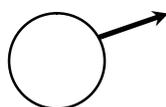
⁹³ Douglas, "Witch Beliefs," 72; Phillips Stevens, Jr., "Some Implications of Urban Witchcraft Beliefs," in *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, eds. Arthur C. Lehmann and James E. Myers, 4th ed. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1997), 200; Maxwell Gay Marwick, "Witchcraft (African Witchcraft)," *ER* 15:425.

⁹⁴ Douglas, "Witch Beliefs," 73; see also Victor Turner, "Witchcraft and Sorcery," 318–319.

The second influential impact that *Witchcraft among Azande* has had on the social sciences is its role in spawning symbolic anthropological approaches to magic. Symbolic anthropology developed primarily among students and followers of the English functionalists Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard.⁹⁵ One prominent symbolist who advanced Evans-Pritchard's approach to witchcraft is Mary Douglas, whose work has great affinity with functionalism.⁹⁶ Douglas argues that social structure, in particular, greatly affects the representation and function of witchcraft and magic in specific socio-cultural contexts.⁹⁷

Douglas distinguishes two basic forms of witchcraft. First, "the witch as outsider" pattern involves locating witches primarily outside the accuser's society (see Figure 2.1). "The function of the accusation [against an outsider] is to reaffirm group boundaries and solidarity," explains Douglas.⁹⁸ In this pattern, the actual identity of the witch is "rarely identified," thus, the community usually does not punish the witch. An exception to this is the identification of a group member as an outsider witch, whom the accuser's group typically expels.⁹⁹

Unidentified or unpunished outsider as witch



Insider identified as outsider witch

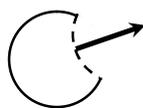


Figure 2.1 Witch as outsider pattern (Douglas, "Thirty Years," xxvi).

⁹⁵ Bell, *Ritual*, 35; Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 180.

⁹⁶ Bell, *Ritual*, 62.

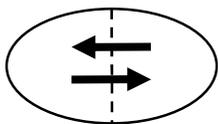
⁹⁷ Douglas, "Witch Beliefs," 75; see also, Lemert, *Trouble with Evil*, 20.

⁹⁸ Douglas, "Thirty Years," xxvi.

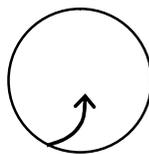
⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, xxvi.

The second pattern is that of “the witch as an internal enemy,” and this pattern typically results from internal group division (see Figure 2.2). Three variations of the pattern exist. The first variant is “the witch as member of a rival faction.” The function of this first variant is “to redefine faction boundaries or realign faction hierarchy or split community.” The second variant identifies “the witch as a dangerous deviant,” and this is the form of witchcraft predominant in Evans-Pritchard’s *Witchcraft among Azande*. The function of the second variant is “to control deviants in the name of the community values.” The third variant is “the witch as an internal enemy with outside liaisons.” This variant functions “to promote factional rivalry, split community, and redefine hierarchy.”¹⁰⁰

Witch from Rival Faction



Witch as Dangerous Deviant



*Witch as Internal Enemy
with Outsider Liaisons*

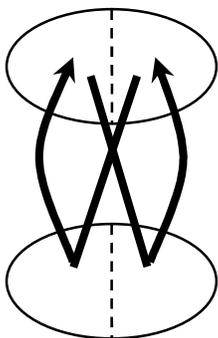


Figure 2.2 Witch as insider pattern (Douglas, “Thirty Years,” xxvii).

¹⁰⁰ Douglas, “Thirty Years,” xxvii.

Douglas' models of witchcraft allow for much variety both structurally and functionally.¹⁰¹ Multiple patterns of witchcraft may exist in a single society. In addition, witchcraft accusations will occur in socio-cultural contexts where face-to-face contact is prevalent.¹⁰² Furthermore, the more politically complex a society the more likely witchcraft will function as a social control system rather than as a means of social change.¹⁰³

Summary

Several aspects of Evans-Pritchard's treatment of Zande witchcraft and magic will be quite useful for my study of magic in Acts. First, the distinction that Evans-Pritchard makes between witchcraft and magic is significant for distinguishing between two different, but related, sets of conceptions of interactions between humans and superhuman forces. Witchcraft, in anthropological literature, primarily refers to harmful psychic emanations, which the person from whom they emanate may or may not consciously control. Magic, within anthropological studies, is primarily a ritual technique, whose effects are not always limited to misfortune or illness. Sorcery, furthermore, is a specific form of magic, specifically malevolent magic. Second, social-scientists and other scholars must use great care when using Evans-Pritchard's model of Zande witchcraft and magic to socio-cultural contexts other than Zande society. Victor W. Turner points out that because Evans-Pritchard never intended his definitions of witchcraft and sorcery to be universal or cross-cultural definitions, his exact descriptions of the dynamics and functions of witchcraft accusations as negotiations of strained social relations are not universal models.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Jeffrey Burton Russell, "Witchcraft (Concepts)," *ER* 15:416; Marwick, "Witchcraft (African)," 15:427.

¹⁰² Douglas, "Thirty Years," xxviii– xxix, xxxv.

¹⁰³ Douglas, "Witch Beliefs," 72–80; cf. Elliott Fratkin, "The Laibon Diviner and Healer among Samburu Pastoralists of Kenya," in *Divination and Healing: Potent Vision*, eds. Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 221. Fratkin claims that "Mary Douglas (1970:4) pointed out that beliefs in sorcery are more common among acephalous, decentralized polities lacking courts or police than among centralized or state-structured societies." However, Douglas does not rule out the possibility of witchcraft systems in societies with more advanced structures, although they are more unlikely to exist in such settings.

Turner, instead, argues that accusations of sorcery in some contexts may function roughly the same way as accusations of witchcraft function in Zande society.¹⁰⁴ Thus, when someone uses Evans-Pritchard's model to understand another socio-cultural context, he or she must carefully and flexibly adapt Evans-Pritchard's model for that socio-cultural context. Therefore, although witchcraft as defined anthropologically may not play a significant role in Acts, accusations of sorcery in Acts may function similarly to Zande witchcraft accusations, and I will argue in ch. 4 that they do.

Nevertheless, Evans-Pritchard's approach to magic and witchcraft has some limitations. First, as a functionalist approach, Evans-Pritchard tends to treat a society as a relatively stable system, and he does not address the role of drastic social change within Zande society. Second, Evans-Pritchard incorrectly understands that in Zande culture witchcraft is only an explanation of the social significance of misfortune rather than an empirical cause of the misfortune. Third, as Douglas' critique of rigidly applied inflexible models of witchcraft indicates, Evans-Pritchard's descriptions of Zande witchcraft and magic are prone to abuse when anthropologists and other scholars rather inflexibly apply the Zande witchcraft model or a similar socio-cultural model to another socio-cultural context. Fourth, Evans-Pritchard developed rather idiosyncratic definitions for magic, witchcraft, and sorcery, which he contextualized specifically for Zande culture. Confusion, however, often occurs when modern people, including anthropologists and historians, use these terms in ways different from the way Evans-Pritchard describes them. For instance, some anthropologists, following Evans-Pritchard, have attempted to standardize "witch" as a gender-neutral designation for anyone who causes misfortune—consciously or unconsciously—through psychic emanations. Other anthropologists and many historians use "witch" as it appeared in Europe and North America from the late Middle Ages through the early

¹⁰⁴ Victor Turner, "Witchcraft and Sorcery," 318–320.

modern period, where “witch” designated a person, particularly a woman, who practices malevolent magic and/or emanates harmful psychic forces.¹⁰⁵ This confusion of terminology has led many to distinguish explicitly between European-style witchcraft and African-style witchcraft.¹⁰⁶ In this study, I will avoid the European understanding of witchcraft because it is rather ill-defined and often carries gender bias; instead, I will only refer to witchcraft in the so-called African sense, that is, psychic emanations that cause harm and misfortune to others. Additionally, for the sake of clarity and consistency, I will employ the terms witchcraft and sorcery roughly the same way as Evans-Pritchard does. Thus, in my study, witchcraft is harmful psychic emanations. Accordingly, sorcery is malevolent magic, which is the ritual harnessing of superhuman power in order to cause undeserved harm or misfortune.

IV. Symbolist Approach to Magic

Now that I have covered the basics of Evans-Pritchard’s approach to witchcraft and magic, including a discussion of some of its strengths and weaknesses, I can now move forward to discussing a theoretical derivative of functionalism, namely symbolic anthropology. Unlike their functionalist predecessors, symbolic anthropologists, or symbolists, typically focus more on the analysis of magical and religious rituals than on the social functions of magic and religion.¹⁰⁷

Clifford Geertz provides a succinct explanation of the general symbolist method:

“Analysis [of cultures], then, is sorting out the structures of signification . . . and determining

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Sarah Iles Johnston, review of *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, by Kimberly B. Stratton, *HR* 49 (2009), 217; Marwick, “Witchcraft (African),” 423–428; Raquel Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), x–xi; Russell, “Witchcraft (Concepts),” 415–423; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 33, 72; Michael Winkelmann, “Witchcraft and Sorcery in Shamanism,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures*, ed. Mariko Namba Walter and Evan Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 272–273.

¹⁰⁶ E.g., Marwick, “Witchcraft (African),” 15:423–428; Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, x–xi; Russell, “Witchcraft (Concepts),” 15:415–423.

¹⁰⁷ Bell, *Ritual*, 41–42, 61; see Horton, “Back to Frazer,” 108. The moniker “symbolist” originates with the neo-intellectualist Robin Horton, a critic of the symbolic-anthropological approach to magic and religion.

their social ground and import.”¹⁰⁸ More particularly, the symbolist approach to magic treats magical ritual as symbolic communication of socio-political messages to ritual participants. Common topics of these socio-political messages include behavioral norms, social hierarchies, and gender roles. Three features of the symbolist approach to magic are particularly relevant for understanding magic in Acts: (1) refusal to draw a sharp distinction between magic and religion, (2) acceptance of both functional and symbolic analysis, and (3) analysis of ritual as communication. While reviewing the symbolist approach to magic, I will preemptively refer to their main critics the neo-intellectualists, whom I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

Magic-Religion as a Heuristic Distinction

Murray Wax and Rosalie Wax in a 1963 article argue that the separation of magic and religion within the intellectualist and sociological approaches derives from Western rationalism. They claim that “magic” is actually a Western category used to describe cosmologies radically different from that of the modern, rationalistic West.¹⁰⁹ Wax and Wax state a common sentiment among many symbolists that “magic” and “religion” are only *heuristic* cross-cultural categories.¹¹⁰ Thus, many social-scientists employ the term “magico-religious,” which designates all rituals concerned with superhuman powers and beings.¹¹¹ Although not all anthropologists have embraced the term “magico-religious”,¹¹² the term is now commonplace in anthropological literature because it allows scholarly discourse concerning ritual to continue without every time having to discuss the exact relationship between magic and religion.

¹⁰⁸ Geertz, “Thick Description,” 9.

¹⁰⁹ Wax and Wax, “Notion of Magic,” 500, 503.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Karl Erik Rosengren, “Malinowski’s Magic: The Riddle of the Empty Cell,” *Current Anthropology* 17 (1976), 667–668. Although Rosengren disagrees with Wax and Wax’s overall argument, he does agree that the categories of magic, religion, and science are scholarly typologies.

¹¹¹ Middleton, “Magic (Theories),” 9:84.

¹¹² Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Religion*, 3–4.

According to prominent symbolist John H. M. Beattie, the inherently expressive and symbolic quality of ritual unites religion and magic.¹¹³ Nevertheless, he relies upon Tylor's definition of religion as "belief in Spiritual Beings" to draw a heuristic distinction between magic and religion.¹¹⁴ Religion, according to Beattie, typically involves "those kinds of beliefs and practices which involve reference to more or less 'personalized' spiritual beings, such as gods, ghosts and spirits." Conversely, magic is concerned with "impersonal, unindividualized power."¹¹⁵

According to Beattie, since magico-religious rituals are expressive and nonscientific activities, anthropologists should analyze them much the same way art is analyzed. Ritual, like art, achieves an effect through expressive efficaciousness, rather than through technological efficaciousness. Nevertheless, Beattie is careful to stress that ritual is *like* art, but it is not actually art.¹¹⁶ Of course, ritual has an instrumental function because the ritual practitioner desires certain results from the ritual performance; however, the instrumentality of a ritual depends upon a ritual's expressive quality.¹¹⁷

Symbolic Anthropology and Functionalism

Symbolist treatments of magico-religious phenomena are primarily ritual studies, which focus on the symbolic aspects of magico-religious ritual. Beattie, in particular, is careful to point out that symbolic anthropology is not a replacement for functionalist approaches to magic and religion; instead, it is a complement, which resolves some of functionalism's shortcomings. For example, Beattie's theory provides the social scientist a means of understanding the relationship between

¹¹³ John Beattie, "Ritual and Social Change," *Man*, n.s., 1 (1966), 65, 68.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 424.

¹¹⁵ Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 212.

¹¹⁶ Beattie, "Ritual and Change," 63, 65, 68, 69, 72.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

ritual and social change.¹¹⁸ Beattie claims that magico-religious rituals “exhibit . . . a conviction, explicit or (more commonly) implicit, that a ritual, dramatic performance will somehow bring about a desired end.”¹¹⁹ Carrying this insight a step further, Tambiah argues that as a means of communicating morality and ethics, rituals are able to convey messages, which may encourage social conformity or social change.

Ritual as Communication

Similar to Beattie who treats ritual as expressive, Tambiah claims that through both verbal symbols and symbolic actions, ritual participants communicate messages concerning proper social behavior to one another.¹²⁰ “Thus, it is possible to argue that all magico-religious ritual is addressed to the human participants and attempts to re-structure and integrate the minds and emotions of the actors,” Tambiah explains.¹²¹

Tambiah claims that magic works by means of ritual metaphor. In metaphorical language, the speaker or writer refers to a source domain and a target domain. The writer or speaker attributes at least one characteristic of the source domain to the target domain.¹²² Similarly, by means of the verbal spell and ritual contact, the desired quality of a ritual material transfers to a human subject, tool, or some other object. Thus, the power of magic is a matter of metaphorical transfer, not any perceived inherent power of words, as some intellectualists argue.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Beattie, “Ritual and Change,” 61, 70–72.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹²⁰ Tambiah, “Magical Power,” 179, 201–202.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹²² Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 25–27, 41–42.

¹²³ Cf. Tambiah, “Magical Power,” 193–195; contra Robin Horton, “African Traditional Thought and Western Science,” pt. 2, “The ‘Closed’ and ‘Open’ Predicaments,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 37 (April 1967), 159. Thus, the Frazerian concepts of likeness and of sympathy are important to magic because these are means of metaphorical transfer and not because of a law of sympathy.

Concerning the Frazerian characterizations of magic, religion, and science, Tambiah comments:

Some of us have operated with the concept of ‘magic’ as something different from ‘religion’; we have thought of ‘spell’ as acting mechanically and as being intrinsically associated with magic; we have opposed ‘spell’ to ‘prayer’ which was thought to connote a different kind of communication with the divine. Frazer carried this thinking to an extreme by asserting that magic was thoroughly opposed to religion and in the interest of preserving this distinction dismissed half the globe as victims of the ‘confusion of magic with religion.’¹²⁴

Tambiah claims that the acceptance of the intellectualist characterization of magic and religion results in declaring traditional societies as irrational and ignorant of the true natures of magic and religion. Tambiah, instead, claims that traditional people have acted “ingeniously” in the mixing of the expressive and instrumental within magic.¹²⁵

Tambiah further criticizes the attempt to portray magic as a pseudo-science by claiming that magic and religion operate by a different form of analogy than science does.¹²⁶ According to Tambiah, two basic kinds of analogy exist. As the basis of science, *predictive analogy* allows a person to make predictive extrapolations. Whereas predictive analogy allows one to explain how things *will* behave, *persuasive analogy* allows one to explain how things *ought* to behave.¹²⁷ Tambiah explains that persuasive analogy is the model for both religious and magical ritual.¹²⁸ He claims that not only the Frazerian but also the sociological approaches to magic have erroneously characterized magic as operating according to predictive analogy, thereby minimizing the similarities between magic and religion.

To explain further his understanding of how magic operates, Tambiah adapts J. L. Austin’s speech act theory to explain how anthropologists can analyze non-verbal ritual acts as

¹²⁴ Tambiah, “Magical Power,” 176; see also, Beattie, “On Understanding Ritual,” 245.

¹²⁵ Tambiah, “Magical Power,” 202.

¹²⁶ See also Beattie, “Ritual and Change,” 65.

¹²⁷ Tambiah, “Form and Meaning,” 69, 72.

¹²⁸ Contra Horton, “African Traditional Thought,” pt. 2, 167; Robin Horton, postscript to *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 347–361.

speech acts.¹²⁹ A magico-religious ritual is an illocutionary act, which “has a *certain conventional force*, a performative act *which does something* (as implied in promising, ordering, apologizing, warning).”¹³⁰ The other speech act forms are the locutionary act, which is “a descriptive statement of fact” that is verifiable, and the perlocutionary act, which refers to the consequences of a speech act. Since magico-religious ritual is an illocutionary act, it is a performative act and not a statement for someone to verify through experimentation; thus, to treat ritual acts as locutionary acts, as Frazer does, is “inappropriate.”¹³¹

Despite the coherence and sophistication of Tambiah’s arguments, his theory leaves behind some unanswered questions. First, although Tambiah claims that no distinction between magic and religions exists, he occasionally refers to magic and religion separately, which suggests that he retains some distinction between the two; however, he never clarifies the difference between magic and religion. Second, Tambiah concentrates so much on the implicit symbolic meaning of rituals that he ignores the explicitly stated goals of the participants themselves.¹³²

Symbolic Anthropology in the Study of the New Testament

Symbolic anthropology has influenced the study of the culture of the early Christ-movement, particularly through NT scholars’ use of Geertz, Douglas, and Turner.¹³³ Nevertheless, the

¹²⁹ See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

¹³⁰ Tambiah, “Form and Meaning,” 79 (italics in the original).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 80–81.

¹³² Cf. Sharot, “Magic, Religion, Science, and Secularization,” 274

¹³³ E.g., Philip F. Esler, “Models, Context and Kerygma in New Testament Interpretation,” introduction to *Modelling in Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament*, ed. Philip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995), 5; David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996), 80; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 2000), 106–107; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 61–62; Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: ‘They Turned the World Upside Down,’” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 271–304; Gerd Theissen, *The*

insights and theories of symbolists have influenced mostly studies of the early Christ-followers' rituals (baptism, Lord's supper), ritual concerns (purity and impurity), and ritual interpretations of narratives (temptation of Jesus).¹³⁴ However, the use of symbolic anthropology to study magic and miracle in the NT, especially in Acts, is limited. The primary reason for the lack of symbolist-influenced studies of NT magic and miracle is the overall lack of ritual detail in respect to magico-religious operations in the NT. Additionally, Richard E. DeMaris describes a trend in traditional biblical scholarship to avoid ritual interpretations of NT texts: "If the New Testament says little about the early church's ritual life, New Testament scholars say even less. They are equally to blame for the disappearance of rites, for the field has historically had a bias against ritual, as has religious studies in general. . . . The academic study of the Bible, and the modern study of religion generally, has its roots in Protestantism and the Enlightenment, both of which devalued ritual."¹³⁵ Thus, biblical scholars have typically analyzed the repetitive patterns that emerge in NT wonder-working contexts, such as patterns in Jesus' healing and exorcistic activities, as the development and employment of literary forms rather than as examples of the ritual activity of Jesus—as either a literary character or historical figure. Such repetitive activity, however, is characteristic of ritual.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, symbolic anthropology's affinity with literary analysis easily lends itself to the interpretation of magic and miracle in the NT.

Therefore, despite Acts' provision of only limited information regarding the mechanics of

Religion of the Earliest Churches: Creating a Symbolic World, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 121–138.

¹³⁴ E.g., Richard E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in Its Ritual World* (London: Routledge, 2008); Malina, *New Testament World*, 161–197; Mark McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 333–360; Jerome H. Neyrey, "Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 360–387; Neyrey, "Symbolic Universe," 271–304.

¹³⁵ DeMaris, *New Testament in Ritual World*, 35.

¹³⁶ Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

wonder-working among Christ-followers and magical characters, Acts' narration of miracle-working participates in the same symbolic universe in which the writer Luke's own understanding of miracle-working participates; thus, symbolic analysis of the narratives can aid in understanding the symbolic significance of wonder-working in Acts. NT scholars should employ symbolist analysis, when it is possible to do so, in order to understand better the socio-political significance—including moral and ethical aspects—of wonder-working in Acts.

An additional benefit of using the symbolist approach to magic to analyze magic and miracle in Acts is the symbolist appropriation of functional analysis. Typically, symbolists, unlike their functionalist predecessors, have understood the social functions of ritual much less as the purposeful goals of ritual and more as the unintended results of ritual. Yet, they recognize the possibility that ritual actors may use rituals to achieve additional social results; however, this is not always the case. Since rituals are forms of communication, ritual actors are able to perpetrate, even unintentionally, not only social stability but also social change.

Despite these benefits, symbolist approaches to magico-religious ritual have two significant limitations. First, although symbolists frequently deny any substantial difference between magic and religion, they continue to refer to “magic” and “religion” as if a distinction does exist, even on a heuristic level. The symbolists, however, rarely provide a concise explanation of the difference between magic and religion. Second, since symbolist analysis focuses so heavily on the symbolic significance of ritual, symbolist analysis is primarily an observer-oriented approach that often ignores the participant's perspective.

V. Neo-Intellectualist Approach to Magic

For neo-intellectualists, seeking an underlying symbolic meaning for rituals is a misguided attempt to maintain the rationality of rituals in traditional societies. Prominent neo-intellectualist

Robin Horton claims that neo-intellectualism is more akin to the work of Tylor than the work of Frazer.¹³⁷ Neo-intellectualists, just as Beattie and other symbolists, tend to adopt a Tylorian definition of religion, in which belief in superhuman beings is the basis of religion.¹³⁸ Definitions of religion like that of Melford E. Spiro are characteristic of the neo-intellectualist approach: “I shall define ‘religion’ as ‘an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings.’”¹³⁹ Notably different in Spiro’s definition of religion than in Frazer’s is Spiro’s refusal to define religion in contradistinction to magic. In fact, he hints that in some socio-cultural contexts such a distinction may not exist.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, close readings of neo-intellectualist approaches to magico-religious phenomena emphasize that magic is typically concerned with impersonal superhuman power, and as a result, practitioners of magic tend to view magical ritual as automatically efficacious. Thus, due to the mutual reliance upon Tylor, the basic symbolist and neo-intellectualist definitions of magic and religion are very similar.

Due to the similarity between basic neo-intellectualist and symbolist definitions of religion and magic, most of the debate between neo-intellectualists and symbolists is over whether rituals are principally instrumental activities aimed at achieving specific observable results or whether rituals are principally forms of symbolic communication conveying socio-political messages, such as behavioral norms. Horton argues that symbolists have incorrectly separated the expressive from the instrumental by portraying ritual as primarily expressive.

¹³⁷ cf. Horton, “Back to Frazer,” 105–108; Robin Horton, “Neo-Tylorianism: Sound Sense or Sinister Prejudice?” in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 53.

¹³⁸ E.g. Goody, “Religion and Ritual,” 157; Robin Horton, “Definition of Religion,” 211; Spiro, “Religion,” 96; cf. Horton, “Neo-Tylorianism,” 53. The affinity that a neo-intellectualist definition of religion has to Tylor’s definition of religion (“the belief in Spiritual Beings” [*Primitive Culture*, 112]) leads Horton to prefer the term *neo-Tylorianism* to *neo-intellectualism*.

¹³⁹ Spiro, “Religion,” 96.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

Horton claims that the proper approach to rituals in traditional societies is to take them at face value. Horton claims that symbols are part of the instrumentality of ritual, that is, rituals achieve their instrumental goals through symbols.¹⁴¹ Thus for Horton, any socio-political messages symbolically contained in ritual are secondary to the instrumental aspect of symbolism in the ritual.¹⁴² He argues that only after analyzing the ritual itself should the analyst investigate how people employ the ritual to convey socio-political messages, including the reinforcement of normative cultural values.¹⁴³

Horton claims that the neo-intellectualists, instead, are willing to take seriously the pre-literate cosmology without either accepting it as reality or circumscribing it through symbolic analysis.¹⁴⁴ Horton further argues that the symbolist approach is nothing more than a means of patronizing people within pre-literate and traditional cultures. According to him, the symbolist approach to ritual attempts to avoid labeling the rituals of traditional societies as irrational; however, they achieve this by projecting Western symbolic meta-language onto non-Western cultures. In short, Horton claims that symbolists have used Western culture as a cultural equivalent to a *lingua franca*, and this move is more ethnocentric than anything found in Frazer's work.

Important also to the development of the neo-intellectualist approach to magic and religion is a dense and lengthy article by Winch, which seems to be the primary instigator of a heated debate over the rationality of magic and religion in traditional societies.¹⁴⁵ The symbolists

¹⁴¹ Horton, "Back to Frazer," 109–111; Horton, "Neo-Tylorianism," 57–58.

¹⁴² Horton, "Back to Frazer," 118; cf. Goody, "Religion and Ritual," 156–157. Goody claims that since "all verbal behavior is sign behavior," the symbolist distinction between the "expressive" and the "instrumental" is meaningless. Therefore, he claims that the distinguishing characteristic of ritual is not its symbolic character.

¹⁴³ Horton, "Neo-Tylorianism," 54–55.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 58–62.

¹⁴⁵ Winch, "Understanding Primitive Society," 307–324; cf. Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," 240–268; Horton, "Back to Frazer"; Horton, "Neo-Tylorianism"; Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 172–193; Hans H. Penner, "Rationality, Ritual, and Science," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict*, eds. Jacob

and neo-intellectualists would continue this debate over rationality through the 1980s. Winch warns that anthropologists should pay attention to both the rationality of the traditional culture they study and the rationality of the social scientists' Western culture. Therefore, Winch suggests that before an ethnographer can translate a traditional culture into Western categories, he or she must first understand the particular non-Western culture on its own terms.¹⁴⁶ For such a translation to occur, the ethnographer must identify what Horton, commenting on Winch's article, labels "situational and motivational common ground."¹⁴⁷ Ironically, Horton notes that Winch's choice of common ground (human birth, death, and sexual relations) reflects his immersion in Western culture,¹⁴⁸ leaving me to wonder if it is even possible for a Western observer to understand another culture without reference to Western culture. Despite Winch's affinities to the symbolist approach,¹⁴⁹ his concern with rationality and the desire to take seriously non-Western cultural phenomena on its own terms is in line with neo-intellectualist concerns.

Before leaving our discussion of neo-intellectualism, I must discuss two implications of Horton's critique of the symbolist approach: (1) the claim of symbolist ethnocentrism and (2) the debate over the rationality of ritual in traditional societies. Contrary to Horton's characterization of symbolists as having ignored the literal, instrumental meaning of rituals, Beattie actually says, "I have never at all disputed the self-evident fact that people practise magic because they want results; on the contrary, I have explicitly stated that they do."¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, in my review of

Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11–24; Tambiah, "Form and Meaning," 84–86; Tambiah, "Magical Power," 198–203.

¹⁴⁶ Horton, "Professor Winch," 139–140.

¹⁴⁷ Winch, "Understanding Primitive Society," 322.

¹⁴⁸ Horton, "Professor Winch," 140.

¹⁴⁹ Winch, "Understanding Primitive Society," 321.

¹⁵⁰ Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," 247; see also Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 202: "People who carry out institutionalized symbolic procedures or rites usually believe that by doing so they are either producing some desired state of affairs or preventing some undesired one."

Winch above, I questioned whether it is possible for a Western observer to avoid completely Western categories of thought. Horton, like Winch, promulgates a method that attempts to understand a non-Western culture completely on its own terms and categories, but is that realistically possible? “Magic,” “religion,” and “science” are ultimately Western distinctions. No matter how much the anthropologist attempts to define these terms as broadly as possible so that they function as cross-cultural categories, these categories are still primarily modern Western categories.¹⁵¹ A scholarly analysis or interpretation—regardless if it is symbolist, functional, or neo-intellectualist—is *an analysis*, that is, a systematic abstraction of the significance of socio-cultural phenomena, which in this case are rituals. The analyst must convey that abstraction with a specific culturally contextualized language, which is most frequently a Western European language. The point here is not that all anthropological study of non-Western magico-religious phenomena is inherently *doomed* to ethnocentrism; instead, I am suggesting that any observer, regardless of whether he or she is a Westerner, will always rely upon a culturally contextualized medium of speech and cognition at some level.

Ultimately, Horton portrays the neo-intellectualist analyses as capable of providing more faithful translations of non-Western cultural phenomena into Western language and categories than analyses by symbolists. Horton, thus, proposes that a social scientist engaging in any cross-cultural comparison, which would result in the translation of non-Western cultural phenomena into Western language and cognitive categories, must first understand the differences between the two cultures before he or she can describe their similarities. In order for this to occur, the

¹⁵¹ Cf. Goody, “Religion and Ritual,” 155–156. Even neo-intellectualist Jack Goody hints at the artificiality of modern social-scientific, cross-cultural categories.

analyst must have an adequate understanding of both the particular non-Western and Western cultures before he or she can compare the two.¹⁵²

The basis for Horton's claim that neo-intellectualism is capable of producing a better analysis of ritual is that ritual is more an instrumental activity than an expressive activity. A close reading of Horton, however, shows that he recognizes that symbolists, particularly Beattie,¹⁵³ have not denied completely the instrumental aspect of ritual but have only subordinated it to the expressive. Horton has done the exact opposite. Subsequently, the bantering between the symbolists and neo-intellectualists boils down to a debate over the relationship between the expressive and instrumental aspects of ritual. On this subject, Beattie writes, "Obviously part of the fieldworker's task is to record the goals which people seek by means of their rites. However, this is the beginning, not the end, of his analysis. It is only *after* we have recorded the facts, including the fact that the magician is trying to kill an enemy, make rain, or whatever it may be, that the interesting problems in the analysis of ritual thought and action rise. . . ."¹⁵⁴ A paragraph later, he explains, "There is no contradiction in asserting that like other ritual[,] magic is symbolic, and at the same time that it is thought by its practitioners to be instrumentally effective."¹⁵⁵ I ask whether the symbols contained within ritual cannot act expressively at both socio-political and instrumental levels simultaneously. I, however, agree that a ritual's culturally recognized instrumental value allows for the development of any social symbolic value, which is the object of much of the symbolists' socio-political analysis; however, this does not mean that a deeper symbolist analysis of rituals is inappropriate.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Robin Horton, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science," pt. 1, "From Tradition to Science," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* (January 1967), 50; Horton, "Back to Frazer," 133; Sharot, "Magic, Religion, Science, and Secularization," 265–266.

¹⁵³ Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," 247–248.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 247–248.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Horton, "Neo-Tylorianism," 55.

In summary, the neo-intellectualist perspective provides two benefits for understanding magic in Acts. First, neo-intellectualism provides concise explanations of the differences between magic and religion, even if such differences only result in a heuristic distinction. Thus, magic for the neo-intellectualist is ritual that attempts to cause change through the manipulation of superhuman forces, particularly impersonal forces. Religion, according to neo-intellectualists, is a social institution focused primarily on superhuman beings. Additionally, the neo-intellectualist approach not only utilizes observer analysis of ritual but also values the participant's perspective. The largest difficulty of the neo-intellectualist perspective, in my opinion, is the continued portrayal of magic as a pseudo-science, that is, an empirically based, theoretical system for explaining the universe and dealing with the difficulties, dangers, misfortunes, and unfulfilled desires in human existence.

VI. Conclusion

The arguments between symbolists and neo-intellectualists initially began over two issues: the proper definitions of religion and magic and the proper means of analyzing them. At the heart of these debates were attempts to explain the rationality of non-Western, traditional ritual. A close reading of the arguments between the symbolists and the neo-intellectualists reveals that their characterizations of each other's positions are actually exaggerated caricatures that often result in the proponents of each position talking *past* one another more than they talk *to* one another. First, the typical neo-intellectualist description of symbolists is that symbolists completely deny the validity of the ritual participant's expressed functions of a ritual and concentrate only on the symbolic significance of a ritual.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Beattie, for example, does not deny the instrumental function of ritual, even while he argues that it is inappropriate to liken magic to

¹⁵⁷ Goody, "Religion and Ritual," 152, 157; Jarvie and Agassi, "Problem of Rationality," 180.

science; instead, he simply stresses the importance of the expressive over the instrumental.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, the symbolist depiction of the neo-intellectualists as completely unconcerned with the symbolic aspects of ritual is unfair.¹⁵⁹ Horton explicitly recognizes the importance of symbolism within ritual; however, he subordinates it to the instrumental element.¹⁶⁰ Most of the debate between the symbolists and neo-intellectualists, thus, centers on disagreement of the relative significance of the instrumental and communicative aspects of ritual.

Moreover, the neo-intellectualist Spiro describes any functional and symbolic aspect of ritual as “an unintended consequence” of the ritual, which interestingly is an opinion with which Beattie seems to agree.¹⁶¹ In reference to his symbolist approach to the social functions of ritual, Beattie comments, “We are concerned here mainly with what R. K. Merton called ‘latent function’ rather than ‘manifest function’. That is, ritual analysts are dealing with *consequences of human behaviour* of which most of the ritual actors are often quite ignorant.”¹⁶² Thus, in relation to the social functions of rituals, both neo-intellectualists and some symbolists argue that the social-structural aspects of ritual are not causes of ritual; instead, they are the results of ritual.

As anthropologists increasingly have come to recognize the essentially Western and heuristic quality of the categories of magic and religion, the debate over the relationship between magic and religion seems to have dissipated. Nevertheless, the definition of magic as instrumental ritual involving verbal and material manipulation seems to have gained the upper hand. In particular, the symbolist understanding of magic is effectively the manipulation of

¹⁵⁸ Beattie, “On Understanding Ritual,” 247; cf. Sharot, “Magic, Religion, Science, and Secularization,” 274.

¹⁵⁹ Beattie, “Ritual and Change,” 63.

¹⁶⁰ Horton, “Definition of Religion,” 204.

¹⁶¹ Spiro, “Religion,” 108.

¹⁶² Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 208 (italics added).

material objects and verbal formulas that function as symbols within the ritual.¹⁶³ Furthermore, symbolists, such as Beattie, have also leaned toward Tylor's basic distinction between magic and religion, in which religion deals primarily with personal superhuman "beings" and magic with "impersonal, unindividualized power." However, this distinction between magic and religion is ultimately an "arbitrary" distinction and more a matter of degree than a clear-cut determination.¹⁶⁴

Furthermore, many neo-intellectualists have abandoned the Frazerian characterization of petitioning religion and coercive magic with the recognition that religion is sometimes quite coercive and magic is sometimes quite petitionary.¹⁶⁵ The so-called "sociological" definition of magic, however, has come under increasing scrutiny as opponents have pointed out instances where magic is quite communal.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, most contemporary anthropologists, especially neo-intellectualists and symbolists, associate magic with *any* ritual practice that focuses on the manipulation of material and verbal symbols to achieve a specific empirical result. Since magic is not inherently opposed to religion, as in both Frazerian and Durkheimian theories, the appearance of magical elements within religion and vice versa is expected. Additionally, as a result of the increased popularity of Tylorian definitions of religion and the decreased popularity of Durkheimian definitions of religion, anthropologists frequently attribute to magic a tendency to be more concerned with impersonal forces than with personal forces.¹⁶⁷

My review of social-scientific theory on magic does not answer all the theoretical difficulties I have raised so far. In ch. 4, my presentation of the social-scientific-critical approach

¹⁶³ Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 48; e.g., Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 202–218; Rasmussen, "Magic, Power, and Ritual" 1:161–162.

¹⁶⁴ Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 212, 219. Beattie, however, does not support Mauss' theory of a universal concept of *mana*, which Beattie treats, as one example of impersonal magico-religious power (*Other Cultures*, 214–216).

¹⁶⁵ Horton, "Definition of Religion," 210–211.

¹⁶⁶ Cunningham, *Religion and Magic*, 60–61.

¹⁶⁷ E.g., Beattie, *Other Cultures*, 212.

that will guide the rest of this study will begin by providing my final conclusions on how to resolve the theoretical debates that the various social-scientific approaches have raised in this chapter, particularly the debates between symbolist and neo-intellectualist approaches.

Nevertheless, the discussion of social-scientific theories that I have provided in ch. 2 will provide an adequate basis in the next chapter for reviewing previous treatments of Greco-Roman magic by historians of religion and biblical scholars.

CHAPTER 3
GRECO-ROMAN MAGIC AND MIRACLE IN PREVIOUS
HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

The discussion of social-scientific approaches to magic and religion in ch. 2, although rather lengthy, is essential to an adequate critical treatment of studies of magic within the related fields of the history of Greco-Roman religions and NT studies. In particular, all modern scholarly descriptions of μαγεία in the Greco-Roman world are dependent either explicitly or implicitly upon social-scientific theories of magic and religion. In order to proceed in my development of a method with which to analyze the conflicts between miracle-workers and μάγοι in Acts, I must first sift through some previous studies on Greco-Roman magic in order to discover both helpful and inadequate approaches to Greco-Roman magic in previous scholarship.

I. Analysis of Approaches to Magic in the Greco-Roman World

Since the 1960s, a plethora of books on the related subjects of Greco-Roman magic and magic in the NT has appeared. The following review of literature will consider both religio-historical studies and biblical studies for two reasons. First, few studies exist that deal only with magic in Acts, although several studies since the 1960s take up the topic of magic in relation to the canonical Gospels and the historical Jesus. Second, the few studies of magic in Acts rely on the more general historical treatments of Greco-Roman magic. Furthermore, in this section I will refrain from providing a comprehensive historical description of Greco-Roman magic because numerous historical studies of Greco-Roman magic already exist. Although I find shortcomings in the overall theoretical approaches in most of the surveys of Greco-Roman magic, many of

them provide detailed and informative presentations of the development and practice of Greco-Roman magic.¹

Early Social-Scientific Influences on the Study of Greco-Roman Magic

It should come as no surprise that early anthropological theories of magic and religion influenced the historical study of Greco-Roman magic in the first half of the twentieth century. Particularly influential historical studies from roughly the first half of the twentieth century include works by Joseph Bidez, Franz Cumont, A. J. Festugière, and Martin P. Nilsson.² Many of these earlier treatments of magic relied (albeit often implicitly) upon intellectualist, particularly Frazerian, descriptions of magic as automatically efficacious ritual that coerces superhuman powers (personal and impersonal).³ Traces of Durkheim also appear in these studies of Greco-Roman magic, such as in Nilsson's characterization of magicians' appropriation of "religious" hymns for magical purposes, a clear example of the magical profanation of the sacred.⁴ Nevertheless, in order to consider only works that the more recent developments in the social-scientific study of

¹ For further study of the development and practice of Greco-Roman μαγεία, I suggest the following studies: Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, eds., *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002); Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford, 1991); Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Sarah Iles Johnston, ed., "Exploring the Shadows: Ancient Literature and the Supernatural," Special Issue, *Helios* 21, no. 2 (1994); Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book; Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), Ebrary e-book; Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, eds., *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, Studies in the History of Religion 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

² Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés: Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d'après la tradition grecque* (Paris: Les Belle lettres, 1938); A. J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks*, Sather Classical Lectures 26 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1954); Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); Martin P. Nilsson, *Die Religion in den Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, K. Humanista Vetenskapssamfundets i Lund Årsberättelse 2 (Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1948).

³ Cf. Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 205–206, 228–229; e.g., Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 28–29, 112–113.

⁴ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 217; e.g., Nilsson, *Religion in Zauberpapyri*.

magic have had opportunity to influence, I will limit this section to studies ranging from the last few decades of the twentieth century until present.

Georg Luck

Starting with historical studies in the mid-1980s, I will discuss first Swedish classicist Georg Luck's *Arcana Mundi*. The original edition of *Arcana Mundi* appeared in 1985 with a second edition in 2006.⁵ Although primarily a sourcebook, *Arcana Mundi* contains a general introduction and several chapter introductions that are significant scholarly contributions to the study of ancient magic.⁶ Luck's definition of magic fits well within the intellectualist tradition: "In the present context, I would define magic as a technique grounded in a belief in powers located in the human soul and in the universe outside ourselves, a technique that aims at imposing the human will on nature or on human beings by using supersensual powers. Ultimately, it may be a belief in the unlimited powers of the soul."⁷ Like the intellectualists, Luck characterizes magic as both a technique and a cosmology, which operates according to natural laws.⁸ Although Luck only makes the briefest of references to Frazer, the bulk of his theory characterizes Greco-Roman magic as operating primarily by the Frazerian principle of sympathy, in which the magician ritually manipulates material objects (or verbal references to material objects) that either are similar to the object or person that the magician wishes to affect or have been in physical contact with the object or person to be affected.⁹

⁵ The first edition of *Arcana Mundi* appeared in 1985; however, all subsequent references will be to the second edition from 2006.

⁶ Morton Smith, review of *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, by Georg Luck, *CW* 80 (1987), 388.

⁷ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1–2, 33; see also, Georg Luck, "Recent Work on Ancient Magic," in *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals, and Magic in the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000; cf. I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson, Key Concepts in the Social Sciences (Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970), 174.

⁹ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 1, 4–6, 24, 26, 34, 522.

Luck's understanding of magic does differ from Frazer's in two ways. First, he ultimately characterizes magic as a sort of proto-humanism by attributing its existence to "a belief in the unlimited powers of the soul," whereas Frazer attributed magic to faith in the regularity of the natural structure of the universe.¹⁰ Second, Luck adopts Marcel Mauss' theory of *mana*, even to the point of identifying the *mana*-like force in Greco-Roman magic as δύναμις.¹¹

Luck, furthermore, shows familiarity with the sociological approach to magic when he describes magic as individualistic and secretive, as opposed to religion, which is communal and public.¹² Nevertheless, he explains that these characteristics of magic are not universal and are secondary to his intellectualist understanding of magic. When Luck does invoke the sociological approach, he retains its basic premise, namely magic is individualistic ritual, as a criterion for distinguishing magic and religion in only certain socio-cultural contexts, including the Greco-Roman context.

Similar to Frazer and Mauss, Luck maintains a firm universal distinction between magic and religion; however, he proposes a new primary criterion for distinguishing magic and religion. He argues that absent from magic is the concept of sin, which he considers a typically religious concept.¹³ To argue that Greco-Roman μάγοι did not have a concept of sin, despite their living in a broader cultural milieu that did have a notion of sin, is a difficult argument to make. Unfortunately, Luck provides little support for his claim that magic lacks a concept of sin.

¹⁰ Cf. J. H. M. Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson, Key Concepts in the Social Sciences (Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970), 244–245; Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 2.

¹¹ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 6; Luck, "Recent Work on Magic," 207–208; cf. John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition*, SBT, 2nd ser., 28 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1974), 105; Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 105; Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 117; Arthur Darby Nock, "Mana and Roman Religion," in *Essays on Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 2:603–605. Hull also accepts Mauss' identification of δύναμις as Greco-Roman *mana*-like force. Nock, however, does not accept this identification, but still considers *mana* a useful concept for understanding Roman religion.

¹² Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

One final critique concerns the actual selections of primary texts contained in *Arcana Mundi*. Very few texts are from inscriptions or magical papyri; instead, most of the texts are works by elite writers, such as philosophical treatises, rhetorical guides, and theatrical dramas.¹⁴ Such elite writings provide primarily an outsider's view of μαγεία. Thus, Luck's affinity for the elitist theories of Frazer and elitist Greco-Roman texts results in *Arcana Mundi* presenting mostly an elitist and outsider view of μαγεία.

Before concluding this section on *Arcana Mundi*, I must point out that Luck incorporates in this book a section on miracles. I have not introduced the topic of miracles into this chapter of my study until now because it is a rarely discussed concept in anthropological literature. However, discussions of ancient miracles will often appear within historical studies of ancient magic. Ultimately, the distinction between μαγεία and miracle is a consequence of a distinction between religion and magic, in which miracle is to religion as a magical act is to μαγεία.¹⁵ Luck cites both Jesus of Nazareth and Apollonius of Tyana as examples of wonder-workers whose followers respectively considered each a religious leader that performed miracles, although their opponents considered them popular μάγοι.¹⁶ Accordingly, Luck explains:

Miracles can be defined as extraordinary events that are witnessed by people but cannot be explained in terms of human power or by the laws of nature. They are therefore frequently attributed to the intervention of a supernatural being. . . .

The definition, tentative as it may be, shows us how difficult it is to separate miracles from the power of performing magic (the Greek word *dynamis* covers both), because magic does produce miraculous effects, and miracles can be attributed to magic. The problem is partly semantic, partly cultural, partly theological.¹⁷

¹⁴ Morton Smith, review of *Arcana Mundi*, 388.

¹⁵ Cf. Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 93.

¹⁶ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 177. For examples of magic accusations against Jesus, see Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49.53; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30. For examples of accusations of μαγεία against Apollonius and defenses against such accusations, see Apuleius, *Apology* 90.6; Lucian, *Alex.* 5; Origen, *Contra Celsus* 6.41.9–18; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.2; 4.18, 35; 5.12; 7.17; 8.19, 30.

¹⁷ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 177.

Nevertheless, Luck draws a heuristic distinction between miracle and magic that accords with his overall understanding of the relationship of magic and religion. First, miracles tend to occur publicly, whereas magic is more private and secretive. Second, magic tends to be more technical than miracle, which requires little or no ritual technique.¹⁸

Fritz Graf

As with Luck's *Arcana Mundi*, Fritz Graf's *Magic in the Ancient World* (originally published in French in 1994) demonstrates an awareness of the social-scientific study of magic and religion. Unlike Luck, Graf demonstrates a familiarity with the symbolist approach in that Graf adopts Tambiah's characterization of magic as ritual communication;¹⁹ nevertheless, his general discussion of the anthropology of magic and religion is rather cursory and reduces the anthropology of magic to an oversimplification of only two opposing positions – intellectualist and functionalist.²⁰ Moving from anthropological approaches, Graf explains that two basic approaches to magic have existed within the historical study of Greco-Roman magic. In the first approach, "[*M*]agic meant everything that the Greeks and Romans could have designated under the heading."²¹ This attempt is an inductive approach in which the historian attempts to identify all Greco-Roman phenomena that Greco-Roman people generally considered to be magic and to induce from these phenomena a common definition and description of Greco-Roman magic. In the second approach, the historian identifies and describes Greco-Roman magical practices on the basis of the Frazerian characterization of magic as automatically efficacious ritual that coerces superhuman forces and operates according to the principle of sympathy.²² Graf,

¹⁸ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 177–178.

¹⁹ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 206–210.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8–18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18 (italics in the original).

²² *Ibid.*, 18–19.

however, has grossly oversimplified the methodological approaches available to historians of religion. Nevertheless, Graf chooses the first methodological option, which deduces from ancient sources (literary, inscriptional, and artifactual) a definition and description of Greco-Roman magic.

The problem with Graf's overall approach is an essential weakness of simple induction. The inductive process requires the observer to determine *a priori* what phenomena will enter his or her database, from which the observer will derive his or her conclusions. In order to develop a more precise definition of Greco-Roman magic, the historian must have a rough, implicit definition of magic, which anthropologists would call a "common sense" definition. The flaw in the process is that this implicit "common sense" definition pre-determines largely the final "scholarly" definition. In short, this simple inductive method is tautological, and the results of the study are largely determined before the observer ever begins his or her formal analysis.²³

Graf's inductive approach would actually work if every example of Greco-Roman magic that he studies explicitly carried the label $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$; however, the overwhelming majority of papyriological, inscriptional, and artifactual evidence is not self-labeled as $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$. Two groups of people have designated these resources as examples of $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$: modern scholars and the elite writers of ancient literature and philosophy. As I already noted, even the designation of the various texts within the *PGM* as "magical," is primarily a modern designation not a self-designation by the writers of the ancient texts.²⁴ Thus, I question whether Graf actually arrives at the "indigenous" description of Greco-Roman "magic" that he claims;²⁵ instead, in my opinion,

²³ Yuval Harari, "What is a Magical Text? Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic," in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. Shaul Shaked. IJS Studies in Judaica 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 108–109.

²⁴ Cf. *PGM* I.127, 331; IV.210, 2319, 2449, 2453, which contain the few occurrences of $\mu\alpha\gamma$ -root words in the *PGM*.

²⁵ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 19.

he has produced the very description of Greco-Roman magic that he sought to avoid, specifically a definition dependent upon a modern, cross-cultural definition of magic.

Here I would like to make a terminological distinction that Graf fails to make. In describing his own approach to analyzing Greco-Roman magic, he characterizes the approach as employing the term “*magic* . . . in the sense that the ancients gave it.”²⁶ However, the so-called “ancients” never used the term “magic”; instead, the ancient Greeks and Romans used the words μαγεία and *magia*, which Graf discusses extensively in his reviews of Greek and Latin terminology related to magic.²⁷ When modern scholars discuss ancient magic, they must remember that although μαγεία may fit the modern category of magic, modern understandings of magic are not conceptual equivalents to μαγεία. Neglecting to make a clear distinction between modern “magic” and ancient μαγεία results from the failure to recognize that “magic” is a socially constructed concept within *modern* Western culture, while μαγεία was a social construction within *ancient* Greco-Roman culture.

Ultimately, Graf’s implicit, common-sense definition of magic appears very similar to intellectualist and sociological definitions of magic. Graf actually notes the similarity between his description of a “magician” as a “marginal person” whom a segment of the local population labels a “magician” and Mauss’ theory that “magicians” are those ritual practitioners whom a society considers individualistic and deviant.²⁸ Therefore, Graf’s inductive attempt to determine how ancient Greco-Roman people understood magic is no different from the alternative approach, which is the use of a social-scientific definition of magic to identify and describe Greco-Roman magic. Both approaches employ a preconceived notion of *magic*; however, the

²⁶ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 18 (italics in the original).

²⁷ See *ibid.*, 20–60.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 87–88.

explicit reliance upon modern social-scientific theory is more candid about its use of a presupposed definition of *magic*.

Graf's explicit use of Mauss' theory indicates that Graf does not completely reject the use of social-scientific theories of magic; however, he only employs these theories as secondary support for his supposed "indigenous" understanding of magic. Nevertheless, Graf's essential complaint against historians' use of social-scientific definitions of magic is that most historical studies have relied primarily upon Frazer. However, historians and biblical scholars do not have to abandon all social-scientific theory on magic just because previous historical and biblical studies used mostly Frazer's (or anyone else's) outdated and inadequate social-scientific theories. Social scientists have and will continue to develop newer, and presumably better, approaches to magic, which are available for historians and biblical scholars to use in their attempts to understand ancient magic.

In spite of this methodological shortcoming, Graf's book is informative and insightful. Several features of Graf's study are extremely valuable, particularly his reconstruction of the historical development of Greco-Roman *μαγεία*. Following the current scholarly consensus on the origins of Greco-Roman *μαγεία*, Graf traces two separate magico-religious traditions in late archaic Greece. The first tradition is the Persian fire cult, whose priest is the *magush*.²⁹ By the end of the archaic period, not only Persian immigrants to Greece but also native Greeks claimed to be priests of the cult. The Greek transliteration of *magush* was *μάγος*, and eventually the Greek term *μαγεία* developed as a label for the transplanted Persian cult.³⁰ The second tradition contributing to the development of Greco-Roman *μαγεία* was the numerous traditional Greek magico-religious specialists. Particularly important is the *γόης*, who was originally a priestly

²⁹ Collins, *Magic in Greek World*, 55.

³⁰ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 20–21.

folk-healer that Greeks eventually considered a charlatan or sorcerer. Other common forms of traditional healing and ritual from the late archaic period that eventually contributed to the concept of μαγεία are the practices of the ἀγύρτης (itinerant priest), the divination of the μάντις (seer, diviner), and φαρμακεία (preparation and use of herbal and traditional drugs and potions).

Two important socio-cultural events occurred in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE that led to a new cosmological paradigm among educated Greeks. The first was the “change of paradigm” from the archaic cosmology to the classical philosophical cosmology.³¹ According to G. E. R. Lloyd, this paradigm shift originated with certain pre-Socratic philosophers who considered nature to be an ordered and divine system. During the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, many Hippocratics adopted this new philosophy of nature. A particularly important testimony to this cosmological paradigm shift is the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*, a text that has been treated – and rightfully so – by most historians of Greek magic as key to understanding the development of the Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία. While refuting traditional explanations of an illness dubbed “the sacred disease,” which deities supposedly inflict upon humans, *Sacred Disease* attributes the illness to natural physiological causes. The writer’s refutation contains three main arguments. First, the author questions the efficacy of the treatments prescribed by traditional healers, whom the author calls “magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks” (μάγοι τε καὶ καθάρται καὶ ἀγύρται καὶ ἀλαζόνες) because their healing techniques (ritual washing and various dietary taboos) are illogical and ineffective (*Sacred Disease* 2.1–35, Jones). Second, the basis for the author’s critique of traditional healing is the author’s own physiological explanation, which attributes the disease to an imbalance of phlegm in the body. Third, the

³¹ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 30.

philosophical basis for the previous two arguments is the writer's conception of nature (φύσις), which Lloyd succinctly explains:

'Nature', for him, implies a regularity of cause and effect. Diseases, like everything else that is natural, have determinate causes and this rules out the idea of their being subject to divine ('supernatural') intervention or influence of any sort. Interestingly enough, however, the writer of *On the Sacred Disease* does not exclude the use of the notion of the 'divine' altogether. Indeed his view is not that no disease is divine, but that all are: all are divine and all natural. For him, the whole of nature is divine, but that idea does not imply or allow any exceptions to the rule that natural effects are the result of natural causes.³²

Relying upon Lloyd, Graf claims that the writer of *Sacred Disease* disagrees primarily with the *cosmology* of the "magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks," not their *rationality*.³³

Furthermore, as Dale B. Martin later explains, any attempt to undo what a deity has done (in this case heal a person of a divinely sent illness) amounts to impiety. According to the Hippocratic writer, the μάγοι profess to control the moon, the sun, and the weather, but such power is the prerogative of the deities. Thus, any human who claims these powers effectively claims to control deities (*Sacred Disease* 4.1–16).³⁴

According to Lloyd, Plato is also critical of people who attribute the existence of the world to nature and chance rather than to "benevolent and divine creative intelligence."³⁵ Graf further explains that Plato understands the activities of the ἀγύρτης (a practitioner of μαγεία) as attempts to coerce deities into doing his bidding.³⁶ Therefore, both Plato and the writer of the *Sacred Disease*, consider the ritual of traditional healers to be impious sacrilege.³⁷

³² G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 26; see also Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 41.

³³ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 21.

³⁴ Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 45.

³⁵ Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience*, 36; see also Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 54; e.g., Plato, *Laws* 10.888E–910D; Plato, *Timaeus* 29A, E.

³⁶ Plato, *Rep.* 2.364B–C; cf. Plato, *Laws* 10.909B.

³⁷ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 25–27, 31–32, 227–229; see also Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 54–60.

The second event contributing to the development of μαγεία is the ongoing military conflict between Greece and Persia in the first half of the fifth century BCE. Until the Greco-Persian wars, the general opinion among Greeks toward Persian religion seems to be one of respect;³⁸ however, during the wars, Greeks increasingly came to identify the religion of the μάγοι as the religion of their enemy.³⁹ By the end of the fourth century BCE, μάγος and μαγεία had taken on very negative connotations. According to Graf, the combined effect of both the cosmological paradigm shift and the Greco-Persian wars was an alteration in the meaning of μαγεία, which became a general term for not only outmoded ritual practice but also Persian religion. As time progressed, the term came to include all foreign and traditional ritual that offended Greek sensibilities,⁴⁰ thus making μαγεία into a form of superstition (inappropriate ritual).⁴¹

Μάγος and μαγεία entered Latin as *magus* and *magia* respectively. Historically, however, Romans up through the Republican period actually showed little interest in discouraging and controlling all practices that fit the Greek concept μαγεία; instead, they historically had only been concerned with the prohibition and punishment of sorcery (*veneficium*), that is, malevolent magic.⁴² However, as we see in Apuleius' *Apology*, Romans by the second century CE had adopted the Greek concept of μαγεία. Apuleius, who stood trial as a *magus* in the second century CE, excellently demonstrates that the terms μάγος and *magus* had two basic meanings in Greco-Roman culture. Positively μάγος/*magus* could signify a respected practitioner of traditional Persian religion (Apuleius, *Apol.* 25.8–11). The more common and

³⁸ E.g., Herodotus, *Histories* 1.120, 140; 7.19, 37, 43, 113–114, 191; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 8.3, 11.

³⁹ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 29.

⁴⁰ See also Jan N. Bremmer, "The Birth of the Term 'Magic,'" in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 10–11.

⁴¹ Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 34, 77.

⁴² Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 36–60.

pejorative use of μάγος/*magus* was that of charlatanistic sorcerer. Thus, μάγοι/*magi* in the vulgar sense of the word were morally suspect and prone to malevolent magic (*Apology* 26.6–9).⁴³

According to Graf, Mauss' description of the magician as harmfully individualistic and socially "marginal" fits perfectly the Greco-Roman popular concept of μάγος. Thus, Graf writes, "The case of Apuleius is thus a fine example of the general rule formulated by Mauss. Although Apuleius is not a magician, the society makes him into one."⁴⁴ Although I question whether Mauss claims that society *makes* a person into a magician, Graf's overall application of the Mauss' theory is insightful.

This discussion of Graf's *Magic in the Ancient World* is far from a comprehensive review of a valuable book that, in addition to the historical development of Greco-Roman μαγεία, discusses Greco-Roman magical technique and initiation of Greco-Egyptian magicians. Nevertheless, curiously missing from the book is a discussion of Judean magic during the Greco-Roman period and a treatment of the relationship between the early Christ-movement and μαγεία, including a discussion of the relationship between μαγεία and miracle.

Hans-Josef Klauck

Unlike Graf's *Magic in the Ancient World*, which focuses on magic only, Hans-Josef Klauck's *The Religious Context of Early Christianity* is a treatment of both magic and religion in the Greco-Roman world. As a biblical scholar, Klauck discusses such phenomena primarily in order to describe the magico-religious context of the early Christ-movement. *Magic and miracles*,

⁴³ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 83–84; cf. Fritz Graf, "Theories of Magic in Antiquity," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, eds. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 93–104. Later in the essay "Theories of Magic in Antiquity," Graf claims that Apuleius has three definitions of *magus*: (1) Persian priest, (2) a teacher for the Persian prince, and (3) a sorcerer. However, the second definition is more likely a special activity of a Persian priest (definition one); thus, Graf's earlier claim that Apuleius has two definitions of *magus* seems more correct (cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* 25.8–11).

⁴⁴ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 88.

along with several other topics, are listed as separate sub-sections within Klauck's chapter "Popular Belief."⁴⁵ To Klauck's credit, he consciously employs social-scientific theory while discussing the relationship between magic and religion. In particular, he uses William J. Goode's magic-religion continuum, including the numerous dichotomous criteria that Goode provides for determining where on the continuum particular magico-religious phenomena exist. Klauck, unlike Goode, emphasizes the coercion-petition dichotomy as the primary criterion for distinguishing magic and religion.

Missing from Klauck's overall explanation of magic and religion, however, is any reference to the more recent insights of the neo-intellectualists or symbolists. Although Klauck's section bibliographies include recent scholarship that employs more recent anthropological approaches, these newer approaches have no substantial impact on Klauck's treatment of magic and religion.⁴⁶ Employment of neo-intellectualist theory would have provided Klauck better support for his essentially intellectualist understanding of magic than Goode's theory does. Additionally, use of symbolist or neo-intellectualist approaches would have likely resulted in Klauck treating the magic-religion distinction as more of a heuristic distinction than he does.

Matthew W. Dickie

In the studies that I have so far reviewed, the general approach has been to discuss the concept and practice of *magic*. Matthew W. Dickie takes a slightly different approach by studying Greco-Roman *magicians* rather than *magic*. Dickie's overall view of magic is largely dependent upon

⁴⁵ Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

⁴⁶ David Frankfurter, review of *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, by Hans-Josef Klauck, *JR* 82 (2002), 439.

Graf.⁴⁷ Dickie, however, seems to employ the sociological approach to magic, with its emphasis on magic as individualistic and deviant ritual, much more than Graf does. Dickie's reliance upon cross-cultural social-scientific theories of magic is surprising, since he demonstrates considerable apprehension toward using social-scientific theories. Nevertheless, he intimates a reason why he can criticize cross-cultural anthropological definitions of magic and still employ quite successfully the sociological approach:

Discussions of the nature of magic have very often been motivated by the desire to provide a definition of the notion that will hold good for all cultures and that will at the same time explain what it is that all procedures thought of as magical have in common. Such enterprises are doomed to failure on two scores: firstly, they do not give sufficient recognition to the fact that the notion of magic is the product of a particular set of historical circumstances in Ancient Greece and that the concept of magic in Judaeo-Christian cultures is the direct offspring of that notion; secondly, all such attempts at capturing the peculiar nature of magic make the mistaken assumption that all concepts have at their heart a core or essence.⁴⁸

Since the majority of anthropological definitions of magic ultimately derive from the Greek concept of *μαγεία* via its Judeo-Christian adaptations, it is possible for a particular social-scientific theory of magic to have limited application to the ancient concept of *μαγεία*. The result of this insight is the conclusion that “magic” is essentially a Western category, whose earliest developmental stages occurred in classical Greece. To identify magic in another ancient society prior to the fifth century BCE is an anachronistic endeavor.⁴⁹ Dickie does concede, “It may be that notions analogous to the Greek concept of magic came into being in other cultures where tensions similar to those existing in Greece obtained. There thus is some reason to think that an idea akin to the Greco-Roman concept of *μαγεία* was present in Ancient Israel.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 21–22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

Additionally, Dickie deserves recognition for attempting to discuss women practitioners of μαγεία. Unfortunately, his description of women practitioners of μαγεία is very problematic. First, problematic is his choice of labels to distinguish women practitioners of μαγεία from male practitioners of μαγεία.⁵¹ He reserves the historically pejorative term “witch” for a woman who practices μαγεία, and he refers to a male practitioner with the more ambiguous “magician.”⁵² Second, problematic also is Dickie’s relatively uncritical use of literary and rhetorical texts to develop his profile of women practitioners of μαγεία in the Greco-Roman world.⁵³ In my opinion, the reason that Dickie portrays women practitioners of μαγεία as typically being low-status women (particularly prostitutes), alcoholics, and elderly is because the texts he primarily relies upon to develop his characterization of Greco-Roman “witches” are written primarily by elite men, who are quite likely biased against women exerting power, including magical power. Although Dickie notes that his ancient sources for describing the women practitioners of μαγεία typically stereotype women as “scheming and devious,” he indicates that he will still employ these negative stereotypical portrayals of “witches” (φαρμακίς, *venefica*) to develop his

⁵¹ The word *μάγος* is nearly always used in reference to a man, although Greek culture did contain a notion of and even examples of women practitioners of μαγεία. Typically, a woman practitioner of popular μαγεία is referred to as a φαρμακίς, the feminine form of φαρμακεύς. Both φαρμακεύς and φαρμακίς refer to practitioners of φαρμακεία, which is primarily the use of herbal potions, medicine, poison, etc. Typical English translations of φαρμακίς are *sorceress* and *witch*, of which both always carry negative connotations of malevolent magico-religious behavior. The corresponding Latin word for φαρμακίς is *venefica*, which along with the masculine *veneficus*, refers to a practitioner of *veneficium*. All three words carry strong negative connotations of malevolent *magia*, since the primary definition of *veneficium* is “poisoning.” Consequently, in addition to translating as “poisoner,” *veneficium* and *venefica* often translate as “sorcerer” and “sorceress” respectively; however, *venefica* also is often translated as “witch.” Cf. BDAG, s.v., “φαρμακεία” and “φαρμακεύς”; Bremmer, “Birth of Magic,” 5; LSJ, s.v. “φαρμακεία,” “φαρμακεύς,” and “φαρμακίς”; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 12–13; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 28; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. “*ueneficus*.” For examples of φαρμακίς/*venefica*, see Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 5.18; Apollodorus, *Library* 1.9.23; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.50–56; Aristophanes, *Clouds* 749–752; Aristotle, *History of Animals* 577a11–13; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.626; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.314–317; Lucan, *Civil War (Pharsalia)* 6.580–582; Plautus, *Truculentus* 4.2.761–763; Seneca, *Epistula Morales* 9.6; Strabo, *Geography* 1.2.39, 40.

⁵² Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 16.

⁵³ E.g., Euripides, *Hippolytus* 478–481; Horace, *Epodes* 5, 17; Horace, *Satires* 1.8.19–50; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.10.25; Quintilian, *Lesser Declamations* 385.6.

description of women practitioners of ancient μαγεία.⁵⁴ Much in the same way that Luck's reading of ancient elite texts results in the reinforcement of elite stereotypes of popular μάγοι, Dickie proceeds to elaborate on the stereotypes of Greco-Roman "sorceresses" and "witches" as if they are mostly accurate in their portrayal of historical women that were identified as practitioners of μαγεία. Unacceptable is Dickie's use of ancient elite texts to develop his description of women practitioners of μαγεία.

In summary, other than adding some detail to Graf's description of the history of Greco-Roman μαγεία, Dickie's work actually makes few new contributions to the discussion of μαγεία in the Greco-Roman world. The greatest strength of the book is probably a more intensive application of the sociological approach to magic than in previous treatments of Greco-Roman magic. However, the shortcomings mentioned above, particularly the way Dickie uses ancient literary and philosophical texts, leads me to question the historical accuracy of Dickie's descriptions of ancient μάγοι, since they may simple be reiterations of elite stereotypes.

Kimberly B. Stratton

Similar to Graf and Dickie, Kimberly B. Stratton has reservations concerning the use of modern social-scientific theories of magic. Stratton candidly comments early in *Naming the Witch*, "As we shall see, what the ancients regarded as magic does not always correspond with common modern definitions, which is why I adhere to ancient designations whenever possible."⁵⁵ Stratton typically prefers to use transliterations, rather than translations, of Greek and Latin terms, including μάγος and *magus*. Similar to Graf, Stratton recognizes that indigenous Greco-Roman understandings of μαγεία are not identical to modern, scholarly understandings of Greco-Roman

⁵⁴ Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 79–80.

⁵⁵ Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, Gender, Theory, & Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.

magic. However, unlike Graf, she employs different terms to refer to indigenous conceptions and scholarly conceptions of rituals and their practitioners; therefore, she is prone to use Greek terms (such as μάγος) when referring to indigenous, Greco-Roman concepts and English terms (such as *magician*) when referring to modern, scholarly concepts, even when the ancient and modern concepts overlap.

Following a brief review of both social-scientific and historical understandings of magic, Stratton claims, “None of these theories, however, adequately considers the degree to which magic is *constructed* through shared belief: once the concept [magic] exists in a particular culture, it acquires power, forever altering the way certain practices and people are viewed.”⁵⁶ Thus, Stratton sees Greco-Roman μαγεία as a dynamic, socially constructed concept that changes drastically from its inception in the fifth century BCE through the rest of Western history.

Stratton claims that Mauss’ theory of magic comes closest to explaining the role of μαγεία in Greco-Roman society. Unlike Mauss, however, she explicitly claims that Greco-Roman μαγεία is not an ontologically real category; instead, it is the product of a social discourse, which she labels “magic discourse.”⁵⁷ Relying upon Michel Foucault’s theory of social discourses,⁵⁸ Stratton lists three basic characteristics of Greco-Roman magic discourse. First, “magic is a socially constructed object of knowledge.” Second, “magic exhibits agonistic characteristics,” and as such, “Magic functions as a discourse among competing discourses where it sometimes overlaps, supports, undermines, or subverts those other discourses.” Lastly,

⁵⁶ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 11 (italics in the original).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11–12.

⁵⁸ See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972); Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979); Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Writings and Other Interviews 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon and others (New York: Pantheon, 1980); Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, vol. 2 of *History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990).

“There is no one single definition or understanding of magic.”⁵⁹ Although Stratton uses the English term “magic” in her discussion of the characteristics of magic discourse in the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context, it is apparent that she uses “magic” in reference to Greco-Roman μαγεία, not the modern Western concept of magic.

Stratton claims that the Greek educated elite in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE were primarily responsible for the formation of the concept μαγεία as a means of developing increased social power through labeling certain foreign and deviant ritual as μαγεία. The Greco-Roman magic discourse is a “discourse of alterity,” through which ancient Greeks and eventually ancient Romans discredited practitioners of offensive and supposedly dangerous rituals.⁶⁰

According to Stratton, the educated and elite Greeks, who first perpetrated the concept of μαγεία, initiated the development of stereotypes for μάγοι. These stereotypes typically involved the following characterizations of μάγοι:⁶¹

- dangerous
- immoral
- manipulates superhuman beings
- feminine
- impious
- secretive
- foreign
- individualistic
- greedy
- irrational

Stratton’s explanations of μάγοι stereotypes should cause modern scholars to reconsider the historical accuracy of most ancient and modern descriptions of μαγεία. While all of the above listed stereotypical characteristics may not appear in every representation of μαγεία, some combination of two or more of these characteristics are common to most descriptions of ancient μάγοι and μαγεία.

⁵⁹ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17–18, 37–69.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 19–24, 47–48, 69, 83–84, 91–96, 124–125.

The magic discourse, therefore, is a competitive discourse that emerged in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE among educated Greeks, such as philosophers and physicians, in order to discredit the traditional sages, teachers, priests, and healers who continued to operate according to the archaic Greek cosmology. The promoters of the new classical cosmological paradigm, whom the Hippocratics and Plato best represent, were originally the minority opinion, and their accusations of μαγεία were a form of polemical rhetoric, not objective historical description. Magic discourse in the ancient world eventually developed into generalized rhetoric for gaining authority and social legitimacy for one's opinions by discrediting the legitimacy of rivals. By the Roman Imperial era, a person could employ accusations of μαγεία with scant evidentiary support in order to discredit not only practitioners of rival ritual traditions but also any social or professional rival.⁶²

Stratton's Greco-Roman magic discourse characterizes most modern historians' descriptions of μαγεία as primarily outsider perspectives. The characterizations of μάγοι that appear in many historical studies of μαγεία are primarily the opinions held by ancient persons who were not μάγοι. Thus, Stratton makes the claim, which I think is correct, that most practitioners of what modern scholars label Greco-Roman *magic* and ancient scholars label *μαγεία* would likely not have considered themselves μάγοι. Furthermore, those few who did designate themselves as μάγοι likely "were adopting a self-consciously subversive stance in relation to the institutions of authority in their culture."⁶³ The majority of the supposed μάγοι, however, likely referred to themselves with terms that are more positive, including prophet (προφήτης), priest (ἱερεύς), and healer (θεραπευτής).

⁶² Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 37.

The temptation may exist to point to the *PGM* and the various artifactual remains of ancient magic as evidence of historical ritual practitioners, who considered themselves to be μάγοι. Nevertheless, Stratton has pointed out that the designation of the overwhelming majority of the *PGM* and the numerous ancient ritual artifacts as “magical” is primarily a modern scholarly designation based upon modern scholars’ acceptance of the stereotypical descriptions of μαγεία that Greek literature provides as normative definitions of μαγεία. Thus, although a few instances of μαγ-root words occur in two papyri in the *PGM*, both of which date to no earlier than the fourth century CE,⁶⁴ it is tautological to argue that all, or even most, of those who practiced the rituals in the *PGM* and manufactured ancient “magical” artifacts accepted for themselves and their practices the labels μάγος and μαγεία respectively because their practices are similar to those reflected in the *PGM* and by the so-called “magical” artifacts.⁶⁵

The Greco-Roman stereotype of popular μάγος that Stratton identifies also includes the very characteristics that the various modern social-scientific theories typically attribute to magicians. Stratton implies that all modern social-scientific theories of magic are sophisticated manifestations of the Western magic discourse.⁶⁶ Therefore, the accusation of ethnocentrism that

⁶⁴ *PGM* I.127, 331; IV.210, 2319, 2449, 2453; cf. Alan F. Segal, “Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition,” in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Giles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, eds. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren, *Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain* 91 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 351, 356. These few instances of μαγ-root words in the *PGM* occur in only two papyri, namely *P.Berol.* inv. 5025 (fourth/fifth century CE) and *P.Bibl.Nat. Suppl.* gr. no. 574 (fourth century CE). Although *PGM* I and IV are two extremely significant components of the *PGM*, the presence of μαγ-root words in only these two papyri of the *PGM* does not support Segal’s claim that “many people in the Hellenistic world called themselves *magoi* when they had no real connection to Persia” (356; italics added). Nevertheless, these few instances of μαγ-root words in the *PGM* do indicate that during the Greco-Roman period, some magico-religious specialists did identify themselves as μάγοι and their practices as μαγεία. However, since the only μαγ-root words that occur in the *PGM* come from papyri dating no early than the fourth century CE, little substantial evidence exists for the self-identified μάγοι during the late first and early second centuries CE.

⁶⁵ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 13–15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*; cf. K. O. L. Burridge, “Other Peoples’ Religions are Absurd,” in *Explorations in the Anthropology of Religion: Essays in Honour of Jan van Baal*, eds. W. E. A. van Beek and J. H. Scherer, *Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 74 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 8–23; Gilbert Lewis, “The Look of Magic,” *Man*, n.s., 21 (1986), 416–418. Even within cultural anthropology, a minority opinion

some anthropologists have leveled at one or another social-scientific theory of magic, may equally apply to all the major social-scientific theories of magic, since each theory highlights one part of the stereotypical Western description of a magician over the others. As anthropologist K. O. L. Burridge demonstrates, descriptions of magic among indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas during the Renaissance and early modern eras were primarily the work of Christian missionaries and European colonizers, who tended to brand the religious and healing rituals of the indigenous peoples as “magic” simply because they did not fit the current Christian notions of proper religion and medicine.⁶⁷ This socio-cultural context is strikingly similar to that which originally gave rise to the concept of *μαγεία* in ancient Greece. During Greek’s classical period, many educated people, who were often elites, characterized traditional and foreign ritual as irrational, impious, and fraudulent. Thus, Stratton leaves her reader questioning whether social-scientific theories of study magic are even appropriate for the study of magic in ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean societies. My complete answer to this question will have to wait until the next chapter. At this point, it is sufficient merely to raise the question and to indicate my general support for the careful use of social-scientific approaches in the study of ancient magic.

Although Stratton’s own study focuses on the use of magic discourse to reinforce patriarchal social roles, her study has significant implications for the study of Greco-Roman *μαγεία* in the literature of the early Christ-movement. A specialized form of the magic discourse is the *miracle discourse*, for which Stratton relies upon Harold Remus’ work on miracles to build a description. According to Remus, “miracle” typically appears in the literature of the second-century Christ-movement as a means of countering claims that the wonder-working tradition of

argues that most theories of magic are ethnocentric means by which social scientists lump together ritual practices that modern Westerners consider strange, irrational, and even absurd.

⁶⁷ Burridge, “Other Peoples’ Religions,” 8–23.

the Christ-movement was μαγεία.⁶⁸ Remus' study demonstrates that the second-century Christ-followers disagreed with their opponents that Greco-Roman stereotypes of μάγοι were descriptive of Christ-following wonder-workers. The early Christ-followers, instead, were prone to apply the label μάγος to their opponents, including those whom so-called "orthodox" writers considered heretics.⁶⁹ Additionally, early Christ-followers characterized their own wonder-working as divinely empowered "miracles" (δύναμεις; *miracula*), "signs" (σημεία; *signa*), and "wonders" (τέρατα; *miracula*). The ultimate difference between a legitimate miracle and deviant μαγεία was the source of the power behind the wonders in question. Miracles occur through God's power, and μαγεία occurs by means of any other superhuman power. The early Christ-followers often, but not always, identified the ultimate power source for μαγεία as the Devil.⁷⁰

Stratton claims that the foundations of the miracle discourse within the Christ-movement appear in the NT and particularly in Acts, which employs magic discourse to discredit Judean wonder-workers as μάγοι and to demonstrate the superiority of Christ-following wonder-workers as divinely empowered miracle-workers.⁷¹ Nevertheless, as Remus warns, a difference in Greek and Latin terms for extraordinary deeds is not what ultimately distinguishes Christ-follower "miracles" from the wonders of other magico-religious actors in the Greco-Roman world. Although I have rather heuristically reserved the term "miracle" for extraordinary deeds performed within the Christ-movement and "wonders" for all other extraordinary deeds, actual

⁶⁸ Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*, Patristic Monograph Series 10 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983), 56–57; cf. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*, 4; Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew*, Foundations and Facets (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988), 1–32; Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 213, 216; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), vii, 43–44, 53, 63–64, 66, 83–85, 89.

⁶⁹ Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict*, 57–72.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷¹ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124–130; see also Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 217.

usage of the terms δύναμις and τέρας do not always reflect such a distinction. Thus, the distinctions, including terminological ones, that Stratton attributes to Christian miracle discourse represent only *tendencies* in rhetoric and in the building of social identity. Nevertheless, the overall point that Stratton makes, and with which I agree, is that the early Christ-followers' typical distinction between δύναμεις and μαγεία is a particular adaptation of the Greco-Roman magic discourse.

Derek Collins

One of the most recent general treatments of Greco-Roman magic is Derek Collins' *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, which first appeared in 2008. Collins accepts Graf's basic reconstruction of the origins of Greco-Roman μαγεία; however, unlike Graf, he demonstrates greater familiarity with more recent social-scientific theories of magic and incorporates them into his exploration of Greco-Roman magic. Collins follows the current trend in anthropology to see no substantial ontological distinction between magic and religion. Furthermore, he employs social-scientific theories of magic quite eclectically because he understands that magic cross-culturally is a broader phenomenon than any one theory covers. In a manner similar to both Stratton's explanation of magic discourse and Tambiah's symbolist theory, Collins understands that Greco-Roman μαγεία is socially constructed communication. However, in a move more akin to Spiro, Collins suggests that from the actor's perspective the superhuman entities (deities, ghosts, etc.) invoked in magical ritual are interlocutors in the ritual communication.⁷²

Collins also employs insights from Evans-Pritchard's explanation of the role of witchcraft in Zande culture. Interestingly, he refrains from simply characterizing Zande witchcraft as "a general explanation of misfortune"; instead, it is *one* Zande "explanation" for

⁷² Collins, *Magic in Greek World*, xi–xii, 2, 7.

misfortune. Collins seems to follow Winch's adaptation of Evans-Pritchard's theory of double-causation, in which witchcraft and natural causes are both explanations of *how* something has occurred. Thus, despite modern Westerners' difficulties in attributing agency to superhuman beings and forces, whoever studies Greco-Roman magico-religious practice should take seriously the fact that some ancient Greeks and Romans considered superhuman beings and forces as ontologically real social actors, and not merely symbols of socio-cultural significance.⁷³

Ultimately, Collins argues that historians should apply social-scientific theories as flexible models that they must contextualize for each particular socio-cultural setting. Furthermore, the context-specific details of particular magico-religious phenomena should always take precedence over any social-scientific theory. Nevertheless, social-scientific theories allow a modern historian of Greco-Roman magic to move beyond mere description and into significant interpretive analysis.⁷⁴

Summary

The historical studies that I have reviewed employ in different degrees social-scientific theories of magic. Some historians (such as Luck, Klauck, and Collins) have been more explicit in their employment of social-scientific theory than other historians have been; however, even when historians use social-scientific theory explicitly, they frequently rely on outdated theories. Familiarity with more recent social-scientific approaches, such as Tambiah's symbolist approach in Collins' *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, provides more insightful discussion than Luck's reliance on Frazer, Graf's references to Mauss, and Klauck's use of Goode's magic-religion continuum. I do not wish to give the impression that the theories of Frazer, Mauss, and Durkheim are no longer useful; however, subsequent social scientists have refined and built upon

⁷³ Collins, *Magic in Greek World*, 19–20, 63.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

the foundational theories developed by these early social scientists. Collins, for instance, deserves praise for incorporating more recent social-scientific insights into his study of Greco-Roman magic. Additionally, Collins and Stratton have followed social scientists in identifying the essentially heuristic, socially constructed nature of the modern, Western concept of “magic.” Furthermore, Collins’ use of intellectualist, sociological, functionalist, and symbolist approaches avoids the tendency among some historians, such as Graf, to reduce the social-scientific options available to the historian to only the intellectualist and sociological approaches. Finally, Stratton perceptively avoids reinforcing elite, negative stereotypes of Greco-Roman μάγοι (particularly women practitioners of μαγεία), unlike Luck and Dickie, who adopt these stereotypes as reliable historical descriptions of μάγοι. As I review biblical scholars’ treatments of magic in the NT, particularly in Acts, I will demonstrate how many of the same problems I have identified in historical studies of Greco-Roman magic also appear in studies of magic in the early Christ-movement and its literature.

II. Analysis of Studies of Magic in Acts

Although the number of studies dedicated solely to magic in Acts is limited, several general studies address the subject of magic in a biblical text. Similar to the previous section on the historical study of magic, I will limit my review to biblical scholarship written from roughly 1980 to the present. Thus, I will begin the review with Morton Smith’s *Jesus the Magician*. Nevertheless, several significant studies of magic within biblical studies precede Smith’s book. Three works in particular are worthy of mention. First, Arthur Darby Nock’s “Paul and the Magus,” despite its misunderstanding of how the Persian fire cult migrated to Greece,⁷⁵ is important because Nock in this 1933 article perceptively recognizes a distinct difference between

⁷⁵ Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 100–101.

modern social-scientific understandings of magic and the Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία.⁷⁶ Second, Robert M. Grant's *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* in 1966 discusses how in the literature of the early Christ-movement, "miracle" is typically reserved for insider wonders and "magic" for outsider wonders.⁷⁷ Third, John M. Hull's *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* relies upon the social-scientific theories of Bronislaw Malinowski and Mauss, even though Hull frequently fails to cite them explicitly (especially Mauss). Despite his use of the outmoded theories of Mauss and Malinowski, Hull's dependence upon social-scientific theories of magic in his study of magic and miracle in the Synoptic Gospels is commendable.⁷⁸

Morton Smith

To a large degree, Morton Smith's *Jesus the Magician* renewed interest in magic among biblical scholars. Smith's main argument is that first-century people outside the Christ-movement viewed Jesus as a "magician"; and much, if not most, of the canonical Gospels aims at recasting Jesus as a something else, such as messiah or Son of God.⁷⁹ Although Smith is sometimes ambiguous as to whether "magician" is an ontologically real social role or a socially constructed identity, he does claim that competing characterizations of Jesus as "magician," "Son of God," and "God" are "expressions of propaganda."⁸⁰ Thus, Smith ultimately treats "magician" as a socially constructed category for labeling offensive wonder-workers.

Jesus the Magician has drawn numerous deserved criticisms, particularly with regard to Smith's rather careless use of primary sources and his suggestion that a principal function of the

⁷⁶ Arthur Darby Nock, "Paul and the Magus," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1:313–317.

⁷⁷ Grant, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 93.

⁷⁸ Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*.

⁷⁹ Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 149.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 68, 149–150.

canonical Gospels is the refutation of outsider characterizations of Jesus as a “magician.”⁸¹

Another aspect of Morton’s study that has gained mixed reviews is his suggestion that Jesus was a shaman who performs healings through possession by the Holy Spirit.⁸² Such a suggestion will become important later in my study of miracles in Acts.

David E. Aune

Although Morton Smith may have raised interest in magic among NT scholars, David E. Aune’s article “Magic in Early Christianity” represents a methodological milestone in the study of magic among biblical scholars. Aune calls for nothing short of an intentional and methodical use of social-scientific theories in order to study magic within the NT. At the beginning of the article, Aune provides a brief review of how the classic intellectualist approach, the sociological approach, and Evans-Pritchard’s functionalist approach have influenced previous biblical scholarship. Unfortunately, Aune reduces the range of theories available within the social-scientific study of magic to two options: intellectualist and sociological. Thus, he ignores the symbolist and the neo-intellectualist approaches.

Aune, following the work of Jonathan Z. Smith,⁸³ endorses an adaption of the sociological approach in which magic is viewed as deviant ritual practice. Subsequently, Aune suggests that scholars of ancient magic should employ the sociological study of social deviance as a means of better analyzing ancient magic. Furthermore, he recognizes that the sociology of deviance itself consists of several competing theories, particularly symbolic interactionism and

⁸¹ Barry Crawford, review of *Jesus the Magician*, by Morton Smith, *JAAR* 47 (1979), 321–322; Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 90–91; Sean Freyne, review of *Jesus the Magician*, by Morton Smith, *CBQ* 41 (1979), 658–651; Eugene V. Gallagher, review of *Jesus the Magician*, by Morton Smith, *Horizons* 6 (1979), 126–127; Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 23–26.

⁸² Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, 104.

⁸³ Jonathan Z. Smith, “Good News is No News: Aretalogy and Gospel,” in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. Jacob Neusner, *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity* 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 23.

functionalism.⁸⁴ In discussing which approach to deviance is best suited for studying Greco-Roman μαγεία, Aune prefers the functionalist approach to magic over the labeling perspective: “In spite of the fact that symbolic interactionism seems to have eclipsed structural-functionalism in contemporary American sociology, the structural-functionalist approach appears better suited for dealing with the particular problems with which this article is dealing: magic in early Christianity within the context of Graeco-Roman religions.”⁸⁵ Aune’s primary reason for favoring functionalism over symbolic interactionism seems to be simply that the biblical scholar can more easily apply functionalism than symbolic interactionism to the Greco-Roman context, despite the fact symbolic interactionism by the early 1980s had superseded functionalism as methodologically superior in the study of social deviance. Thus, Aune’s preference for functionalism is questionable.

Additionally, as is apparent in his survey of Greco-Roman magic,⁸⁶ Aune follows a rather conventional sociological approach and treats magic as if it is more an ontological reality than a social construct. Of course, this is also likely a result of his rejection of symbolic interactionism, which is a social constructionist methodology.⁸⁷ Ultimately, Aune makes four summary comments on Greco-Roman magic:

- “One important feature of magic during this period was the irregularity of its utilization in contrast to the carefully structured recurrent observances of religious rituals.”
- “Magic appears to have been far more popular among the lower, uneducated classes in the Graeco-Roman world than among the upper classes.”

⁸⁴ David E. Aune, “Magic in Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 1507–1516.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.2:1515.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.2:1516–1523.

⁸⁷ Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 1–13.

- “The popular distinction between magic and miracle has it that the latter is more ‘religious’ than the former. In reality, the magic/miracle dichotomy is not only an artificial distinction which presupposes an unambiguous difference between magic and religion, but it also appears to have little value in interpreting the evidence available to us from the Graeco-Roman period.”
- “Finally, our sources reveal three relatively distinct functions of magic in the Graeco-Roman world, all of which require a setting in social deviance: (1) the pragmatic, goal-oriented utilization of deviant religious procedures and materials to achieve particular goals for individuals, (2) the imaginative literary and folkloristic portraits of magicians and magical activities . . . , and (3) the use of accusations of the practise of magic as a means of social control and definition.”⁸⁸

The first of these comments represents the separation of magic and religion according to which religious rituals follow a regular calendrical cycle and magic does not.⁸⁹ This view of magic has never garnered extensive support as an *essential* quality of magic. The second comment, although quite possibly a historical reality, is still methodologically problematic because the evidence for such a claim comes almost exclusively from elite literary sources. The third comment represents a paradox within Aune’s approach because, although earlier he discusses magic as if it is more an ontological reality, here magic is a social construction. Fourth, Aune blends elements of the sociological and intellectual approaches with little accompanying explanation. For instance, he follows an intellectualist approach in portraying magic as “pragmatic, goal-oriented” ritual, but he also subscribes to the sociological approach that treats

⁸⁸ Aune, “Magic in Christianity.” 23.2:1521–1523.

⁸⁹ E.g., Mischa Titiev, “A Fresh Approach to the Problem of Magic and Religion,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 16 (1960), 292–298.

magic as social deviance. I suspect that the source of Aune's merging of some rather disparate theoretical elements is his dependence on Goode. Aune considers Goode's revision of Mauss' magic-religion continuum a valuable approach that has been underappreciated by historians of religion and biblical scholars; however, Goode's criteria for distinguishing magic and religion is a problematic merging of the sociological and intellectualist criteria for magic and religion.⁹⁰ Another unfortunate shortcoming of Aune's study is that he never makes a clear distinction between the modern concept of "magic" and the ancient concept of μαγεία. The result is that occasionally he too easily attributes elements of a modern concept of *magic* to the ancient Greco-Romans' characterization of μαγεία.

Aune, in conclusion, states that his article is an attempt to stimulate research in the relationship between magic and the early Christ-movement.⁹¹ Despite the methodological shortcomings in the article, Aune achieves his overall goal of stimulating study of magic in the NT.

Howard Clark Kee

Only a few years after the appearance of Aune's "Magic in Early Christianity," Howard Clark Kee published two books on extraordinary magico-religious phenomena, *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (1983) and *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times* (1986).⁹² Despite showing familiarity with social-scientific studies of magico-religious phenomenon, Kee makes only infrequent references to such studies. Kee provides a rather vague intellectualist definition of magic: "*Magic* is a technique, through word or act, by which a desired end is achieved, whether that end lies in the solution to the seeker's problem or in damage to the enemy

⁹⁰ Aune, "Magic in Christianity," 23.2:1512.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.2:1557.

⁹² Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic*; Kee, *Miracle in Christian World*.

who has caused the problem.”⁹³ Additionally, in *Miracle in the Early Christian World*, Kee further distinguishes magic in a way common to both Tylor and Mauss: “religion involves communication with beings, while magic consists in manipulation of forces.”⁹⁴ Significantly, he notes that in the early Roman Empire, accusations of μαγεία became a means of discrediting one’s rivals. Therefore, he notes that early Christ-following writers tended to reserve the term “magician” for their religious competitors.⁹⁵ While Kee is still inclined to draw a distinction between magic and religion, he does explain that the determination of whether a particular act of wonder-working is magic or miracle is ultimately dependent upon the particular socio-cultural context in which the event occurs. Thus, he recognizes that the distinction between magic and miracle is ultimately a social construction.⁹⁶

Susan R. Garrett

Unlike Kee and the other biblical scholars that I have discussed up to this point, Susan R. Garrett in her book *The Demise of the Devil* concentrates specifically on magic in the Gospel of Luke and Acts.⁹⁷ Within *The Demise of the Devil*, Garrett’s overall thesis is that a theme exists within the Gospel of Luke and Acts in which the defeat of “magicians” signifies the defeat of Satan. Garrett explains that just as the Holy Spirit empowers the wonders of Jesus and the Christ-followers in the Gospel of Luke and Acts, Satan empowers the miracles of the outsider “magicians” in Acts. The exorcisms and miraculous healings that the Gospel of Luke and Acts attribute to the Christ-followers are not merely evidence of God’s defeat of Satan; instead, these

⁹³ Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic*, 3

⁹⁴ Kee, *Miracle in Christian World*, 92

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 107, 278–279.

⁹⁶ Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic*, 100–101.

⁹⁷ See also Susan R. Garrett, “Light on a Dark Subject and Vice Versa: Magic and Magicians in the New Testament,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and In Conflict*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 142–165.

miracles actively contribute to Satan's downfall.⁹⁸ To support this thesis, she draws on Aune's adaptation of the sociological approach to magic; however, to her credit, Garrett seems to employ labeling theory rather than functionalism.⁹⁹ Therefore, Acts' portrayal of characters, particularly Simon of Samaria and Elymas, as μάγοι is an example of deviance labeling.

Garrett's study deserves praise on several points. First, she characterizes magic ultimately as a socially constructed concept. Second, she understands that ultimately a scholar must adjust any description of magic to fit the details of the particular socio-cultural context. Third, she abandons trying to identify δύναμις as Greco-Roman *mana* because she understands the powers behind μαγεία and miracle to be personal entities, namely Satan and the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁰ Fourth, she shows how labeling theory can be very useful in studying Greco-Roman μαγεία. Lastly, she recognizes that μαγεία, μάγοι, and accusations of μαγεία in the Gospel of Luke and Acts contribute to the theological aims of the biblical writer.

Nevertheless, Garrett's study contains several significant weaknesses. First, despite her apparent familiarity with social-scientific theories of magic and with labeling theory, she includes little explanation of these anthropological and sociological theories. Second, she does not adequately account for the role of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Luke and Acts.¹⁰¹ Lastly, the greatest weakness of Garrett's study is the validity of her overall hypothesis that the defeat of "magic" in the Gospel of Luke and Acts equals the defeat of Satan. Particularly problematic is her claim that the Gospel of Luke and Acts associate all "magic" with Satan. In actuality, the Gospel of Luke never explicitly links μαγεία or μάγοι with Satan, and Acts only once

⁹⁸ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 46–57, 66–67, 84, 104.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Alan C. Mitchell, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *TS* 51 (1990), 558; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 137.

¹⁰¹ Antoinette Clark Wire, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *ThTo* 47 (1990), 312.

associates a μάγος or μαγεία with Satan. Acts 13:10 depicts Paul calling Elymas a “Son of the Devil”; otherwise, no connection exists between μαγεία and Satan in both the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Thus, while competition does exist between popular μάγοι and miracle-workers in Acts, a closer reading of the Gospel of Luke and Acts does not support the claim that such competition always represents the cosmic struggle between God and Satan.¹⁰²

Stephen D. Ricks

Garrett, however, is not the only biblical studies scholar to treat “magic” as a means of designating the ritual practices of the dangerous Other in the Bible. Stephen D. Ricks argues that the ancient Hebrew and Greek words for “magician” in the Bible were ideological designations for characterizing certain ritual practitioners as “outsiders.” Like Aune, Ricks follows Jonathan Z. Smith’s adaptation of the sociological approach to magic, in which “magic” is deviant ritual. Thus, the HB labels only non-Hebrews and deviant Hebrews as “magicians” (חַרְטָם, בְּשָׁף).¹⁰³ Furthermore, the prohibited “magic” and “divination” in Deut 18:10–11 are best understood as foils to the cultic service of the Levites in Deut 18:1–8 and the oracles of the “true” prophets in Deut 18:15–19. As Ricks notes, the HB, including the Pentateuch, makes provision for legal divination and prophetic wonder-working; thus, the magicians and diviners of Deut 18:10–11 are simply the wonder-workers and diviners whom the biblical writer(s) find(s) theologically and socially unacceptable.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, as in Stratton’s magic discourse, חַרְטָם and בְּשָׁף are nothing

¹⁰² David Frankfurter, “Luke’s μαγεία and Garrett’s ‘Magic,’” review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *USQR* 47 (1993), 82–89; James Hanson, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *WW* 12 (1992), 87; Wire, review of *Demise of Devil*, 312; cf. Todd E. Klutz, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *JSNT* 48 (1992), 122.

¹⁰³ E.g., Gen 41:24–36; Exod 22:18; Lev 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; 1 Sam 28:8–25; Dan 2:2. The closest the HB comes to labeling a Hebrew a “magician” is Dan 4:9 [MT 4:6], where Nebuchadnezzar refers to Daniel as “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians” (בִּלְטְשַׁאצַּר רֹבֵב חַרְטָמִיָּא).

more than negative labels, which characterize as outsiders or deviants those whom the particular writer finds offensive.

Ricks continues by claiming that the NT conceptions of “magic” and “magician” follow a similar pattern. According to Ricks, “In the case of the Bible, the major factor dividing the acts that might be termed ‘magical’ from those that might be termed ‘religious’ is the perceived power by which the action is performed. For the writers of the Bible, wonders performed by the power of Israel’s God are not magical, even when these wonders may be formally indistinguishable from those that the biblical writer(s) depict(s) as magical.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, biblical writers typically label “magic” any wonder occurring through some superhuman power other than the Hebrew God. As a result, the typical NT conceptions of μαγεία and μάγος are not only products of their Greco-Roman environment but also products of their Hebrew heritage.

Despite Ricks’ wonderful insights into the Bible’s ideological use of “magic” and “magician,” his overall argument needs better theoretical support, in particular more up-to-date social-scientific theory on magic. Notably, Ricks only explicitly refers to anthropological theories of magic in a footnote at the end of his essay, where he mentions only the work of Goode.¹⁰⁶ Certainly, the sociological approach to magic, which describes magic as marginalized ritual, fits well with Ricks’ understanding of magic in the Bible. Furthermore, a symbolist analysis of various examples of magic and miracle would likely strengthen Ricks’ argument that theological motives lay behind the biblical writers’ characterization of some ritual as legitimate religious practice and some ritual as illegitimate magic. Nevertheless, his essay provides

¹⁰⁴ Stephen D. Ricks, “The Magician as Outsider in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 134–139.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 143, n. 46.

scholarly support for Stratton's Greco-Roman magic discourse by showing that "magic" is a designation of the ritual Other in the Bible.

Hans-Josef Klauck

The overall aim of Hans-Josef Klauck's *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity* is to provide commentary on passages in Acts that involve magic and Greco-Roman religion other than Judaism. According to Klauck, the goal of Acts' portrayal of early Christ-followers' interactions with μαγεία and with Greco-Roman religions is the formation of a unique Christ-following identity free of the "remnants of popular religiosity."¹⁰⁷

Although Klauck provides valuable commentary of the particular passages upon which he focuses, two questions remain unanswered. First and foremost, it is not clear why Klauck does not discuss Judean religion in the book, although he discusses Judean "magic," non-Judean "magic," and non-Judean religion. My suspicion is that μαγεία and non-Judean religion together actually signify magico-religious traditions that Acts presents as illegitimate, while Acts treats Judean *religion* and the Christ-movement as legitimate ritual traditions. Thus, the concentration on "magic" and non-Judean religion in *Magic and Paganism* reflects Acts' on particular presentation of legitimate and illegitimate magico-religious institutions and practices, rather than universal Greco-Roman designations of μαγεία and religion. Second, Klauck refuses to provide a succinct definition of "magic" and claims that "[magic's] contours will become clearer in the course of our study of the texts [Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 19:11 –20]."¹⁰⁸ I question the prudence of Klauck's decision to force his readers to infer his understanding of magic. Klauck should have at least referred the reader to the discussion of "Popular Belief" in his *The Religious Context of*

¹⁰⁷ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 120.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Early Christianity, in which he ultimately identifies magic as primarily coercion of superhuman powers.

Andy M. Reimer

Andy M. Reimer's *Miracle and Magic* represents a methodological leap within the study of magic in Acts. He demonstrates a thorough familiarity with historical and social-scientific approaches to magic; however, he is sorely dissatisfied with previous attempts at defining magic and its relationship to miracle. Reimer reduces the study of miracle and magic among historians of religion to two basic stages: (1) the use of "absolutist definitions offered by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social anthropology," such as Frazer's characterizations of magic as an ontological real category of ritual that coerces superhuman powers and (2) the use of "relative definitions offered by the framework of the sociology of knowledge," such as Jonathan Z. Smith's adaptation of the sociological approach that treats "magic" as a pejorative label for offensive or rival ritual practices. Reimer continues by declaring that it is time for a third approach. Before continuing, I must note that Reimer admits that his division of the historical study of magic risks oversimplification, which I think is an apt description of his reduction of the study of Greco-Roman "magic" to only two approaches.¹⁰⁹

Despite Reimer's insistence that his approach is a new alternative to previous analyses of ancient magic, it is actually a variation on functionalist approaches to magic. According to Reimer, "miracle" and "magic" are value-laden terms; thus, he uses the more neutral designation "intermediary" to refer to a wonder-worker.¹¹⁰ Reimer builds his method upon the work of Evans-Pritchard and Mary Douglas. In particular, he argues that Greco-Roman society was a world of "ill-defined" social interactions; thus, Evans-Pritchard's and Douglas' theories on

¹⁰⁹ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 45–46.

witchcraft and sorcery accusations are applicable to accusations of μαγεία in Greco-Roman society. Nevertheless, Reimer's theory bears only surface resemblance to Evans-Pritchard's and Douglas' work. Although Evans-Pritchard's and Douglas' work with magic and witchcraft fall into the category of sociology of knowledge, Reimer himself rejects approaching magic from a sociology of knowledge perspective.¹¹¹ Additionally, he criticizes the use of social-scientific models, and he misrepresents Douglas as opposing the use of modeling.¹¹² However, although Douglas does prohibit the use of inflexible models, which are the result of an analyst's failure to adapt properly pre-existing models for each socio-cultural context, Douglas is not completely against social-scientific modeling. In fact, she frequently uses models.¹¹³

In regards to magic in the Greco-Roman context specifically, Reimer supports the use of polythetic classification for identifying "magicians." Polythetic classification involves the grouping of things into the same category based on the presence of several, but not all, characteristics common to that category. Thus, there may exist in a single category, members who have very little resemblance because they share few, if any, of the same characteristics.¹¹⁴ The Greco-Roman classification of μάγοι is an example of polythetic classification, according to Reimer. Therefore, a single example of a Greco-Roman μάγος will not demonstrate all of the common characteristics of μάγοι; instead, significant combinations of several characteristics will typically elicit an accusation of μαγεία from observers. Thus, one μάγος may be a secretive, Syrian woman who uses potions. Another μάγος, however, may be a native Athenian man, who performs wonders on the street corner. Both fit the criteria of being a μάγος, but both have very little in common.

¹¹¹ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 9–10, 13, 33, 36, 38–39.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹³ Cf. Mary Douglas, "Thirty Years after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*," introduction to *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas, A.S.A Monographs 9 (London: Tavistock, 1970), xix–xxvi, xxix.

¹¹⁴ Rodney Needham, "Polythetic Classification," *Man*, n.s., 10 (1975), 349–369.

Reimer continues that intermediaries operate by means of inarticulate, or unofficial, social power, which is generated by his or her liminal status in the community. In order to maintain his or her social power, the intermediary must negotiate his or her “fringe” status in a way that avoids accusations of popular μαγεία. Failure to negotiate this liminal status successfully results in others labeling the intermediary a “magician.”¹¹⁵ Intermediaries engage in several activities to manage their fringe status. First, the intermediary engages in “withdrawal from the social network,” which he or she typically achieves by “abandoning” his or her livelihood and mainstream society, traveling extensively, and demonstrating “disregard for personal safety.” Second, the intermediary performs miracles that result in a positive reputation for the intermediary. Third, the intermediary must “avoid” the appearance of being overly ambitious, which includes the downplaying of one’s own power and the avoidance of wealth.¹¹⁶

Reimer claims that the interactions between intermediaries and those who possess more formal types of social power will reveal why observers label some intermediaries “prophets” and “miracle-workers” and label others “magicians” and “sorcerers.”¹¹⁷ To demonstrate how intermediaries function and to analyze the intersections of intermediary and traditional power, Reimer compares the accounts of wonder-workers in Acts with Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. In the end, Reimer’s conclusions are not that different from those who employ the sociological approach to magic, in which magicians are nothing more than those whom society (or at least certain segments of society) perceives as religious deviants.¹¹⁸

Despite the overall sophistication of Reimer’s study, its shortcomings ultimately overshadow its benefits. First, according to Stratton, Reimer’s acceptance of the labels μαγεία

¹¹⁵ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 47–48.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62–141.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 245–250.

and *μάγος* as “descriptive” of actual magico-religious practitioners, as opposed to being polemical labels, creates a circular logic in which “‘real’ magicians look a lot like negative caricatures of them in stereotype.”¹¹⁹ Second, the applicability of polythetic classification to the labeling of popular *μάγοι* actually seems to support the notion that *μαγεία* is a social construct and not a real category as Reimer suggests. Third, problematic is Reimer’s claim that intermediaries engage in their unique behaviors *in order* to maintain their unique position of power. Of course, a common criticism directed at functionalism, which is appropriate for Reimer’s thesis, is that functionalists typically ascribe purposeful intention to social actors when the actor’s behavior more likely has a *resultative* effect rather than a *purposeful* function.¹²⁰ Thus, the intermediary’s “fringe status” is more likely an unintended result than an intended goal for an intermediary. A final difficulty is Reimer’s choice to limit his study to only *Acts* and *Life of Apollonius*. A wider selection of texts would have bolstered the credibility of his study and its results. Furthermore, Reimer treats *Acts* (80–100 CE) and *Life of Apollonius* (217–240 CE) as if they are *independent witnesses* to the common Greco-Roman social role of intermediary; however, the significant chronological distance that separates the writing of *Acts* and the writing *Life of Apollonius* opens the possibility that *Acts* directly or indirectly influenced *Life of Apollonius*.¹²¹

Despite the sophisticated way in which Reimer expounds his theory and method, he ultimately provides little new in the way of theory, method, or results in respect to the study of

¹¹⁹ Kimberly B. Stratton, review of *Miracle and Magic*, by Andy M. Reimer, *JBL* 122 (2003), 768–769.

¹²⁰ David Downes and Paul Rock, *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule Breaking*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 97–99.

¹²¹ Hans-Josef Klauck, review of *Miracle and Magic*, by Andy M. Reimer, *BibInt* 12 (2004), 319–320.

Greco-Roman magic.¹²² Although Reimer refers to polythetic classification and the theories of Evans-Pritchard and Douglas, his ensuing study does not adequately employ them.¹²³

Daniel Marguerat

While Reimer treats Acts more as a historical source for constructing a portrait of Greco-Roman wonder-workers, Daniel Marguerat treats Acts primarily as a literary document, which employs the concepts of *miracle* and *μαγεία* for more ideological purposes. The third section of Marguerat's essay focuses on competitive conflicts between wonder-workers. Significantly, Marguerat notes the continuing presence of two basic definitions of *μαγεία* in the Greco-Roman world: (1) the respected traditional practices of divination and ritual healing and (2) charlatanistic sorcery. Thus, Marguerat claims that those who study ancient references to *μαγεία* must be careful to distinguish between *μαγεία* as a "technical description" (the first use of *μαγεία*) and *μαγεία* as "denigrating rhetoric" (the second use of *μαγεία*).¹²⁴

In respect to Acts, Marguerat explains that Acts refers to *μαγεία* exclusively in the second sense, even if Simon of Samaria or Elymas were to have considered themselves *μάγοι* in the first sense. What ultimately distinguishes Simon and Elymas as *μάγοι* is that Acts presents them having an inappropriate relationship with the Holy Spirit. In Acts, *μάγος* and *μαγεία* are pejorative labels, which Acts uses to discredit literary characters who represent improper relationships with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the primary fault that Acts attributes to popular *μάγοι*

¹²² Cf. Stanley E. Porter, "Magic in the Book of Acts," in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 114.

¹²³ Cf. Stratton, review of *Miracle and Magic*, 768.

¹²⁴ Daniel Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 116–117.

in the μαγεία-miracle conflicts is the attempt “to instrumentalize” the Holy Spirit.¹²⁵ This, of course, is simply a manifestation of the common Greco-Roman stereotype of the impious μάγος, who forces superhuman powers to do his or her bidding. Thus, I am apprehensive about reducing Acts’ use of μαγεία to a means of countering the instrumentalization of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Marguerat is on target when he claims that μαγεία-miracle conflicts are literary devices employed in Acts for thematic purposes. Furthermore, these thematic purposes involve the Holy Spirit’s role as the power source of Christ-following miracle-workers. Thus, Acts typically portrays those who attempt to use the Holy Spirit inappropriately or fail to use the Holy Spirit at all as “magicians.” Thus, the identification of μάγοι hinges upon the wonder-worker’s relationship with the Holy Spirit.¹²⁶

Bernhard Heininger

Like Marguerat, Bernhard Heininger in his essay “Im Dunstkreis der Magie” discusses the important thematic role of the μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts. Although Heininger’s essay begins primarily as a discussion of the relationship between the historical Paul and magic, it ultimately evolves into a discussion of the relationship between magic and Paul in Acts. Similar to Stratton’s characterization of magic discourse as a Western metanarrative, Heininger suggests that competitions between magicians are a Western literary leitmotif, of which the μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts are an adaptation. Heininger claims that the portrayal of some opponents to the Christ-movement as μάγοι is a means of discrediting the religious Other.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the manifestation of this motif in Acts contributes significantly to Acts’ thematic

¹²⁵ Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle,” 118–123.

¹²⁶ Cf. Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 155.

¹²⁷ Bernhard Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie: Paulus als Wundertäter nach der Apostelgeschichte,” in *Biographie and Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 187 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 290–291.

development. In order to avoid portraying Paul as μάγος, Acts alters its sources so that in the context of wonder-working, (1) Paul acts as an intermediary for the Hebrew God alone, (2) Paul refuses to accept monetary payment for his wonder-working, and (3) some of Paul's opponents are performers of μαγεία.¹²⁸

Like Marguerat, Heininger claims that there are two senses of the word μάγος—the instrumental sense and the vulgar sense. These two senses of μάγος respectively mirror Apuleius' proper and vulgar senses of the word *magus*.¹²⁹ Some ambiguity exists in the essay as to whether Heininger considers μάγος a purely socially constructed category; however, he eventually states, "I hold this [*Acts of Paul and Thecla* 20] as a reliable, historical remembrance (that Paul was reproached for magic, not that he was a magician)."¹³⁰ Finally, according to Heininger, the primary reason that Acts and subsequent Christ-follower writings avoid portraying Jesus, Paul, and any other Christ-following wonder-workers as μάγοι is that μαγεία as a general practice was illegal in the Roman Empire by the late first century CE.

Three criticisms of Heininger's study are necessary. First, intergroup competitive rhetoric as discussed in Stratton's magic discourse not only incorporates the illegality of μαγεία but also explains the miracle discourse much better than the legal status of μαγεία alone. Second, problematic is Heininger's treatment of μαγεία in its so-called "instrumental" sense as primarily an ontologically real phenomenon, while he treats the vulgar sense of μαγεία as purely a socially constructed concept. If the vulgar sense of μαγεία and Acts' concept of miracle-working are social constructs, it seems more reasonable to characterize the "instrumental" sense of μαγεία as a social construct. Heininger's use of the "instrumental" sense of μαγεία as an

¹²⁸ Heininger, "Dunstkreis der Magie," 273–275, 286.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 275.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 288: "Ich halte dies für eine zuverlässige historische Erinnerung (dass Paulus der Magievorwurf gemacht wurde, nicht dass er ein Magier war)." English translation is mine.

objective category likely stems from his failure to distinguish between modern “magic” and ancient μαγεία. Thus, Heininger grants the “instrumental” sense of μαγεία ontological reality because he erroneously equates it with his modern concept of “magic.”

Peter Busch

The final treatment of magic in the NT that I will discuss is Peter Busch’s *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*. The majority of the book contains a description of Greco-Roman magical practices (including Judean magic) and a description of what he calls the *Magiepolemik*, which to a large degree is similar to Stratton’s magic discourse.¹³¹

As his book progresses, Busch understands the NT to have an ambiguous relationship with magic. He notes that the NT never explicitly forbids “magic,” although the related concept of sorcery receives negative treatment.¹³² The Gospel of Matthew is very congenial to the μάγοι that pay homage to the young Jesus (Matt 2); however, Acts through the character Paul, for example, treats Elymas (Acts 13:6–12) very harshly. Even more ambiguous is Acts’ portrayal of Simon of Samaria. Philip (and subsequently Peter and John) allow Simon to join the Christ-movement and undergo baptism; however, nowhere does Acts explicitly indicate that Simon ceased practicing μαγεία.¹³³ Furthermore, Peter does not rebuke Simon for practicing μαγεία, but for trying to buy the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9–24). Thus, Busch

¹³¹ Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 9–153.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 159–160.

¹³³ Cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 202. Some debate exists as to the proper translation of the words προῦῆρχεν, μαγεύων, ἐχιστώνων, and λέγων in Acts 8:9. Some biblical scholars treat the four words as the components of a complex periphrastic verbal construction that indicates that Simon prior to Philip’s arrival in the city had already ceased practicing μαγεία, amazing the city’s residents, and saying he was someone great (e.g. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Tomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 62–63). Others, including Busch, treat προῦῆρχεν as syntactically independent of μαγεύων and ἐχιστώνων. Thus, verb προῦῆρχεν merely indicates that Simon was in the city prior Philip’s arrival. The participles function circumstantially to indicate Philip’s activities in the city, and no indication exists in the text to suggest that Simon ever ceases practicing μαγεία prior to, or even after, Philip’s arrival (e.g., BDF §414 [1]).

concludes that the NT allows μαγεία some latitude (*Spielraum*) within the Christ-movement. So long as someone does not practice μαγεία publicly, the NT tolerates the practice of μαγεία among Christ-followers.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, he concludes that a closer reading of the NT will demonstrate that justification through Christ, baptism, and the Holy Spirit are much better means of dealing with misfortune and harmful superhuman forces, than μαγεία is.¹³⁵

Numerous methodological shortcomings weaken Busch's work. Foremost, Busch's description of Greco-Roman μαγεία is broadly synchronic. He frequently reads the magical techniques within the *PGM* into the first-century context with little regard for the ways such techniques may have developed between the first century and the writing of the magical papyri. Second, Busch makes no clear distinction between the Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία and the modern concept of magic; instead, he operates as if there is little substantial difference between the two categories. Therefore, Busch's overall work does not provide us with a description of what a Greek or a Roman in the late first and early second centuries CE would have considered μαγεία; instead, it provides a description of the Greco-Roman ritual activities that fit the modern category of "magic." Finally, Busch's canonical reading of the NT unfortunately assumes with little support that a single NT perspective on μαγεία exists, and he subsequently reads Act's treatment of μαγεία through the lens of the Gospel of Matthew's favorable portrayal of the eastern μάγοι, an interpretative move I find quite problematic.

Summary

During this review of treatments of magic in biblical studies, particularly magic in Acts, I have shown how social-scientific approaches to magic have greatly influenced these studies, just as within the historical studies of Greco-Roman magic. Many of the same problems that appeared

¹³⁴ Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 159.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 170–171.

in the historical studies also appeared in the biblical studies that I reviewed. In the concluding analysis that follows, I will explicitly identify and briefly discuss the major problems recurring in both the historical and biblical studies treatments of Greco-Roman magic.

III. Summary Analysis

From the above reviews of previous scholarship on ancient magic among historians of religion and biblical scholars, several trends emerge from among the numerous problems that I have identified within these studies. In particular, four *root problems* have hampered studies of magic in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. Three of these problems relate directly to the use of social-scientific theories in the study of ancient magic. The fourth problem is primarily a weakness in historical methodology, which exacerbates the other three root problems.

The first root problem is a trend toward *the oversimplification of available social-scientific theories for the study of ancient magic*. Several treatments of Greco-Roman magic and magic in the NT, such as Graf's and Aune's studies, reduce the social-scientific study of magic to two basic theoretical approaches: classic intellectualism (as exemplified by Frazer) and the sociological approach (as exemplified by Mauss and Durkheim).

Some historians and biblical scholars have shown familiarity with alternatives to classic intellectualism and the sociological approach. For example, Collins shows familiarity with more recent theories, particularly Tambiah's symbolist studies; however, he does not employ symbolist theory in any systematic way as others have done with the older theories of Frazer and Mauss. Additionally, Klauck opts for the alternate, mediating theory of Goode, which newer social-scientific approaches have surpassed. In addition, Reimer develops his own functionalist approach to Greco-Roman miracle-workers and *μάγοι*, but his approach, unfortunately, not only

incorporates the same tautological problems of classic functionalism as a whole but also grossly misrepresents the work of Evans-Pritchard and Douglas. Thus, the second root problem, which is related to the first, involves two aspects: (1) *the explicit reliance upon older, even outmoded, social-scientific theory* and (2) *the failure to use newer social-scientific theory on magic in any explicitly systematic way.*

Related closely to the second root problem is the third root problem: *the lack of a thoroughgoing application of social constructionism to the study of ancient μαγεία.* As I noted in my discussion of the symbolist and neo-intellectualist approaches to religion, a tendency now exists among social scientists to recognize the heuristic nature of distinctions between magic and religion. Although most historians of religion and biblical scholars to various degrees accept social constructionism in relation to Greco-Roman μαγεία, their application of social constructionism is not complete. It is confusing when a historian or biblical scholar, such as Smith or Aune, seems inconsistent as to whether he or she considers μάγος to be an ontologically real or socially constructed social role. Additionally, several scholars—Luck, Klauck, and Kee—essentially treat the distinction between magic and religion as ontologically real, although they claim they are actually heuristic categories. Related to this is the tendency among some scholars, such as Reimer, to treat μάγος erroneously as an ontologically real social role.

Correlative to the failure to recognize the socially constructed character of magic is the assumption that magic and miracle are ontologically discrete categories of ritual practice, rather than seeing the distinction as a heuristic one. The distinctions between μαγεία and miracle made by Luck and Klauck ultimately are these historians' representations of the classic intellectualist separation of magic and religion. For Luck and Klauck, miracles are extraordinary events

performed by divine superhuman forces often at the request of human devotees, while magical acts are extraordinary events performed through the ritual manipulation of superhuman forces. The coercion-petition distinction, which is fundamental to the classic intellectualist distinction between magic and religion, is readily recognizable in the distinction between μαγεία and miracle in the studies of Luck, Klauck, and Kee.

Another manifestation of this third root problem involves the socially constructed nature of modern understandings of “magic.” As noted, the trend among social scientists, particularly anthropologists, is to recognize “magic” primarily as a modern Western, heuristic concept; thus, they recognize that the modern Western scholar’s concept of “magic” is not identical to non-Western or non-modern practices and concepts, such as Zande *ngua*. Thus, it is valid to question studies that make no clear distinction between the historian’s category of “magic” and the ancient concept of μαγεία. I strongly contend that, while “magic” and μαγεία are related both cognitively and historically, they are not exactly the same. The failure to distinguish adequately between the scholar’s “magic” and Greco-Roman μαγεία results in the unwarranted attribution of modern understandings of magic to pre-modern Greco-Roman people.

One result of the failure to distinguish adequately between “magic” and μαγεία is the tendency to use the *PGM* unconditionally as examples of μαγεία. However, although the majority of the *PGM* consists examples of “magic” according to most modern scholarly definitions of magic, this does not mean that all the texts in the *PGM* should be treated unconditionally as examples of μαγεία. Put more simply, the “magical” texts of the *PGM* may contain some examples of μαγεία, but the entire corpus of the *PGM* may not be an example of μαγεία. Thus, Greco-Roman magic is similar to but not exactly the same as Greco-Roman μαγεία.

This discussion of the third root brings me to the last root problem, which is primarily a shortcoming in historical methodology. In particular, several treatments of Greco-Roman magic engage in substantially uncritical *readings of ancient elite writings*, particularly literary and philosophical texts. In particular, several treatments of Greco-Roman magic or of magic within the NT insufficiently account for the ideological biases of ancient texts, particularly those biases related to social status and social power.

In reference to the historical study Greco-Roman magic, two problems emerge with readings of elite writings that do not sufficiently account of the ideological biases within these texts. First, as Stratton notes, many of the characterizations of μαγεία within Greek literary and philosophical writings rely upon and simultaneously develop negative stereotypes of μάγοι. When historical studies of Greco-Roman magic, such as Luck's *Arcana Mundi*, depend heavily upon these literary and philosophical sources, they run the risk of uncritically accepting the negative stereotypes in these sources as reliable descriptions of historically real μάγοι. However, when the scholar recognizes that these descriptions are stereotypes, the resulting study is more likely to avoid treating μαγεία and μάγος as ontologically real categories.

Second, Stratton concentrates on one particular variation of negative stereotypes of Greco-Roman μάγοι, namely women practitioners of μαγεία. She warns that the overwhelming majority of women practitioners of μαγεία in Greco-Roman literature are merely representations of negative stereotypes that uphold the social dominance of Greco-Roman elite men. Modern historical studies of Greco-Roman μαγεία do not provide reliable descriptions of Greco-Roman women practitioners of μαγεία, when these studies rely heavily upon literary and philosophical primary texts. In light of Stratton's larger argument that Greco-Roman μαγεία was a means of labeling the ethnic and religious Other, modern descriptions of female *and* male popular μάγοι

seem unreliable when they fail to consider critically the socially constructed nature of descriptions of μάγοι and μαγεία Greco-Roman literary and philosophical.

Nevertheless, several aspects of the previous scholarship in this chapter will help me move beyond these problems in the next chapter, in which I will develop my own approach for analyzing conflicts between popular μάγοι and miracle-workers in Acts. In particular, a combination of more recent social-scientific insights and Stratton's study of the Greco-Roman magic discourse will allow me to treat the negative stereotype of *popular μάγος* as a socially constructed concept for discrediting social rivals. Finally, employment of symbolic interactionism's labeling theory, which Stratton and Ricks employ to a limited extent, will allow me to show the applicability of major components of the sociological approach to Greco-Roman μαγεία, while still embracing universally a primarily neo-intellectualist perspective, in which magic is the ritual manipulation of objects and/or use of verbal formulas in order either to cause or to hinder an observable change by means of superhuman power, especially impersonal power.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYZING ΜΑΓΕΙΑ-MIRACLE CONFLICTS IN ACTS

In the previous two chapters, I left unresolved three key issues in respect to the social-scientific study of magic and its importance to the study of magic in Acts. In the current chapter, I will address these issues. First, in ch. 3, I noted some significant criticisms of the use of social-scientific theories of magic to study μαγεία in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. I will begin ch. 4 with my response to such criticisms. Next, I will return to the issue of reconciling functionalist, symbolist, and neo-intellectualist approaches to magic, as I promised to do at the conclusion of ch. 2. I will attempt to reconcile these three social-scientific approaches to magic by subsuming functional and symbolist analyses under a general neo-intellectualist approach. Third, having addressed criticisms of the use of the social sciences to study μαγεία in Acts and having reconciled the major social-scientific approaches to magic, I will still need to provide a comprehensive outline of how I see the social sciences facilitating the study of μαγεία in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. In the second half of ch. 4, I will present my own social-scientific critical approach that will guide my analysis of μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts. Ultimately, my analysis of these episodes will involve the application of a modified sociological understanding of magic to the specific socio-cultural phenomenon of Greco-Roman μαγεία. My modified sociological approach to μαγεία will rely upon the symbolic interactionist study of social deviance. In light of Kimberly B. Stratton's claim that the categorization of some wonder-workers as μάγοι involves the application of the negative stereotype of the dangerous sorcerer, I will employ also social psychological insights on cognitive categorization and stereotyping in

order to create an analytical model to explain how Acts characterizes and categorizes the various wonder-working characters as either miracle-workers or μάγοι. Finally, I will explain how this analytical model will facilitate an identification of moral boundaries in Acts regarding wonder-working and Acts presentation of legitimate and illegitimate wonder-working.

I. Social-Scientific Critical Study of Magic in Acts

As is evident from the second half of ch. 3, historians of religion and biblical scholars since the 1980s frequently use social-scientific theory to facilitate the study of Greco-Roman magic. Nevertheless, application of social-scientific theory to the study of magic in Greco-Roman society and the NT is typically piecemeal and *ad hoc*. Of course, a few scholars, such as Reimer, have attempted to use a social-scientific theory of magic comprehensively. In addition, several scholars who explicitly express reservations concerning the use of the social sciences surprisingly use social-scientific insights to facilitate their studies. For instance, Fritz Graf, Matthew W. Dickie, and Stratton express serious concern over the appropriateness of using social-scientific theory.¹ While recognizing the legitimacy of these scholars' reservations regarding the use of social-scientific theory, their tendency to use social-scientific theory as *ad hoc* reinforcement of their historical treatments of Greco-Roman magic troubles me. For instance, Graf, who claims to identify the concept of "magic" as the Greeks and Romans understood it and without reliance upon social-scientific theories of magic, reinforces his characterization of Greco-Roman "magic" by mentioning Mauss' sociological understanding of

¹ Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 17–18, 21–22; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 18–19, 61, 87–88; Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, *Gender, Theory, & Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 11–12.

magic and religion.² Dickie and Stratton are more subtle in their appropriation of social-scientific insights. After heavily criticizing the use of social-scientific approaches, their own characterizations of Greco-Roman “magic” are incredibly similar to the sociological understanding of magic. Thus, rather than openly utilizing the sociological approach, they develop what amounts to sociological understandings of *μαγεία* without openly admitting to the influence of the sociological approach upon their analyses of *μαγεία*. The result of their approaches is the subtle use of *insights* from the sociological approach, rather than the explicit utilization of comprehensive social-scientific *approaches* to magic. Thus, in my opinion, the implicit and piecemeal appropriations of social-scientific insights that appear in their studies are essentially social-scientific proof texts. In this chapter, I will attempt to develop a method of analysis that utilizes social-scientific *approaches* to magic in a comprehensive way that does justice to the intricacies of these approaches but also appreciates the reservations of historians of religion and biblical scholars.

Legitimacy of Using Social-Scientific Theory on Magic

Before I provide my own perspectives on social-scientific approaches to magic, I will first address criticisms and reservations regarding the use of social-scientific understandings of magic to study *μαγεία* in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. I will focus on the reservations expressed by Graf, Stratton, and Dickie. Preliminarily, it is significant that none of these three historians completely disavows the use of social-scientific theory. In particular, they draw upon the sociological approach to magic, especially Mauss’ version.

Graf, for instance, chooses not to use social-scientific theory as the *primary* lens for viewing Greco-Roman magic; thus, he employs social-scientific theory rather flexibly as it

² Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 88.

corresponds to his attempt to understand “magic” as the Greeks understood it.³ Dickie and Stratton’s reservations regarding the use of social-scientific theory to study Greco-Roman “magic” are similar. Both argue that *magic* is essentially a Western concept and, thus, not a universal cross-cultural category.⁴ Nevertheless, Stratton and Dickie, like Graf, are willing to use the sociological approach to magic to reinforce their historical investigations of Greco-Roman “magic.” Following the lead of Murray Wax and Rosalie Wax, both Dickie and Stratton recognize that the characterization of religion as communal and of magic as individualistic is a thoroughly Western practice originating in classical Greece and continuing through Western Judeo-Christian tradition.⁵ Dickie hints at why he can simultaneously criticize the social-scientific study of magic as inadequate for studying Greco-Roman “magic” and employ insights from the social-scientific study of magic. Since *magic* is essentially a Western concept, Dickie intimates that modern social-scientific theories of magic may have limited applicability to ancient Greco-Roman “magic,” so long as the historian accounts for the essentially Western and modern character of social-scientific theories of magic.

To summarize, Graf, Dickie, and Stratton do not reject the use of social-scientific *insights* in the study of Greco-Roman μαγεία; instead, they avoid using social-scientific *approaches* to magic as primary analytical tools for studying Greco-Roman μαγεία. As Graf’s use of Mauss in *Magic in the Ancient World* demonstrates, social-scientific insights into magic can be very valuable to the study of the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context. However, I question whether the employment of mere *insights* from the social sciences does justice to the specific social-scientific approaches and fully exploits the value of social-scientific approaches for the study of

³ Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 18–19, cf. 61, 87–88.

⁴ Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 18, 21; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 11–12, 17, 27.

⁵ Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 18; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 7, 27; Murray Wax and Rosalie Wax, “The Notion of Magic,” *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963), 497.

magic in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. The social-scientific treatments of magic that I reviewed in ch. 2 are more than mere theories or insights; instead, they are comprehensive approaches. Contrary to Graf's reservations about the use of social-scientific approaches as primary tools for investigating Greco-Roman "magic," I agree with Aune that social-scientific approaches when responsibly adapted for the task of investigating Greco-Roman magic as represented in ancient texts, inscriptions, and material artifacts are valuable tools for studying magic in Greco-Roman society and in the NT. Thus, I propose in this present study to develop and utilize a methodology that uses more than social-scientific insights to study representations of magic in Acts. In my opinion, the use of social-scientific *approaches* that accounts for the approaches' essentially modern conceptualizations of magic will provide a more systematic and responsible way of employing the social sciences than merely using social-scientific insights to reinforce a particular view of Greco-Roman magic.

As I begin the development of my approach for studying μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts, I must address the fact that I will not be analyzing Greco-Roman μαγεία and miracles; instead, I will be analyzing Acts' *narrative representations* of Greco-Roman μαγεία and miracles. Nevertheless, social-scientific theory and insights, which address actual magico-religious behavior and phenomena, are still valuable tools for understanding narrative representations of Greco-Roman magico-religious behavior and phenomena. However, the analyst must keep in mind that ultimately the presentation of magico-religious behavior and phenomena in a narrative is dependent upon the knowledge, biases, limitations, artistry, and agendas of the narrative writer. Therefore, when I analyze Acts 19:12, for example, it will be more appropriate for me to explain that the healings by means of clothing that touched Paul's skin *resemble* magical practice, rather than for me to say that these healings *are* magic.

As I explained in ch. 1, in order to create a plausible narrative world, the author of a narrative interacts with his or her socio-cultural context. This plausible narrative world is part of what Samuel Taylor Coleridge refers to as “dramatic illusion.”⁶ According to Charles I. Patterson, the dramatic illusion of the narrative “gives the illusion that we are looking directly on the scene rather than reading it in a novel.”⁷ The writer’s and reader’s interactions with their cultures, including their symbolic universes, permit the dramatic illusion of the narrative world. Within the dramatic illusion, the author creates a plausible narrative world in which the narrative characters appear to exist and interact with one another in a way that the the reader is likely to expect actual humans to interact.

As I discussed earlier in ch. 1, Seymour Benjamin Chatman claims that narrative characters are “autonomous beings” that the audience “reconstruct[s]” them from explicit and implicit information in the text.⁸ Relying upon Chatman’s insights, Coleman A. Baker explains, “Therefore, not only do readers construct their image of characters by what they perceive in the text, as Chatman argued, but also by combining this information with their own knowledge and experience of people.”⁹ Furthermore, I explained that the reader’s “knowledge and experience of people” is nothing less than the reader’s understanding of culture and society. Thus, the reader interprets and evaluates the narrative world, including its characters and their experiences, much in the same way he or she interprets and evaluates actual people and events. The reader uses his or her own culture to understand a narrative world and its characters, since the narrative world should be a relatively plausible imitation of the historical world of the author. The reader is able

⁶ Charles I. Patterson, “Coleridge’s Conception of Dramatic Illusion in the Novel,” *ELH* 18 (1951), 125.

⁷ Patterson, “Coleridge’s Dramatic Illusion,” 132.

⁸ Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 119.

⁹ Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 21–22.

to identify deviant characters and identify the significance of their behavior on the basis of the reader's own culturally mediated understandings of and personal experiences with actual deviants. Thus, theory and insights from the social sciences, which are the modern study of culture and society, can be extremely valuable aids in studying the narrative world and the characters within a narrative, including Acts. In result, the same social-scientific insights and theories used to study actual humans can be utilized, with some necessary adjustments, to study the characters in narratives, including Acts.

A Social-Scientific Critical Approach to Magic in Acts

The method that I will develop for the investigation of μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts is a *social-scientific critical approach*, rather than a social historical approach using social-scientific *insights*. John H. Elliott defines social-scientific criticism of the Bible as “that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences.” Elliott further clarifies, “This definition indicates, first, that social-scientific criticism is a *sub-discipline of exegesis* and is inseparably related to the other operations of the exegetical enterprise: textual criticism, literary criticism, narrative criticism, historical criticism, and theological criticism. Social-scientific criticism complements these other models of critical analysis, all of which are designed to analyze specific features of the biblical texts.”¹⁰ Therefore, the approach that I will develop in this chapter is not primarily a historical study of Greco-Roman magic; instead, it is an interpretative approach designed to study magic and miracle in Acts. Additionally, my methodology will not be a replacement for the historical study of magic in Greco-Roman society or the NT. Nevertheless, in my opinion, a social-scientific critical

¹⁰ John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* GBS, NT ser. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 7 (italics in the original).

approach to magic in Acts, which utilizes social-scientific *approaches* to magic, is a much better way of utilizing social-scientific studies of magic than simply using social-scientific *insights*.

Nevertheless, I must clarify that I am a biblical scholar, not a social scientist. Furthermore, my method in this study is *social-scientific critical*, not social-scientific. Thus, my method will *adapt* social-scientific approaches for use in exegetical analysis because I recognize that social-scientific approaches themselves are not *directly* applicable to the study of magic in the NT. Since the social sciences focus primarily on extant societies, social scientists engage in extensive fieldwork and experimental testing. Historians and biblical scholars, however, focus on ancient societies and their literary and material remains; therefore, the fieldwork and experimental testing common to social scientists are impossible for the historian and biblical scholar. Thus, the biblical scholar, in particular, relies heavily upon the analysis of ancient texts. Therefore, it is imperative that a social-scientific critic of the NT adapt social-scientific approaches for the investigation of texts; thus, the method that occupies the rest of this chapter is a *social-scientific critical method*, not a social-scientific method.

The comprehensive use of social-scientific approaches to develop and to employ social-scientific critical methods relies on the assumption that ancient texts are cultural products and manifestations of the socio-cultural contexts in which they developed. Since the social sciences are primarily the study of human societies and cultures, the biblical scholar may adapt social-scientific approaches in order to study better the textual artifacts of ancient societies and cultures. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will involve the selection of relevant social-scientific approaches and the adaptation of these approaches for my study of μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts.

A Cross-Cultural View of Magic

At the end of ch. 2, I refrained from resolving the theoretical debates among proponents of the various social-scientific approaches to magic. As the work of a biblical scholar, not of a social scientist, my proposed resolution is a modest attempt to draw together connections between each of the social-scientific approaches reviewed in order to provide an avenue for developing a social-scientific critical approach to μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts. Ultimately, I wish to argue for a method that incorporates the best of the sociological, functional, symbolic, and neo-intellectualist approaches to magic. An initial caveat, however, is necessary. Since “magic” is essentially a modern, Western concept (as opposed to the ancient concept μαγεία), any cross-cultural understanding of magic applied to the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context is inherently a Western and modern description of certain Greco-Roman ritual practices.

Since “magic” is a modern theoretical construct, approaches to magic that have a wider universal application should take precedence over theories that are more culturally specific. Thus, only three of the five social-scientific approaches to magic qualify as candidates for a universally applicable approach to magic: classic intellectualism, symbolic anthropology, and neo-intellectualism. It is difficult to accept the sociological approach to magic as a valid *cross-cultural* theory of magic. Although the sociological approach is easily applicable to Western contexts,¹¹ applying this approach to many non-Western contexts, such as pre-Roman Egypt and early twentieth-century Zande society, is difficult. Similarly, as Mary Douglas explains, E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s understanding of Zande magic and witchcraft may be adapted for some other social-cultural contexts, but it is also not universally applicable to all socio-cultural contexts.¹²

¹¹ Cf. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 18, 21; Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 61, 87–88; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 11–12, 17, 27.

¹² Mary Douglas, “Witch Beliefs in Central Africa,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 37 (1967), 72; cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon,

Although classic intellectualism does qualify as a cross-cultural theory, the neo-intellectualist approach is preferable to classic intellectualism because of neo-intellectualism's rejection of classic intellectualism's social evolutionary aspects. Thus, the two remaining possibilities for valid cross-cultural approaches to magic are the symbolist and neo-intellectualist approaches.

To a large extent, symbolist and neo-intellectualist approaches to magic share a common definition of magic, namely a Tylorian definition, in which *magic is any ritual manipulation of material and verbal symbols to achieve a specific empirical result by means of superhuman forces, particularly impersonal forces*. This is the modern definition of magic to which I will ascribe in this study. Nevertheless, this agreement on the definition of magic does not solve the dilemma of which is the more appropriate method for studying magic. After my own close reading of not only symbolist writings but also neo-intellectualist writings, I see opportunities for reconciling the two methods.

The means of achieving my synthetic approach to magic lies within the actual arguments of symbolists and neo-intellectualists. First, the most influential proponents of either approach have never completely denied the value of studying the functional, symbolic, and instrumental aspects of ritual. For example, John Beattie notes the importance of functional analysis.¹³ On the neo-intellectualist side, both Robin Horton and Melford E. Spiro have left room within anthropological study for functional and symbolic analyses, so long as they are secondary to actor-oriented analysis.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the neo-intellectualists avoid the tautological character of

1937), 73; see also Victor W. Turner, "Witchcraft and Sorcery: Taxonomy versus Dynamics," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34 (1964), 318–319.

¹³ John Beattie, "Ritual and Social Change," *Man*, n.s., 1 (1966), 61.

¹⁴ Robin Horton, "A Definition of Religion, and Its Uses," *JRAIGB* 90 (1960), 202, 204; Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton, A.S.A. Monographs 3 (New York: Praeger, 1966), 108–109, 117–121.

functionalism by treating the structural and symbolic aspects of ritual as the by-products, rather than the goals, of ritual.¹⁵ Despite symbolist claims that they do not reject the actor's instrumental perspective on rituals, their decision to value the observer's expressive analysis over the actor's perspective relegates the actor's perspective to a position of almost complete insignificance in the final analysis of a ritual. Thus, the focus on the actor's perspective in the neo-intellectualist tradition can act as a control mechanism on analysis of the symbolic aspects of a ritual.

At the heart of each of the major approaches to magic are attempts to deal with the social relationships involved in and/or represented by ritual performances. The explanation of social relations, of course, is quite transparent in the functionalism of both the sociological approach and Evans-Pritchard's approach to magico-religious phenomena. S. J. Tambiah, however, provides a concise explanation of social relations from a symbolist perspective: "Thus it is possible to argue that all ritual, whatever the idiom, is addressed to the human participants and uses a technique which attempts to re-structure and integrate the minds and emotions of the actors."¹⁶ From a symbolist perspective, magic as a form of ritual is essentially communication among humans. Tambiah, in particular, pays little attention to the fact that the human ritual actor perceives two audiences in ritual performances: (1) the human participants, and (2) the superhuman actors. This is related to Tambiah's description of the role of ritual language.

The role of language immediately confronts problems if placed in relation to a primary function of language which is that it is a vehicle of communication between persons. By definition, the persons in communication must understand one another. In ritual, language appears to be used in ways that violate the communication.¹⁷

¹⁵ Horton, "Definition of Religion," 204, 218; Spiro, "Religion," 108.

¹⁶ S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man*, n.s., 3 (1968), 202.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

Tambiah argues that for language to be communicative, the communication partners must understand one another. If ritual actors actually address their ritual language to superhuman beings or forces, ritual language is not communication, since superhuman beings and forces are not empirically verifiable realities. In order to preserve the communicative function and general rationality of ritual language, Tambiah argues that the actual audience of ritual language is the human participants.

The problem with Tambiah's argument is his assumption of a rationalist perspective that pays little attention to the fact that the ritual actors treat superhuman beings and forces as ontological realities. At this point, I must return to Peter Winch's "Understanding a Primitive Society," in which Winch states, "Reality is not what gives language sense. What is real and what is unreal shows itself *in* the sense that language has."¹⁸ Although Winch is defending specifically the use of heuristic categorical distinctions that may not exist within the language of a particular society, it is possible to apply his insight specifically to the role of ritual language. Regardless of the structure of ontological reality, if the cosmology of the ritual actor involves the existence of superhuman beings or forces, ritual language may function as communication with superhuman beings or forces. The scholar should take seriously the ritual actors' cosmology and recognize that ritual language functions socially and cognitively as human communication directed at superhuman beings or forces, whom the ritual actor assumes can understand his or her ritual language.

Tambiah, however, ignores the actor's perspective to the extent that an analysis of ritual language as human communication directed toward superhuman beings or forces results in ritual being irrational. To be clear, Tambiah never explicitly rejects, the actor's perspective, but the

¹⁸ Peter Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964), 309 (italics in the original).

actor's perspective on the ritual seems not to be a significant aspect in Tambiah's method of analysis. As I noted in ch. 2, Horton criticizes all symbolist observer-oriented perspectives for ignoring actor-oriented perspectives and subtly treating ritual as irrational. Conversely, he claims that intellectualist observer-oriented methods avoid characterizing the ritual of traditional societies as irrational.¹⁹ Although I question whether Horton's critique is equally applicable to all symbolist approaches, I certainly find it applicable to Tambiah's perspective. Tambiah's symbolic anthropology does not save ritual from irrationality; instead, it actually dooms it to irrationality. The ritual actor who thinks he is speaking to an ancestral spirit in order to heal a sick neighbor literally believes that his efforts may result in a healing. Thus, the actor's stated purpose is healing, but if the ultimate function of the ritual is the communication of messages to the human audience, the ritual is irrational on two counts.

In I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi's refutation of the symbolist approach to magic, they outline two senses of rationality. *Weak rationality* involves a person acting consistently with his or her belief system. *Strong rationality* consists of a person acting consistently with a set of "rationally held beliefs."²⁰ In Tambiah's approach, the observer's perspective on magic ritual becomes irrational in the weak sense because its anticipated effect (communication with human participants) is not the same as the stated goal (healing of the illness). The actor's perspective is irrational in the strong sense of rationality because it does not actually achieve a healing.

Regardless of whether a modern scholar subscribes to the existence of superhuman beings (such as deities, spirits, and ghosts) or superhuman forces (such as *mana*), the ritual actors treat superhuman beings and forces as ontological realities. Therefore, no analysis of a ritual is

¹⁹ Robin Horton, "Back to Frazer? (The Sir James Frazer Memorial Lecture, Cambridge, 1987)," in *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 129–133.

²⁰ I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson, *Key Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970), 173.

complete that fails to consider the purported social relations between ritual actors and superhuman beings or forces. According to Spiro, the neo-intellectualist approach accounts for both human-human and human-superhuman social relations in ritual. As noted, one component of Spiro's definition is that religion is "an institution consisting of *culturally patterned interaction*."²¹ Furthermore, Spiro explains that the social interactions within magico-religious ritual are of two types. "First, [interaction] refers to activities which are believed to carry out, embody, or to be consistent with the will or desire of superhuman beings or powers. . . . Second it refers to activities which are believed to influence superhuman beings to satisfy the needs of actors."²² Unlike Tambiah's symbolist theory, Spiro's neo-intellectualism allows for an analysis that treats ritual as communication not only with humans but also with superhuman beings or forces.²³

Spiro's approach to the social relations of ritual allows for a fuller treatment of ritual than that which I have typically found in symbolist and neo-intellectualist theory. Symbolic analysis, functional analysis, and actor-oriented analysis are not mutually exclusive options; instead, an interpreter may analyze the same ritual on several different levels. Therefore, an analyst should not attempt to seek *the* one correct meaning of a ritual; rather, the ritual may have meaning on a number of levels, in particular the symbolic, functional, and instrumental levels. In light of the problems associated with functionalist and symbolist approaches, I agree with Spiro and Horton that actor-oriented analysis should take precedence over, but not eliminate, observer-oriented

²¹ Spiro, "Religion," 96 (italics added).

²² *Ibid.*, 97.

²³ Cf. John L. McCreery, "Negotiating with Demons: The Uses of Magical Language," *American Ethnologist* 22 (1995), 144–165. McCreery provides a great ethnographic example of how an anthropologist can appreciate both the symbolic and instrumental aspects of ritual by recognizing that the ritual participant perceives himself as communicating symbolically with both human and spiritual interlocutors. McCreery's article investigates a Taiwanese exorcistic rite, which from an intellectualist perspective is quite "magical" because of its manipulation of ritual material and coercion of demons.

analysis. Social-structural functions and social-symbolic functions are important; however, they are typically secondary consequences of ritual, not its goals.

Although I have decided to subsume functional and symbolic analyses under an intellectualist, actor-oriented approach, I am not completely rejecting functionalist and symbolic analyses; instead, I recognize the great value that both of these approaches provide in achieving a much fuller understanding of ritual than any single theoretical approach might offer. Important facets of any activity (ritual, political, economic) include any explicit and implicit significance within the activity and any results stemming from the activity. Functionalist and symbolist analyses alone, however, are prone to ignore any significance that the ritual actors and indigenous observers consciously ascribe to the ritual. Ultimately, my subordination of functionalist and symbolist analyses under neo-intellectualism represents my attempt to fulfill what A. R. Radcliffe-Brown saw as the domain of all cultural anthropology: “From the point of view here presented the ‘content’ or subject-matter of social anthropology is the whole social life of a people *in all its aspects*.”²⁴ Nevertheless, a major way in which my approach disagrees significantly with neo-intellectualism concerns the characterization of magic as a pre-modern functional equivalent to science.²⁵ As evident in the *Sacred Disease*, magic and science—even ancient science—are not the same thing.

Μάγος as a Deviant Social Label

Although the symbolist and neo-intellectualist approaches to magic provide the best cross-cultural approaches to magic, this does not mean that the sociological approach to magic is without value. In light of Aune’s recommendation of an adapted form of the sociological

²⁴ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, “On the Concept of Function in Social Science,” *American Anthropologist* 37 (1935), 400.

²⁵ Cf. John Beattie, *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1964), 206–207.

approach and Stratton's claims that the sociological approach essentially identifies a Western discourse on deviant magico-religious ritual, the sociological approach still offers an interpretative avenue for the study of Greco-Roman *μαγεία* in Acts, so long as the analyst recognizes the weaknesses and culture-specific nature of the sociological approach. It is necessary to indicate that I am advocating the use of the sociological approach to analyze the culture-specific phenomena of *μαγεία*, not all Greco-Roman magico-religious phenomena that fit the modern category of "magic."

Three aspects of Stratton's study of Greco-Roman "magic" will affect my use of the sociological approach to magic. First, Stratton's Greco-Roman magic discourse operates upon the labeling and/or describing of a rival as a *μάγος* in Apuleius' popular sense of the word through the application of negative stereotypical qualities to the rival.²⁶ Thus, the magic discourse portrays the one labeled a *μάγος* primarily as dangerous, immoral, greedy, individualistic, and manipulating superhuman forces. The popular *μάγος* in the magic discourse is a "sorcerer," and easily qualifies as a social deviant, which is someone whom society (or a segment of society) recognizes as posing a danger through the violation of perceived social norms.²⁷ Therefore, as Aune recommends, Jonathan Z. Smith's adaptation of the sociological theory of magic, which treats Greco-Roman *μαγεία* as deviant behavior, appears to be both a valid and fruitful way of analyzing popular *μαγεία*.

A second aspect of Stratton's discussion of the magic discourse that will affect my use of the sociological approach to magic is her recognition of the socially constructed quality of the concept *μαγεία*. Since *μαγεία* is a social construct, I prefer the social-interactionist approach to social deviance over functionalist approaches to deviance because social interactionism, unlike

²⁶ Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 20–21; see Apuleius, *Apol.* 26.6–9.

²⁷ Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 2–4.

the functionalist approach, rests upon the recognition that deviance is primarily a socially constructed category.

Finally, Stratton's magic discourse recognizes that the labeling of a person as a μάγος is an attempt to discredit someone, thereby minimizing the labelee's social power and increasing the labeler's own social power. Whether performed intentionally or unintentionally, an accusation of μαγεία involves an attempt either to redistribute social power or to maintain an already established imbalance of social power. This is most evident in Stratton's claim that μάγος was not typically a self-claimed title but a label applied by another person. The few self-proclaimed μάγοι "were adopting a self-consciously subversive stance," that is, they are consciously acting as social deviants.²⁸ In addition, recognition that μάγος is primarily a discrediting label bears striking resemblance to Evans-Pritchard's description of how accusations of witchcraft operate within ambiguous and strained social relations. Thus, my analysis of μαγεία-miracle conflicts will focus on these conflicts as competitive social interactions.

Thus, it is the narrator in Acts 13:6 who identifies Elymas as a μάγος and a false-prophet. A historical Greco-Roman person similar to the character Elymas would have likely considered himself or herself a true prophet and likely would not have considered himself or herself a μάγος. However, Acts applies these labels to Elymas, who is a rival to Acts' protagonist Paul, resulting in the portrayal of Elymas as a disreputable rival Judean wonder-worker through the description of him as a socially deviant practitioner of magico-religious rituals. Of course, this instance of deviance labeling functions as a means of resolving for the reader any ambiguity between the magico-religious rivals Paul and Elymas. The labeling of

²⁸ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 37.

Elymas as a deviant in Acts 13:6–7 indicates to the reader which wonder-workers and wonder-working are legitimate and which ones are illegitimate.

I will elaborate later in this chapter how the detection and confrontation of witches in Zande culture works as a means of deviance labeling and how this insight into Evans-Pritchard's approach assists in my analysis of *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts in Acts. At this point, however, I will present the social interactionist perspective on deviance in order to explain better how *μάγος* and related words, such as *γόης*, function as deviance labels in the Greco-Roman world and in Acts.

II. Deviance and Identity in *Μαγεία*-Miracle Conflicts

The labeling of deviants and deviance is part of a larger process of creating, adopting, and maintaining social identities for oneself and one's own social group(s) through the creation and ascription of negative identities to other individuals and social groups. In Acts specifically, the utilization of the magic discourse involves the application of a particular deviant stereotype, namely the sorcerer, onto wonder-working characters who rival the Christ-following wonder-workers. Furthermore, the portrayal of rival wonder-workers in Acts as socially deviant *μάγοι* ultimately functions as a means of creating and maintaining a Christ-follower social identity. In Acts, the labeling of *μάγοι* serves to establish the proper Christ-following identity in relation to wonder-working through the presentation of contrasting examples. This section of ch. 4 will present the basics of the social-interactionist study of deviance and the social psychological study of stereotypes in order to explore how Acts employs negative stereotypes to label and portray rival wonder-workers as workers of *μαγεία*.

Symbolic Interactionist Study of Deviance

Symbolic interactionism is a broad methodological perspective within sociology that has significantly influenced the study of deviance. Herbert Blumer provides a succinct description of this perspective:

Symbolic interactionism rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. . . . The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.²⁹

Symbolic interactionism is a social constructionist perspective because as Blumer explains “symbolic interactionism sees meaning [of people and objects] as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact.”³⁰ In a more recent formulation of symbolic interactionism, Robert Prus and Scott Grills provide seven characteristics of “human group life”:

- Intersubjective
- (Multi)perspectival
- Reflective
- Activity-based
- Negotiable
- Relational
- Processual³¹

²⁹ Herbert Blumer, “The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism,” in *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

³¹ Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 6.

As groups and individuals interact, they engage in an ongoing negotiation of significance, in which they define and redefine social identities, norms, and group boundaries.³² As a result of its social constructionist basis, the interactionist approach to deviance, in particular, is especially prone to incorporate also a conflict perspective; thus, designations of deviance and deviants often are matters of social conflict. According to Stuart Henry, the identification of deviance as a social construction carries five implications:

- “[T]here is not one reality but as many realities as there are groups constructing the norms as their reality.”
- “[A]ny appearance of a single dominating reality is largely an illusion in spite of claims about universal values.”
- “[T]here are many moralities reflecting multiple realities.”
- “[T]here are numerous stereotypes constructed by groups as part of their means to control and contain human behaviors that are seen to deviate from and threaten their view of what counts as reality.”
- “[D]eviance does not just happen but is created by people making distinctions and acting towards those distinctions as though they are real.”³³

In regards to Greco-Roman *μαγεία*, the significance of people, objects, and activities associated with *μαγεία* is a social product, not an inherent meaning.

³² Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance: Moral Panics, Drug Abuse, Deviant Science, and Reversed Stigmatization*, SUNY Series in Deviance and Social Control (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), Netlibrary e-book, 15–18; Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 41–42.

³³ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 10.

Labeling Theory and the Identification of Deviance

The primary expressions of labeling theory have been within *symbolic interactionism* and the *societal reaction theory*, which is sometimes called *societal response theory*.³⁴ Interactionists Prus and Grills explain that although some sociologists outside symbolic interactionism, particularly societal reaction theorists, have adopted modified forms of labeling theory, the labeling perspective still derives from an interactionist basis. Nevertheless, Prus and Grills claim, “Although labeling theory is not synonymous with interactionism, the amount of interchange between those working in labeling theory and interactionism has been so great that the two have become largely synonymous in many discussions of deviance.”³⁵ Thus, for example, Howard S. Becker “dislike[s]” the moniker *labeling theory* so much that he resolves to call this theoretical approach “an interactionist theory of deviance.”³⁶ Furthermore, Prus and Grills explain that the symbolic interactionist approach has adapted much of the societal reaction approach to its perspective.³⁷ The basic premise of labeling theory is that an activity, characteristic, or person is “deviant” only when a society or group designates it as such. Therefore, no action or personal characteristic is inherently deviant. Only when other people recognize the action or characteristic as deviant does it become so. Likewise, a person or group is not deviant until others identify that person or group as deviant.³⁸ As Kai T. Erikson explains, “Deviance is not a property *inherent* in certain forms of behavior; it is a property *conferred upon* these forms by the audiences which

³⁴ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 181; F. James Davis, introduction to *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), xi–xii; John I. Kitsuse, “Societal Reaction to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method,” in *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*, ed. Howard S. Becker (New York: Free Press, 1964), 87–102; Edwin M. Schur, *Crimes without Victims: Deviant Behavior and Public Policy; Abortion, Homosexuality, Drug Addiction* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 4; cf. Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 73.

³⁵ Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 73–74.

³⁶ Becker, *Outsiders*, 181.

³⁷ Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 73.

³⁸ Becker, *Outsiders*, 8–9, 14; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), 125–137; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 4, 6, 71–94; Edwin M. Schur, *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 5, 22.

directly or indirectly witness them.”³⁹ Furthermore, an interactionist perspective on deviance understands that the designation of an action or quality as deviant develops as individuals and groups interact with one another.⁴⁰ Thus, labeling theorists, according to John I. Kitsuse, focus more on “the *processes by which persons come to be defined as deviant by others.*”⁴¹ Interactionists frequently refer to this process of identifying and characterizing individuals and groups as deviants as *deviantization*.⁴²

One of the clearest explanations of labeling theory occurs in Howard S. Becker’s *Outsiders*, in which Becker describes the process by which a society identifies and deals with deviance and deviants. In introducing the deviance process, Becker explains,

[S]ocial groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender.’ The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.⁴³

In order to describe the mechanics of the deviance process, Becker uses the moral crusade as *an illustrative model*.⁴⁴ Since the moral crusade is a deviance process occurring within a macro-sociological context (specifically the general society), deviance processes within small social contexts, such as within the early Christ-movement, will differ from the moral crusade in exact details, but they will share in the moral crusade’s basic components. Becker identifies three types

³⁹ Kai T. Erikson, “Notes on the Sociology of Deviance,” in *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*, ed. Howard S. Becker (New York: Free Press, 1964), 11 (italics in the original); see also Kitsuse, “Societal Reaction,” 97, 100–101.

⁴⁰ Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 4–7.

⁴¹ Kitsuse, “Societal Reaction,” 87–88 (italics in the original).

⁴² E.g., Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 7, 12; Edwin M. Schur, “Comments,” in *The Labelling of Deviance: Evaluating a Perspective*, ed. Walter R. Gove (New York: Halsted / Wiley, 1975), 288.

⁴³ Becker, *Outsiders*, 9 (italics in the original).

⁴⁴ cf. Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 97–99.

of actors in the deviance process: rule-creator, rule-enforcer, and deviant.⁴⁵ *Rule-creators* are those persons who attempt to sway public opinion into recognizing a certain behavior or quality as “deviant.” In a moral crusade, the rule-creator’s goal is typically the creation of a rule, law, or custom that identifies the particular behavior or quality as deviant and works to regulate the behavior or quality. Such regulation often takes the form of punishment, social exclusion, or therapeutic treatment, depending on the details of the behavior or quality.⁴⁶ The rule-creation component of a moral crusade may last for only a few days or as long as several decades.⁴⁷ *Rule-enforcers* typically have three related tasks: (1) identification of deviance and deviants, (2) regulation and/or treatment of deviance and deviants (including punishment and therapeutic treatment), and (3) deterring potential deviants from engaging in deviant activity. Members of the law-enforcement field, such as police officers and judges, are major examples of rule-enforcers.⁴⁸ The presence of rule-enforcers within the deviance process emphasize that although the labeling of deviance derives from conflict over the symbolic significance of a behavior or quality, the deviance process includes more than symbolic communication; it also involves direct instrumental action (such as law enforcement, shunning, incarceration, hospitalization).⁴⁹

Together, the rule-creators and rule-enforcers are social control agents, which Becker labels *moral entrepreneurs*.⁵⁰ Additionally, the same person can occupy the roles of rule-creator and

⁴⁵ Cf. Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 31. To this list of primary actors in the deviance process Prus and Grills add three auxiliary actors. The *supporting cast* is those who assist the deviants in their activities. *Implicated parties* close associates of deviants, such as family and friends. *Vicarious participants* are those who “play at deviance . . . without totally or completely embracing these notions in practice.” Furthermore, Prus and Grills make a distinction between those people successfully labeled “deviant” and those who are *targets*, that is, those that moral entrepreneurs have labeled “deviant” but that have not yet been formally designated as “deviant.”

⁴⁶ Becker, *Outsiders*, 147–155; cf. Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 38–42.

⁴⁷ F. James Davis, introduction to part 3 of *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 174.

⁴⁸ Becker, *Outsiders*, 155–162.

⁴⁹ Richard Stivers, introduction to part 1 of *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 6.

⁵⁰ Becker, *Outsiders*, 147; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 31–35; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 58–59.

rule-enforcer.⁵¹ The third group is those people whom the moral entrepreneurs have labeled as *deviants*. Becker's description of a moral crusade requires the implied existence of a fourth group, namely the *general public*.⁵² The general public serves a dual role. First, they are the intended audience of the moral entrepreneur's persuasive campaign for the identification of a certain behavior or quality as "deviant." Second, they are also the pool for potential deviants.

According to Nachman Ben-Yehuda, "*Moral entrepreneurs* attempt to persuade others to adhere to a particular symbolic-moral universe. . . . An efficient way of doing this is to draw the public's attention to the moral boundaries that mark differences between symbolic-moral universes."⁵³ A successful moral campaign results in the creation of a rule, law, or custom that recognizes and treats the particular behavior or quality as "deviant," that is, lying outside the moral boundaries of the society.

A society's cultural values are a manifestation of its symbolic moral boundaries. Moral entrepreneurs, thus, frequently appeal to common cultural values to support their identification and regulation of deviance.⁵⁴ Particular examples of deviance labeling and the enforcement of rules and customs are the results of particular interpretations of cultural values. The deviance process becomes complicated when supposed deviants or rival moral entrepreneurs either interpret a pertinent value differently or appeal to a different value.⁵⁵ In addition, a moral campaign may fail, even after a temporary period of success, for several reasons:

⁵¹ Becker, *Outsiders*, 155.

⁵² Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 57.

⁵³ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 97–98.

⁵⁴ Becker, *Outsiders*, 130–131; F. James Davis, "Beliefs, Values, Power, and Public Definitions of Deviance," in *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 51–52.

⁵⁵ Davis, "Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions," 51.

- The rule-creators fail to persuade the general public that their rules are adequate interpretations of the social values to which the rule-creators appeal.⁵⁶
- The general public does not subscribe to the values to which the rule-creators appeal.⁵⁷
- The rule-enforcers fail to enforce sufficiently the rules or norms established by the moral entrepreneurs.⁵⁸
- A rival moral campaign may be more successful in swaying or even reversing public opinion. Often, the supposed deviants themselves may function as rival moral entrepreneurs.⁵⁹

Therefore, a moral campaign, or any other deviance process, is not an automatically successful endeavor. It will frequently encounter opposition and competitive alternatives.

Formal, Informal, and Secret Deviance

Another key concept of labeling theory is the formal degradation ceremony, in which a control agent publicly labels someone a deviant. Drawing upon on Harold Garfinkel's 1956 essay "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," labeling theorists have explained that publicly recognized deviance changes the social status of the one labeled a deviant, so that the deviant identity becomes a "master status."⁶⁰ According to Henry, "A core or 'master status' is one that takes precedence over all others that a person possesses, such that the person comes to represent the thing described. At the same time, all their other statuses are consumed by their master status."⁶¹ Two primary characteristics of a master status exist. First, it is an

⁵⁶ Becker, *Outsiders*, 153–155.

⁵⁷ Davis, "Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions," 51.

⁵⁸ Becker, *Outsiders*, 121–134, 161.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 152.

⁶⁰ Harold Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (1956), 420; Erikson, "Notes on Deviance," 16; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 76.

⁶¹ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 82.

“essentializing label,”⁶² by which the deviant identity comes to be the primary identity of the person so that he or she “come to represent” the deviance itself.⁶³ Second, as a master status, the deviant label is not easily removed to the point of being nearly irreversible.⁶⁴

The use of formal degradation ceremonies, such as criminal trials and ecclesial excommunication,⁶⁵ to designate deviants does not occur in all examples of deviance labeling. Garfinkel notes that both formal degradation ceremonies that fail to follow proper procedure or informal degradation ceremonies in general are less effective than properly conducted formal degradation ceremonies in producing lasting or widely recognized ascriptions of deviance.⁶⁶ Formal degradation ceremonies, such as criminal trials, are more common in relation to *formal* deviance, that is, deviance for which institutional means of identification and regulation exist. However, *informal* deviance often is designated through less formal means that function in ways only similar to formal degradation ceremonies.⁶⁷ Even when deviance is designated formally, much of the negative societal response to the designation may be informal, such as the social shunning of convicted criminals.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it is to be expected that informal deviance is likely to garner less social consensus than formal deviance. The ascription of deviant labels without official degradation ceremonies is more open to dispute and more likely to be successfully refuted. Nevertheless, the lack of formal degradation ceremonies in the case of

⁶² Robert A. Scott, “A Proposed Framework for Analyzing Deviance as Property of Social Order,” in *Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance*, eds. Robert A. Scott and Jack D. Douglas (New York: Basic, 1972), 14.

⁶³ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 82.

⁶⁴ Erikson, “Notes on Deviance,” 16; Erich Goode, “The Significance of Extreme Deviance,” introduction to *Extreme Deviance*, eds. Erich Goode and D. Angus Vail (Los Angeles: Pine Forge, 2008), ix–x; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 77–78; Lemert, *Human Deviance*, 17–18, 41.

⁶⁵ Kai T. Erikson, “On the Sociology of Deviance,” in *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 16.

⁶⁶ Garfinkel, “Conditions of Degradation Ceremonies,” 424.

⁶⁷ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 87–88; Douglas Raybeck, “Hard versus Soft Deviance: Anthropology and Labeling Theory,” in *Deviance: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Morris Freilich, Douglas Raybeck, and Joel Savishinsky (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991), 55; Schur, *Labeling Women*, 3; see also Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 183; Richard Stivers, introduction to part 2 of *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 74.

⁶⁸ Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 183–201.

informally labeled deviance suggests that it is not so much the ceremony itself that ensures the successful ascription of a deviant label to a person, but it is the “shared agreement of the identity of the deviant, the nature of the offense, and the deviant’s resulting relationship to the wider social order” that are responsible for successful ascription of a deviant label. Thus, in the formal labeling of deviance, the formal degradation ceremony functions as a very visible and tangible representation of the “shared agreement” of the ascription of the deviant identity that typically more firmly solidifies the ascription of the identity than would a more informal labeling process.⁶⁹

Another form of deviance designation that occurs without the aid of formal degradation ceremonies and without the attribution of a deviant master status is *secret* deviance. At first, “secret deviance” may seem to be an oxymoron because according to a strict interactionist perspective, an act is not “deviant” unless someone observes it and labels it as deviant. Therefore, the labeling of deviance to a large degree depends on the visibility of the action or quality in question.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, from a labeling perspective, secret deviance can exist in three ways.⁷¹ First, the socio-cultural norms of a particular society or group may prohibit the commission of a particular action or possession of a certain characteristic; thus, the society or group considers the action or quality itself a form of deviance. If such a prohibited act were

⁶⁹ Raybeck, “Hard vs. Soft Deviance,” 55.

⁷⁰ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 48–51; Teresa E. Levitin, “Deviant as Active Participants in the Labeling Process: The Visibly Handicapped,” *Social Problems* 22 (1975), 550.

⁷¹ Cf. Alexander Liazos, “The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts, Sluts, and Perverts,” *Social Problems* 20 (1972), 107. Much of the interactionist understanding of secret deviance and self-labeling is revisions of earlier expositions of labeling theory in light of criticisms that labeling theory did not adequately explain secret deviance (e.g., Liazos, “Poverty of Sociology of Deviance,” 107). Nevertheless, these reformulations do not satisfy all the critiques of labeling theory in regards to secret deviance because of differences in methodological perspective between interactionists and their critics. Interactionists tend to operate from an actor-oriented perspective; thus, deviance is a relative category, of which the boundaries are defined by the actors, including deviants, moral crusaders, and social control agents. Many critics of the labeling perspective, however, operate from an outsider-oriented perspective in which the analyst (sociologist, ethnography, etc.) determines whether an action or characteristic is deviant (e.g., Liazos, “Poverty of Sociology of Deviance,” 110).

carried out in secret, the act itself could be said to be deviant, although no one would know who had performed the act and many times that the act had even occurred. In such instances, the individual person engaging in the behavior, however, would not be designated a deviant.⁷² Second, self-labeling can result in the identification of secret deviance and secret deviants. Self-labeling occurs when a person secretly commits an act or possesses a quality that he or she personally considers a violation of socio-cultural norms.⁷³ Becker also suggests a third form of secret deviance, which exists only in the collective consciousness of the society. The example that Becker provides is that of witchcraft. From an outsider analyst's perspective, witchcraft may not actually exist or be practiced, such as in the cases of Zande witchcraft and early modern Western witchcraft. Nevertheless, the indigenous population considers witchcraft to be an activity in which real humans participate, although the analyst is certain that witchcraft is not real and that few, if any, humans actually practice witchcraft. Therefore, the indigenous population would accept the reality of real humans practicing witchcraft, even if they fail to designate anyone as an actual witch. Even more importantly, they are capable of designating individuals as witches that performed secret deviant rituals, although the analyst and possibly even the supposed witch know that no such secret rites ever occurred.⁷⁴ Unlike the first two types of secret deviance, this third, putative type of secret deviance may result in the ascription of a deviant master status to a person.

The characterization of a deviance label as a master status has received considerable negative criticism from within and outside the labeling perspective. For example, symbolic

⁷² Becker, *Outsiders*, 20–21, 31; cf. Goode, "Significance of Extreme Deviance," xviii–xix. Goode only implies the existence of secret deviance without the designation of a deviant.

⁷³ Becker, *Outsiders*, 187; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 87; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 85–86; Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, "Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label," *Social Problems* 22 (1974), 102; contra Jack Katz, "Deviance, Charisma, and Rule-Defined Behavior," *Social Problems* 20 (1972), 198.

⁷⁴ Becker, *Outsiders*, 187; see also Henry, *Social Deviance*, 3.

interactionists Harrison M. Trice and Paul Michael Roman claim that a deviant label sometimes can be removed, but often a label indicating the person is a “repentant deviant,” such as the label “recovering alcoholic,” replaces the original deviance label.⁷⁵ Lee N. Robins, a critic of the labeling perspective, analyzed the applicability of the labeling perspective to alcoholism. Similar to Trice and Roman, Robins also determines that the deviant label “alcoholic” was neither irreversible nor always essentializing. In the face of growing criticism against characterizing deviance labels as master statuses, later formulations of the labeling perspective indicate that deviance labels are prone to be master statuses but are not always so.⁷⁶ Furthermore, only secondary deviance (that is, habitual or frequent deviance) is liable to result in the ascription of a deviant master status to a person.⁷⁷

Deviance and Stereotypes

Henry indicates that when an ascribed deviant status does function as essentializing master status other statuses or identities are likely to become “consumed” by or subordinated to the master deviant status. In addition, the society or group is likely to attribute deviant *peripheral* or *auxiliary* statuses to the deviant. The ascription of auxiliary statuses further discredits the moral character of the deviant.⁷⁸ Thus, for example, the deviant status of “homeless person” is likely to illicit the auxiliary status of “lazy,” regardless of whether the observer has any evidence regarding the person’s work ethic. Therefore, observers of deviant persons, or even suspected

⁷⁵ Harrison M. Trice and Paul Michael Roman, “Delabeling, Relabeling, and Alcoholics Anonymous,” in *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 360–369; Lee N. Robins, “Alcoholism and Labelling Theory,” in *The Labelling of Deviance: Evaluating a Perspective*, ed. Walter R. Gove (New York: Halsted / Wiley, 1975), 21–33.

⁷⁶ E.g., Henry, *Social Deviance*, 82.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

deviants, are prone to ascribe deviant stereotypes to the human targets of deviance labeling.⁷⁹

The ascription of negative stereotypes to those labeled deviant is usually an informal, and even an unconscious, activity that occurs both secretly and publicly.⁸⁰

Norms and Moral Boundaries

As social psychologists Penelope J. Oakes, S. Alexander Haslam, and John C. Turner explain, “Stereotyping is the process of ascribing characteristics to people on the basis of their group memberships.”⁸¹ Stereotyping is a function of social categorization of individuals into groups and classes. Social categorization itself involves the drawing of boundaries for group membership. The drawing of boundaries does not merely involve the application of social categorical labels, but it also consists of the observation and ascription of behaviors and characteristics to supposed members of a social grouping. As symbolic interactionism indicates, the significance of these behaviors and categories are social constructions; therefore, the socio-cultural boundaries, including moral boundaries, that these activities represent are also social constructions. Subsequently, the ascription of deviant identities, which frequently involves the ascription of stereotypes to the supposed deviants, is an exercise in social categorization dependent upon the creation and utilization of moral boundaries.⁸² From a primarily functionalist perspective on moral boundaries, Erikson explains:

To say that a system maintains boundaries is to say that it controls the fluctuation of its constituent parts so that the whole retains a defined range of activity, a unique pattern of constancy and stability, within the larger environment. Because the range of human behavior is potentially so wide, social groups maintain boundaries in the sense that they try to limit the

⁷⁹ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 85; see also Goffman, *Stigma*, 4; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 74–75; Schur, *Labeling Women*, 24.

⁸⁰ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 88.

⁸¹ Penelope J. Oakes, S. Alexander Haslam, and John C. Turner, *Stereotyping and Social Reality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 1.

⁸² Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 65.

flow of behavior within their domain so that it circulates within a defined cultural territory. Boundaries, then, are an important point of reference for persons participating in any system.⁸³

Thus, moral boundaries are means of distinguishing those who are members of the normative society or group from those whose behavior or characteristics effectively place them outside the boundaries of the normative society or group.⁸⁴ These “outsiders,” as Becker calls them, are deviants, who typically are *physically present* in the society or group but are *symbolically outside* the society or group. In addition, the extreme examples of incarcerated and exiled deviants experience physical separation because of their moral separation.⁸⁵ Reciprocally, the identification of deviance identifies acceptable behavior. Therefore, as anthropologist Joel Savishinsky comments, “Without the negative example of the maligned, then, conformists would not know how good they truly are. By punishing the deviant, people reward themselves for their own proper behavior. In epigrammatic terms, if everyone was good, goodness would cease to exist.”⁸⁶ This, of course, is the nature of boundaries; they set a group of things (land, people, animals, etc.) apart from other things. Moral boundaries establish two groups of people: *deviants* and *normals*.⁸⁷ Furthermore, as sociologists Robert A. Dentler and Kai T. Erikson explain, the identification and punishment of deviant behavior operates as a continuing means of regulating group behavior, by “pressur[ing]” group members to continue conforming to group norms.”⁸⁸

Deviants, however, are more than moral outsiders. The society or group considers deviants to be a threat to the very moral boundaries that the society or group uses to demarcate

⁸³ Erikson, “Notes on Deviance,” 13.

⁸⁴ Erikson, “On Sociology of Deviance,” 15.

⁸⁵ Becker, *Outsiders*, 1; see also Scott, “Proposed Framework,” 15.

⁸⁶ Joel Savishinsky, “Free Shows and Cheap Thrills: Staged Deviance in the Arctic and the Bahamas,” in *Deviance: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Morris Freilich, Douglas Raybeck, and Joel Savishinsky (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991), 81; see also Morris Freilich, “Smart Rules and Proper Rules: A Journey through Deviance,” in *Deviance: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Morris Freilich, Douglas Raybeck, and Joel Savishinsky (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991), 93

⁸⁷ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 10.

⁸⁸ Robert A. Dentler and Kai T. Erikson, “The Functions of Deviance in Groups,” *Social Problems* 7 (1959), 100.

deviant behavior from acceptable behavior. Unless the society or group acts to “negatively sanction” those who transgress the moral boundaries, the boundaries themselves are subject to irrelevance or undesired change.⁸⁹ Thus, the negative sanctions against deviance communicate two things to the entire social group: (1) such behavior or characteristics are not part of the normative social identity of members of the social grouping and (2) the established moral boundaries of the social grouping are important, particularly for the maintenance of social cohesion. Accordingly, when members of a group perceive an external threat to the social group, they are less tolerant of aberration and are more likely to identify and to sanction negatively deviants in an effort to increase social integrity and cohesion.⁹⁰ At the minimum, the society or group perceives deviance as a threat to social order, and more extreme forms of deviance, such as murder, threaten individual human safety.⁹¹ Thus, deviance varies in its degree of threat.⁹²

Conversely, when the designation of a person as a deviant may threaten social cohesion, a social group is less likely to apply a deviance label to that person, whom they would label as a deviant under other circumstances. For instance, reluctance in ascribing deviance labels is common in small-scale societies because the designation of a community member as a moral “outsider” would likely disrupt village or tribal life. However, in large scale-societies, the labeling of deviants is much more common because the size of the population reduces the risk of social instability resulting from labeling deviants.⁹³

⁸⁹ Scott, “Proposed Framework,” 22–23.

⁹⁰ Pat Lauderdale, “Deviance and Moral Boundaries,” *American Sociological Review* 41 (1976), 660–676; cf. Robert A. Scott, “Deviance, Sanctions, and Social Integration in Small-Scale Societies,” *Social Forces* 54 (1976), 604–605.

⁹¹ Davis, “Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions,” 50, 57–58; Lemert, *Human Deviance*, 44; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 3 Schur, *Labeling Women*, 44; Scott, “Proposed Framework,” 15; contra Freilich, “Smart and Proper Rules,” 39.

⁹² Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 7; Raybeck, “Hard vs. Soft Deviance,” 53–54.

⁹³ Raybeck, “Hard vs. Soft Deviance,” 57–67.

Up to this point, I have delayed discussing the important theoretical concept of socio-cultural norms, which is central to any sociological approach to deviance. Becker's classic description of the symbolic interactionist approach to deviance understands deviance as "rule-breaking."⁹⁴ Of course, in accordance with Becker's interactionist perspective, rules are social constructs. However, Becker's concentration on deviance as perceived "rule-breaking" is problematic. First, the concept of "rules" connotes formal regulations. Although rule breaking is an appropriate description of formal deviance (particularly crime),⁹⁵ informal deviance is not always the violation of formalized rules.⁹⁶ Thus, Becker's emphasis on rule breaking seems to result from his concentration on moral crusades, which focus on establishing deviance as the transgression of formal regulations, such as rules and laws. However, the violation of norms is more applicable to informal sanctions against deviance and to small-scale social contexts. Second, the violation of formal rules does not always result in the labeling of the violator as a deviant. For instance, modern Western society typically does not deviantize a person who drives an automobile faster than the posted speed limit, even if a police officer stops the driver and issues him or her a citation.⁹⁷ Thus, many interactionists prefer to speak of deviance as the perceived violation of socially constructed *norms*, of which formal rules are one expression.⁹⁸

Defining norms, however, is a difficult task because a norm, according to Erickson, is "an abstract synthesis of the many separate times a community has stated its sentiments on a given

⁹⁴ Becker, *Outsiders*, 1.

⁹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 79; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 41.

⁹⁶ Cf. Katz, "Deviance, Charisma, and Behavior," 186–202. It is the reference to rule-breaking, as opposed to norm violation, among some early formulations of the labeling perspective, particularly Becker's explanations of labeling, that has led some critics to determine that labeling is inadequate for explaining all forms of deviance, particularly secret deviance (e.g., Katz, "Deviance, Charisma, and Behavior," 198).

⁹⁷ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 56; cf. Lemert, *Human Deviance*, 17. Lemert notes that much primary deviation is rule-breaking that does not lead to secondary deviation.

⁹⁸ Erikson, "Notes on Deviance," 14; Alex Heckert and Druann Maria Heckert, "Using an Integrated Typology of Deviance to Analyze Ten Common Norms of the U.S. Middle Class," *The Sociological Quarterly* 45 (2004), 209–228; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 1, 29–30.

kind of issue.”⁹⁹ Sociologist Francesca M. Cancian in her book on socio-cultural norms provides a useful simple definition of norms: “Norms can be loosely defined as shared conceptions of appropriate or expected action.”¹⁰⁰ Norms derive from conscious and unconscious interpretations of socio-cultural values, and norms then result in morally significant behavior.¹⁰¹ Cancian explains, “Norms cannot be directly observed; therefore they must be inferred from some verbal or non-verbal act.”¹⁰² Consciously interpreted values result in more formal manifestations of norms, such as rules and verbally recognized customs. However, unconscious interpretations results in what Richard Stivers, following Jacques Ellul, would call “lived morality,” that is, behavioral results of unspoken custom.¹⁰³

Furthermore, Cancian identifies three types of norms: (1) ranking norms, (2) reality assumptions, and (3) membership norms. According to Cancian, “Ranking norms are defined as *shared beliefs about what actions and attributes bring respect and approval (or disrespect and disapproval) from oneself and others.*”¹⁰⁴ Ranking norms determine what behavior and characteristics are expected of people at various levels of social stratification.¹⁰⁵ Reality assumptions derive from the shared understandings of reality and distinguish between meaningful and meaningless behavior and characteristics.¹⁰⁶ “Membership norms are the standards for including or accepting a person within a group or social position.” Since membership norms dictate behavior or characteristics expected of *all individuals* in the group or

⁹⁹ Erickson, “Notes on Deviance,” 14.

¹⁰⁰ Francesca M. Cancian, *What Are Norms?: A Study of Beliefs and Action in a Maya Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1.

¹⁰¹ Davis, “Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions,” 52.

¹⁰² Cancian, *What are Norms*, 6; see also Kitsuse, “Societal Reaction,” 93.

¹⁰³ Stivers, introduction to part 2 of *Collective Definition*, 74; cf. Jacques Ellul, *To Will and To Do: An Ethical Research for Christians*, trans. C. Edward Hopkin (Philadelphia: Pilgrim, 1969), 112–126, 159–171.

¹⁰⁴ Cancian, *What Are Norms*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

class, they are different from ranking norms, which facilitate differential evaluations of individuals.

Ranking norms, thus, reflect the contextualized quality of norms in general, since ranking norms readily demonstrate that behavior and characteristics that people identify as deviant will not only vary among societies but from group to group, from historical period to historical period, from social class to social class, and from one social context to another.¹⁰⁷ Thus, designations of deviance can vary from one group to another within the same society with the result that behavior considered deviant by the general public functions as normative behavior in a “deviant” group.¹⁰⁸

Up to this point, I have addressed deviance and norms from a primarily conservative functionalist perspective. From this perspective, norms and the resulting designations of deviance are fairly stable. However, the previous discussion of moral crusades suggests that norms and designations of deviance can be areas of disagreement and conflict. Attempts to influence designations of deviance and of deviants are effectively attempts to affect the moral boundaries of a society or group.¹⁰⁹ The ability to change or to maintain the moral boundaries of a society or group requires considerable social power.¹¹⁰

From a conflict-oriented perspective, the designation of deviance and of deviants involves intergroup competition, in which designations of deviance operate as bids for group legitimacy and negotiations of power.¹¹¹ A conflict-oriented perspective treats society as a collection of interacting subgroups that typically compete against one another for social

¹⁰⁷ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 4–5; Henry, *Social Deviance*, 1, 5, 46; Goode, “Significance of Extreme Deviance,” xiii, xiv–xvi.

¹⁰⁸ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 107–108.

¹⁰⁹ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 10.

¹¹⁰ Davis, “Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions,” 54.

¹¹¹ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 66, 221; Davis, “Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions,” 57–58; Davis, introduction to *Collective Definition*, xi–xii; Nanette J. Davis, “Labeling Theory in Deviance Research: A Critique and Reconsideration,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 13 (1972), 451.

power.¹¹² The successful designation of a certain behavior or characteristic as deviance simultaneously degrades the performers of the deviance and legitimizes the labelers.¹¹³ However, the deviance process becomes extremely complicated when two or more competing groups are involved.¹¹⁴ Therefore, a conflict-oriented, interactionist approach pays attention not only to the labeling of deviants but also to the responses that the targets of deviance labeling demonstrate toward their deviantization.

Responses from the Deviantized

The human targets of deviance labeling may respond to the labeling in a variety of ways ranging from complete acceptance to complete rejection of the label.¹¹⁵ Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo identify “nine modes of adaptation to a deviant label” by which human targets of deviance labeling negotiate their deviant identity:

- *Acquiescence*: The labeled person reluctantly accepts the deviant label, which sometimes occurs when the person labeled feels resistance to be futile.
- *Repudiation*: The labeled person firmly rejects the deviant label, although his or her resistance may magnify the deviant label.
- *Flight*: The person labeled as a deviant attempts to escape the deviant label through some sort of withdrawal, including emotional withdrawal, change of geographical location, or “passing” oneself off as a “normal” person.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Prus and Grill, *Deviant Mystique*, 99; Stivers, introduction to part 1 of *Collective Definition*, 8.

¹¹³ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 12–13; Davis, “Labeling Theory,” 468; Joseph R. Gusfield, “A Dramatistic Theory of Status Politics,” in *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, eds. F. James Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975), 28.

¹¹⁴ Becker, *Outsiders*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 95; Fred Davis, “Deviance Disavowal: The Management of Strained Interaction by the Visibly Handicapped,” in *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*, ed. Howard S. Becker (New York: Free Press, 1964), 119.

¹¹⁶ For more on passing, see Goffman, *Stigma*, 73–91.

- *Channeling*: The person labeled accepts the deviant label and uses the label “as a fulfilling means of self-expression, personal identity, and social effectiveness.”
- *Evasion*: The person labeled rejects the deviant label and deflects any negative results of the label, such as guilt, away from himself or herself.
- *Modification*: The person labeled attempts to exchange a more socially acceptable label for the deviant label.
- *Reinterpretation*: The person labeled accepts and reinterprets the deviant label so that the stigma of the deviant label is removed.
- *Redefinition*: The person labeled rejects the label and redefines the particular behavior or characteristic in question as “normal.”
- *Alteration*: The person becomes subject to attempts at rehabilitation.¹¹⁷

Within the mode of evasion, Rogers and Buffalo include the majority of a class of response techniques called “neutralization.” Although Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza are more representative of the *social control* theory of deviance, they identified a number of “neutralization” techniques used by deviants that allow the deviant to justify, excuse, or legitimize his or her deviant behavior:

- *Denial of Responsibility*: The deviant claims he or she is not responsible for his or her actions.
- *Denial of Injury*: The deviant claims that his or her actions caused no harm to anyone.
- *Denial of the Victim*: The deviant claims that the victim of the deviant act deserved the harm he or she received.

¹¹⁷ Rogers and Buffalo, “Fighting Back,” 105–114; see also Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 65–66.

- *Condemnation of the Condemners*: The deviant claims that those who have labeled him or her a deviant are themselves guilty of wrongdoing.¹¹⁸

To this list, Henry adds six additional neutralization techniques:

- *Appeal to Higher Loyalties*: The deviant claims that he or she performed the deviant act in obedience or loyalty to some higher authority or allegiance.
- *Metaphor of the Ledger*: The deviant claims that although this particular act was wrong, the numerous good things he or she has done offset the harmful act.
- *Claim of Normality*: The deviant claims that everyone else does the very same thing.
- *Denial of Negative Intent*: The deviant claims that he or she did not intend to harm anyone.
- *Claim of Relative Acceptability*: The deviant claims that his or her actions were not as bad as some other deviant behaviors.
- *Claim of Privilege of Deviate*: The deviant claims that he or she deserves to be able to deviate as a reward for some good he or she has performed.¹¹⁹

Rogers and Buffalo classify the majority of instances of neutralization as forms of the mode of *evasion*; however, some instances of neutralization may also function as other modes of adaptation to deviance labeling.¹²⁰ In addition, Henry is careful to explain that although neutralization sometimes indicates the reasons a person engages in deviant behavior, people

¹¹⁸ Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957), 664–670; see also Henry, *Social Deviance*, 58. Concerning Sykes and Matza's involvement of control theories of deviance, see Cullen, *Rethinking Crime*, 139–141; David Downes and Paul Rock, *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule Breaking*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 148–150, 227.

¹¹⁹ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 62–65.

¹²⁰ Rogers and Buffalo, "Fighting Back," 110.

engage in deviant behavior for numerous other reasons, including pecuniary, recreational, interpersonal, problem solving, and political.¹²¹

Deviant Groups and Counter-Cultural Movements

Deviants will sometimes develop into subcultural groups as a result of and/or response to their deviantization; however, already existent subcultural groups also may experience deviantization. Regardless of whether a deviant group was already in existence or formed in response to labeling, deviant groups must negotiate the prospective or newly acquired deviant status. Just as with individual deviants, a group may react to deviance labeling in a variety of ways, ranging from acceptance to rejection.¹²²

In the case of those groups that reject their deviant status, the intergroup competition for power is most evident. The deviant group often holds to conceptions of what is deviant and what is acceptable that are different from those that normative society holds; thus, the deviant group subscribes to a set of moral boundaries different from the boundaries of opposing groups, including the general society.¹²³ In the case of counter-cultural groups, deviant groups will accept as normal behavior that which most of the general society would consider deviant behavior.¹²⁴

Often attempts to neutralize and/or abolish an ascribed deviant identity involve the development of an opposition movement.¹²⁵ In the case of a well-established designation of deviance, such opposition movements may function as counter-cultural movements, which

¹²¹ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 66.

¹²² Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 86.

¹²³ Goode, "Significance of Extreme Deviance," xiii.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹²⁵ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 66–67; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 67.

attempt to draw moral boundaries different from that of the surrounding society.¹²⁶ An increased preoccupation with group boundaries and designating deviant group members is to be expected within deviant groups, since external threats to a group frequently result in increased emphasis on designating normative and deviant behavior in order to build group cohesion.¹²⁷ The group's alternative moral boundaries not only designate the limits of acceptable behavior for group members but may also designate certain group members, who trespass these limits, as deviant to the group.

Ultimately, a successful opposition movement precipitates social change, in which the general society comes to identify the deviant behavior or characteristic as normal.¹²⁸ Conversely, a successful moral crusade will likely result in the redrawing of a society's moral boundaries, and behavior that was once normal thus becomes deviant.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the deviance process is a complex, dynamic interplay between competing groups of moral entrepreneurs vying for the power and authority to draw the moral boundaries of a group and ultimately for society.¹³⁰

Μαγεία-Miracle Conflicts and Deviance Labeling

Since the sociological approach to magic is applicable to the Greco-Roman magico-religious context, the identification or characterization of an activity as μαγεία or a person as a μάγος functions as deviance labeling. Furthermore, Stratton's claim that Greco-Roman characterizations of μάγοι rely upon the negative stereotype of the sorcerer is fully in accord with the interactionist explanation of the ascription of deviant stereotypes to those labeled as deviants. Furthermore, I would characterize Greco-Roman μαγεία as very similar to Becker's

¹²⁶ Henry, *Social Deviance*, 8, 59, 107.

¹²⁷ Lauderdale, "Deviance and Boundaries," 660–676; cf. Davis, "Belief, Values, Power, and Definitions," 51; Prus and Grills, *Deviant Mystique*, 138.

¹²⁸ Ben-Yehuda, *Politics and Morality*, 11–12; Davis, "Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions," 57–58.

¹²⁹ Scott, "Proposed Framework," 17–19.

¹³⁰ Cf. Davis, "Beliefs, Values, Power, and Definitions," 57–58; Erikson, "On Sociology of Deviance," 17.

third form of secret deviance, that is, deviance that exists primarily in the collective consciousness of the society. Although not all those who are labeled μάγοι in the Greco-Roman world performed their ritual activities in secret, three factors suggest recognizing μαγεία as a *putative* form of deviance. First, the stereotypical descriptions of μαγεία typically describe it as secretive ritual performances.¹³¹ Second, in accordance with Stratton's claim that very few self-labeled μάγοι actually existed, the secretive quality of μαγεία is intensified by the fact that a member of Greco-Roman society rarely, if ever, encountered someone who was undeniably a μάγος. Third, since accusations of μαγεία occur primarily as means of discrediting rivals, these accusations are ways of negotiating ambiguous and contentious relationships, much the same way as witchcraft accusations function within Zande society in Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft among the Azande*. Although few self-labeled μάγοι actually existed, both μάγοι and μαγεία are realities in the collective consciousness of Greco-Roman society, and Greco-Roman persons frequently attributed misfortune that they considered otherwise unexplainable to μάγοι and μαγεία. For instance, Apuleius argues that out of envy and lack of understanding as to how their widowed relative Pudentilla would marry the visiting philosopher and rhetor Apuleius, they determined that Apuleius had used some kind of μαγεία (possibly a spell or a potion) to cause Pudentilla to marry him.¹³²

The lack of self-proclaimed μάγοι and the tendency for μαγεία to function as secret deviance resulted in much ambiguity and conflict over particular examples of the labeling of μαγεία. Numerous ancient Greco-Roman texts demonstrate such ambiguity and conflict.

¹³¹ Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 60, 156; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 21–22; Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2d ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book, 3; Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 97, 106–107.

¹³² Apuleius, *Apol.* 27.5–12.

According to Apuleius' *Apology*, for example, the family of Apuleius' wife attempts to prove Apuleius is a *magus* by providing what he considers ambiguous, circumstantial evidence.¹³³ In addition, although many people evidently considered Apollonius of Tyana a μάγος, Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* insists that he is a philosopher, not a μάγος.¹³⁴

As Origen's *Against Celsus* shows, early Christ-following wonder-workers were at times labeled as popular μάγοι.¹³⁵ Two aspects of the early Christ-movement made the early Christ-followers susceptible to being labeled as popular μάγοι. First, as Harold Remus explains, the early Christ-movement was a *counter-cultural* movement.¹³⁶ The missionary-minded early Christ-movement was very much intent on changing the values, beliefs, and moral boundaries not only among its members but also for the entire world. Most importantly, Acts presents Paul preaching that the moral boundaries of the people of God should include Gentiles as full members of the community. For many Judeans, this would have been a complete refutation of the traditional ethnic boundaries. Thus, Acts 17:6 quite appropriately presents the Judeans of Thessalonica claiming that the Christ-followers have upset or disturbed the world.¹³⁷

The second aspect of the Christ-movement that made the early Christ-followers prone to being labeled μάγοι is its wonder-working tradition.¹³⁸ Remus demonstrates that the second-century Christ-followers strongly refuted accusations that Jesus of Nazareth and Christ-following

¹³³ Apuleius, *Apol.* 27–51, 53–54, 57, 61–65, 79–82.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 90.6; Lucian, *Alex.* 5; Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.*, 1.2; 4.18, 35; 5.12; 7.17; 8.19, 30.

¹³⁵ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 38.1–26, 68.1–45; 2.48.1–50; 3.36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26.

¹³⁶ Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*, Patristic Monograph Series 10 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983), 71–72, 79–80.

¹³⁷ Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down,'" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 271–273.

¹³⁸ Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict*, 71.

wonder-workers performed μαγεία.¹³⁹ Stratton identifies these refutations as part of a Christian miracle discourse that deflects accusations of popular μαγεία against Jesus and Christ-followers onto their accusers and other opponents.¹⁴⁰ In sociological terms, the Christian miracle discourse in many ways functions as attempts to neutralize the labeling of Jesus and Christ-following wonder-workers as popular μάγοι.

For example, Origen in *Against Celsus* refutes Celsus' claims that the wonders performed by Jesus and the Christ-followers are μαγεία or γοητεία.¹⁴¹ At one point, Origen denies specifically that exorcisms performed by Christ-followers are works of μαγεία:

If, then, the Pythian priestess is beside herself when she prophesies, what spirit must that be which fills her mind and clouds her judgment with darkness, unless it be of the same order with those demons which many Christians cast out of persons possessed with them? And this, we may observe, they do without the use of any curious arts of magic, or incantations [οὐδενὶ περιέρῳ καὶ μαγικῶ ἢ φαρμακευτικῶ], but merely by prayer and simple adjurations which the plainest person can use. (*Against Celsus* 7.4.14–20; *ANF*)

Origen's defense of the Christ-follower's exorcistic practices is an example of what Rogers and Buffalo calls *redefinition*. He has rejected the accusation that early Christ-follower exorcisms are μαγεία, and he redefines the exorcisms as the results of legitimate religious prayer.

Although clear evidence for accusations of μαγεία against Jesus and Christ-followers do not appear until the second century, Stratton identifies instances of the Christian miracle discourse in Acts. She demonstrates that Acts 19 draws a contrast between Paul and the Sons of Sceva. Paul successfully performs various wonders, including exorcisms (vv. 11–12), but Acts presents the Sons of Sceva as failing in their attempt to use the name of Jesus to exorcise an evil spirit (vv. 12–16). The resultant disavowal of περίεργα (curious or superstitious practices)

¹³⁹ Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict*, 56–57; cf. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 30; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 69.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.17; 23.1–9; 35.12.

¹⁴⁰ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 107–114.

¹⁴¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30.

among Ephesian Christ-followers intimates that the Sons of Sceva were performing exorcisms through μαγεία. Similarly, Stratton notes that the miracle discourse also appears in the interactions between the missionary Philip, who works miracles (σημεία; δυνάμεις) and exorcisms, and Simon the Samaritan, who works μαγεία (Acts 8:4–13).¹⁴² Stratton also notes that John M. Hull points out several instances where the writer Matthew apparently edits his sources to minimize possible “magical” elements in Jesus’ miracles.¹⁴³ The reduction of magical elements in the Gospel of Matthew and the appearance of the miracle discourse in Acts suggest that both the writer Matthew and the writer Luke are aware that the Christ-movement was an easy target for accusations of popular μαγεία and that they take measures to counter such accusations. In my opinion, the Gospel of Matthew’s anti-μαγεία redactions and Act’s miracle discourse strongly suggest that accusations of popular μαγεία against the Christ-movement were not only a possibility but were most likely already occurring in the late first century. At first, the easiest way for the writer Luke to refute accusations that Christ-following wonder-workers were popular μάγοι would seem to be the exclusion from Acts of any references to or narrations of wonder-working by Christ-followers. However, this chapter’s prior discussion of deviance neutralization techniques suggests that the absence of wonder-working within Acts would likely have been less effective at countering accusations of popular μαγεία than the portrayal of Christ-follower wonder-working as divinely empowered and divinely authorized miracle-working.

In Acts, miraculous “signs and wonders” are demonstrations of the divine power delegated to the Christ-followers, as my analysis of Acts 2 will show in the next chapter of this

¹⁴² Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124–126.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 113; see also John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition*, SBT, 2d ser., 28 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1974), 116–141; Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 217; cf. Mark 7:31–37; Matt 15:29–31.

study. Miracle-workers are a significant component of Acts' portrayal of many Christ-follower leaders and missionaries as prophetic witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit, whose healing miracles are physical manifestations of eschatological salvation. The exclusion of miracle-working in Acts would have hindered Acts' presentation of this theme of spiritual empowerment. Furthermore, it is likely that miracle-working was such an established feature of traditions regarding the first three to four decades of the Christ-movement that the writer Luke was unable to ignore completely these traditions. Thus, the early Christ-follower wonder-working tradition furthers Acts theme of the divine empowerment of Christ-followers, and Acts' presentation of Christ-follower miracle-working functions as the neutralization of the historical deviantization of Christ-follower miracles as popular *μαγεία*. In response to likely attempts to brand Christ-follower miracle-workers as popular *μάγοι*, Acts narrates conflicts between Christ-following wonder-workers and popular *μάγοι*, namely Simon of Samaria, Elymas, and the Sons of Sceva. These *μαγεία*-working characters function as foils to the miracle-working protagonists. The implicit comparison between the wonder-working protagonists and their *μαγεία*-working antagonists communicates that Philip, Peter, John, and Paul are not *μάγοι*, but workers of religious miracles.

Of course, arguing that the earliest stages of the miracle discourse appear in Acts becomes easier if a reader places the composition of Acts in the first half of the second century CE, since this would considerably reduce the chronological distance between Acts and references to actual accusations of *μαγεία* against the Christ-movement in second-century Christ-follower writings.¹⁴⁴ The dating of Acts is a difficult task, and the range of dates

¹⁴⁴ Justin, *1 Apol.* 30; Justin, *Dial.* 69.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.17; 23.1–9; 35.12.

suggested for the composition of Acts is from 65 to 150 CE. However, opinions on the dating of Acts divide roughly into three groups: (1) 65–70 CE, (2) 75–100 CE, and (3) 100–150 CE.

In favor of dating Acts to the late 60s, Darrell L. Bock, for instance, provides two reasons for favoring a date in the late 60s. First, he points to “the lack of any explicit reference” to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Second, Bock claims that a date before 70 CE is also indicated by “the lack of effort to draw upon the ‘legacy’ of Paul in contrast to Acts’ focus on Paul’s own ministry activity.” However, Bock does admit that the lack of reference to the defeat of Jerusalem may be the result of the writer Luke having written Acts at a much later date, such as 120–130 CE, when the destruction of the temple and concern over Paul’s ministry vis-à-vis his legacy “are no longer worth noting.”¹⁴⁵ In regards to the plausibility of the early dating of Acts, Bock’s argument rests upon a supposed lack of reference within the Gospel of Luke and Acts to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE; however, although an explicit reference to the destruction of the temple does not exist, the redaction of Mark 13:14–20 in Luke 21:20–24 not only warns the Judeans to flee Jerusalem when armies surround the city (vv. 20–21) but also indicates that “Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles” (v. 24). Thus, Luke 21:20–24 could be an implicit reference to the destruction of the temple.¹⁴⁶ In combination with Ben Witherington III’s claim that the lack of the Pauline legacy in Acts is a product of the chronological limitations that the Gospel of Luke sets on Acts, it is unlikely that the Gospel of Luke was written prior to 70 CE.

¹⁴⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (X–XXIV)*, AB 28A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1343–1344; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP 3 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 1991), 325–326; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*, 5th ed., ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1922), 481–483; contra Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1675; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 17–24; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 760–761.

The dating of Acts to the last two decades of the first century is the majority opinion currently among biblical scholars. Witherington, for example provides several reasons for placing the composition of Acts between 80 and 90 CE. First, Witherington argues that placing the composition of Acts earlier in the 60s CE because of Acts' focus on the life of Paul is unconvincing because Acts is not a biography of Paul; instead, Acts is a portrayal of "the progress of the gospel and salvation history, finishing in the capital of the Empire."¹⁴⁷ In other words, Acts makes little reference to what Bock calls the "'legacy' of Paul" because Acts is not Paul's biography but the writer Luke's account of the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome (cf. Acts 1:8), thus the legacy of Paul does not fit into the chronological limitations that the writer Luke places on Acts.¹⁴⁸ Second, Witherington provides six reasons why Acts could not have been written "at the very *end* of the first century or the beginning of the second [century]:

- "[The writer Luke's] primitive Christology and lack of a developed theology of the cross"¹⁴⁹
- "[The writer Luke's] primitive ecclesiology, which bears no resemblance to what we find in Ignatius or other Christian writers of the later era"
- "[The writer Luke's] failure to address even indirectly some of the major third- and fourth-generation problems, such as Gnosticism, Montanism, and the like"
- "[The writer Luke's] apparent ignorance of many of the elements of Pauline theology that we find in such capital Pauline letters as Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, or Galatians. How could this have happened if Acts was written at a time when Paul's letters were already at least

¹⁴⁷ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 61.

¹⁴⁸ See also Bruce, *Acts*, 18.

¹⁴⁹ See also Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xxxiii, who dates Acts between 80 and 100 CE because "[the writer] Luke's theology, however, is of a much earlier type than that of Justin."

partially collected and circulating as a revered corpus of early Christian writings (2 Pet. 3:15–16)?”

- “When one couples the ‘we’ passages . . . with the open-ended conclusion [of Acts] itself, the suggestion is ready to hand that [the writer] Luke sees his own time as a continuation of the time when the story concludes.”
- “[T]he apparent allusion to Acts in Justin Martyr’s *1 Apol.* 39.3, 50.12 and *2 Apol.* 10 from the middle of the second century suggesting a first-century date for the book [of Acts].”¹⁵⁰

Third, Witherington claims that Tacitus’ description of how dangerous it was under the Flavian emperors (69–96 CE) to praise those whom the Flavians and their immediate predecessor Nero (37–68 CE) had punished as criminals explains why the text of Acts was kept secret until the end of Flavian rule and why the writer Luke “is so cautious in his presentation of the Roman authorities” in the Gospel of Luke and Acts.¹⁵¹ Finally, F. F. Bruce and C. K. Barrett argue that additional support for dating Acts to the last quarter of the first century CE is Acts’ familiarity with the Roman provinces and political climate in the first century CE.¹⁵²

However, a significant minority of scholars have argued that Acts shows thematic similarities with the Pastoral letters and the so-called Apostolic Fathers, especially in that Acts shares with the Pastorals and the Apostolic Fathers a concern with “the protection of established communities from external and internal threats.”¹⁵³ Thus, Richard I. Pervo argues for dating Acts around 115 CE. Furthermore, Acts’ apparent concern for the designation of legitimate leaders and the presentation of hierarchical relationships between the leaders and leadership groups in

¹⁵⁰ Witherington, *Acts*, 61–62.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 62–63.

¹⁵² C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 1:48; Bruce, *Acts*, 17–18.

¹⁵³ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 5.

the early Christ-movement bears affinities with concerns within early second-century Christ-follower texts over delineating and supporting the developing hierarchy of the so-called “proto-orthodox” church.

Another substantial argument for placing the composition of Acts between 100 and 150 CE is that Acts is thematically similar to the Pastoral Epistles and Apostolic Fathers. Nevertheless, this argument partly depends upon firmly dating the composition of the Pastorals within the early second century CE; however, the date of the Pastorals is also a matter of dispute because many scholars prefer to place the writing of the Pastorals in the late first century.¹⁵⁴ In addition, although it is true that both Acts and the Apostolic Fathers portray the Christ-movement as having a more institutionalized leadership structure than likely existed during the middle of the first century CE, official leadership within the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (particularly in Ignatius’ letters) appears more institutionalized and complex than what appears in Acts. Finally, the assertion that Acts’ heightened concern with internal and external threats is solid evidence of an early second-century dating of Acts is misleading. Although conflict escalated within the Christ-movement and between the Christ-movement and the rest of Greco-Roman society from the first century CE forward, the Christ-movement was still subject to internal and external threat prior to the second century CE. In fact, Witherington’s indication that no direct reference to Gnostics, Montanists, or any other second century “heretics” suggests that Acts is concerned with internal and external threats that predate Marcionism and other “Gnostic” Christ-following groups of the second century. However, Shelly Matthews’ argument that Acts is

¹⁵⁴ Cf. James D. G. Dunn, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” in *NIDB* 11:781–782; Benjamin Fiore, *First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*, SP 12 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 2007), 19–20; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 91; George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1992), 53–54; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 387; Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, AB35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 17–21.

a response to emerging “marcionite ideas” indicates that the absence of clear references to Marcionism or any other second-century “heresy” within Acts only rules out the latest of suggested dates for the composition of Acts; thus, Matthews dates the composition of Acts to 110–135 CE.¹⁵⁵

Finally, in reference to the appearance of miracle discourse in Acts providing support for a late dating of Acts, two observations are pertinent. First, Christ-follower miracle discourse appears first in the Gospel of Luke and Acts as an adaptation of Greco-Roman magic discourse. Since magic discourse was already an established part of Greco-Roman culture during the first century, it is not necessary to conclude that the writer Luke developed Acts’ miracle discourse in the second century CE. The writer Luke could have drawn upon the stable conceptual construct of *magic discourse* and the emerging Christ-follower miracle discourse to create miracle discourse just as easily in the first century as in the second century. Furthermore, Acts’ miracle discourse seems to be less developed than Justin’s miracle discourse in the middle second century. In particular, Acts does not indicate the source of the wonder-working power that μάγοι use; instead, he merely assumes that it is not God’s power. However, Justin indicates that the power of μάγοι comes from the evil *daimones*.¹⁵⁶ Thus, although the Lukan miracle discourse could easily fit within the early second century, it also possible that the writer Luke developed his miracle discourse in the last quarter of the first century, since magic discourse was already a stable aspect of Greco-Roman century in the first century CE. More importantly, the so-called Beelzebul episode in the Synoptic Gospels appears to be a form of Christ-follower miracle discourse, since in all three versions of this pericope Jesus’ refutation of accusations he heals by means of Beelzebul appears to be his attempt to neutralize claims that he is a popular μάγος,

¹⁵⁵ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online edition, 27–54.

¹⁵⁶ Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 14.1–2; 26.1–5; 56.1–4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 7.3.

particularly a sorcerer—a worker of malevolent *μαγεία* (Matt 12:22–30; Mark 3:22–27; Luke 11:14–23).¹⁵⁷ Thus, the appearance of the Beelzebul episode within the Gospel of Mark, which scholarly consensus dates to the first century CE,¹⁵⁸ indicates that Christ-follower miracle-discourse likely originates in the first century CE and suggests that already in the second half of the first century, the Christ-movement was being accused of practicing popular *μαγεία*. Therefore, it is not necessary to place the composition of Acts within the second century CE based on the presence of miracle discourse within Acts.

Ultimately, a precise dating of the composition of Acts is not absolutely essential to my study of the *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts in Acts. However, the above considerations lead me to eliminate the earliest and latest of suggested dates for the writing of Acts. Since a dating of the Gospel of Luke to a time prior to or concurrent with fall of Jerusalem (70 CE) seems less plausible than a time after the destruction of Jerusalem, dating the composition of Acts to a time prior to the last quarter of the first century seems very implausible. Furthermore, the lack of clear reference to Marcion or any other “heretic” from the middle of the second century makes dating Acts to the middle of the second century highly unlikely. Overall the most plausible range of dates for Acts lies approximately between 80–135 CE. Thus, Acts’ *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes represent one of the earliest stages in the development of miracle discourse within the Christ-movement.

¹⁵⁷ Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 98–99, 128, 161; Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 3–4, 43–46; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 43, 77–78; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 47–48; cf. Luke 9:32, 34; John 7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20.

¹⁵⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 11–14; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), lxii–lxiii; Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Dallas: Word, 1989), xxxi–xxxii; Joel Marcus, “The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark,” *JBL* 111 (1992), 441–462; PHEME PERKINS, “The Gospel of Mark,” in *New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 8:517–518; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 12–15.

Stereotyping and the Labeling of Μάγοι

As examples of miracle discourse, Acts' μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes characterize their μαγεία-working antagonists primarily through the ascription of deviant stereotypes to these antagonists.¹⁵⁹ As Apuleius' *Apology* explains, two definitions for μάγος/*magus* existed in the Greco-Roman world. The *proper sense* of μάγος/*magus* referred to Persian priests. The *popular sense* of μάγος/*magus*, however, referred to a sorcerer, and it is this popular understanding that not only functions as the deviant stereotype in the Greco-Roman world but also later is the basis for the sociological approach to magic. As I already demonstrated while reviewing Stratton's *Naming the Witch*, the common Greco-Roman description of a μάγος relied upon a negative stereotype, which utilized some combination of several qualities:¹⁶⁰

- dangerous
- immoral
- manipulates superhuman beings
- feminine
- impious
- secretive
- foreign
- individualistic
- greedy
- irrational

Furthermore, Reimer's use of Rodney Needham's polythetic classification indicated that not every example of a magical person or character demonstrates every stereotypical quality of the popular μάγος stereotype.

Referential Classification and Prototypes

Social psychologists Marilyn B. Brewer, Valerie Dull, and Layton Lui demonstrate that stereotypes typically function as *prototypes* for social identities, which are means of categorizing

¹⁵⁹ For the use of stereotypes in deviance labeling, see Henry, *Social Deviance*, 85.

¹⁶⁰ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 19–24, 47–48, 69, 83–84, 91–96, 124–125.

people.¹⁶¹ Initially developed by Eleanor Rosch, *prototype theory* encompasses two elements: a categorical structure and categorization facilitated by prototypes. According to Rosch, humans classify phenomena (objects, humans, etc.) in order “to provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort.”¹⁶² Through her fieldwork, Rosch identified three levels of cognitive classification: basic, superordinate, and subordinate. In explaining basic level categories, Rosch writes:

One of the basic claims of the present research is that, of the many levels of abstraction at which any given thing can be classified, there is one basic level of abstraction at which the organism can obtain the most information with the least cognitive effort. That is, in so far as categorization occurs to reduce the infinite differences between stimuli to behaviourally and cognitively usable proportions, two opposing principles of categorization are operative: (a) On the one hand, it is to the organism’s advantage to have each classification as rich in information as possible. . . . (b) On the other hand, for the sake of reducing cognitive load, it is to the organism’s advantage to have as few classifications as possible. . . . We believe that the basic level of classification, the primary level at which ‘cuts’ are made in the environment, is a compromise between these two levels; it is the most general and inclusive level at which categories are still able to delineate real-world correlational structures.¹⁶³

One level of abstraction higher than the basic level is the superordinate level, which is deficient in classificatory information. One level of abstraction lower than the basic level is the subordinate level that consists of a cumbersome multitude of classifications. Furthermore, Rosch notes that despite the heuristic neatness of her model of cognitive categorization, real cognitive categories do not always have definite boundaries; thus, overlap often occurs between categories.¹⁶⁴ Table 4.1 illustrates these levels of categorization.

¹⁶¹ Marilyn B. Brewer, Valerie Dull, and Layton Lui, “Perceptions of the Elderly: Stereotypes as Prototypes,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 41 (1981), 686–670; see also Oakes, Haslam, and Turner, *Stereotyping and Reality*, 51–58.

¹⁶² Eleanor Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” in *Cognition and Categorization*, eds. Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978), 28.

¹⁶³ Eleanor Rosch, “Classification of Real-World Objects,” in *Thinking: Readings in Cognitive Science*, eds. P. N. Johnson-Laird and P. C. Wason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 213.

¹⁶⁴ Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” 35; cf. Oakes, Haslam, and Turner, *Stereotyping and Reality*, 53–54.

Table 4.1 Levels of cognitive categorization (adapted from Rosch, “Classification of Objects,” 215).

Superordinate	Basic	Subordinate	
Fruit	Apple	Red delicious apple	McIntosh apple
	Peach	Freestone peach	Cling peach
Clothing	Pants	Blue jeans	Slacks
	Shirt	T-shirt	Dress shirt

Within each category, classification of representative phenomena occurs according to a particular phenomenon’s similarity to the categorical prototype(s). A prototype is an abstracted conception of the most typical or most characteristic subordinate category.¹⁶⁵ For example, red delicious apples may function as the prototype for the basic category of apple. All other types of apples (granny smith, fuji, golden delicious) are placed in the category of apple because each demonstrates enough characteristics similar to the red delicious. However, a mandarin orange does not demonstrate enough characteristics similar to a red delicious apple for it to be classed as an apple. The mandarin orange is more similar to the valencia orange, which could be a prototype for the basic category orange; thus, the mandarin orange is classed in the basic category of orange.

The ultimate effect of prototypical classification is that cognitive categorization depends on the recognition of a sufficient number of characteristics demonstrated by the prototype. Similarities exist between Rosch’s prototype theory and Needham’s polythetic categorization. In particular, Rosch and Needham recognize that within a particular category variety exists with the result that two particular phenomena in a category may demonstrate little or no common characteristics. However, Needham’s polythetic classification is a form of what Rosch calls

¹⁶⁵ Rosch, “Classification of Objects,” 213; Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” 37; Eleanor Rosch, “Prototype Classification and Logical Classification: The Two Systems,” in *New Trends in Conceptual Representation: Challenges to Piaget’s Theory?* ed. Ellin Kofsky Scholnick, The Jean Piaget Symposium Series (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1983), 81.

logical categorization,¹⁶⁶ and it relies on compiling a list of basic qualities characteristic of the category and then determining whether the particular phenomenon possesses a sufficient number of these characteristics to warrant inclusion in the category. According to Rosch, prototypical categorization, however, relies on “reasoning from reference points.”¹⁶⁷ Polythetic classification may function quite well for the biological sciences from which the anthropologist Needham borrowed this classificatory system. However, in light of the rather organic development of the Greco-Roman concept of μάγεία and the stereotypical sense of popular μάγος as sorcerer, the referential classification of prototype theory seems more appropriate for explaining how certain Greco-Roman wonder-workers came to be classified as popular μάγοι.

In regards to the prototypical classification of humans, specific individuals often function as *exemplars* of the prototype.¹⁶⁸ As the most typical subordinate category, a prototype is the most typical representative of a category; however, an exemplar is the most illustrative single instance of a category. The exemplar is the consummate example of the category. Exemplars not only reflect common stereotypes of the categories they represent, but they will also influence the boundaries of the category.¹⁶⁹ In addition, a person is more likely to categorize on the basis of exemplars than on the basis of prototypes when he or she is familiar with actual human representatives of the category.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, Dentler and Erikson claim that in regards to social ranking within a group, groups typically ascribe lower status within the group to deviant members, who are typically the least prototypical members of a group.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Rodney Needham, “Polythetic Classification: Convergence and Consequences,” *Man*, n.s., 10 (1975), 349–352.

¹⁶⁷ Rosch, “Prototype and Logical Classification,” 81.

¹⁶⁸ Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate, “Exemplar and Prototype Use in Social Categorization,” *Social Cognition* 8 (1990), 243–262.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 246–247.

¹⁷¹ Dentler and Erikson, “Functions of Deviance,” 99.

Referential Classification of Wonder-Workers

In applying prototype theory to the characterization of wonder-workers in Acts, it is important to remember that the writer Luke is the designator at work; thus, characterization of wonder-workers in Acts is from a decidedly Christ-follower perspective. Following the symbolic interactionist perspective on deviance, the designation of some characters as μάγοι is the result of Acts portraying certain wonder-workers as operating outside what Acts presents as the moral boundaries of the Christ-movement. In large part, my analysis of the μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts will explore how Acts participates in a miracle discourse, in which Acts portrays Christ-following wonder-workers as miracle-workers and their rival wonder-workers as popular μάγοι. I will argue that the characterization of these rival wonder-workers as μάγοι utilizes the deviant stereotype of a Greco-Roman popular μάγος to discredit and to deviantize wonder-workers in competition with the wonder-working, Christ-following protagonists of these four episodes. Nevertheless, the ultimate result of Acts' deviantization of wonder-working characters that compete against the miracle-working protagonists in Acts is neither the admonishment of Christ-followers to refrain from using μαγεία nor the explication of the identity of μάγοι to Acts' audience. It is not necessary for Acts to warn its readers about popular μαγεία in general because popular μαγεία is in itself dangerous, social deviance. In addition, since *popular μάγος* is a stable Greco-Roman deviant stereotype, explication of the stereotypes is unnecessary. Instead, the deviantization of wonder-working rivals to the Christ-following miracle-workers is a means for the writer Luke to develop his understanding of the social identity of *Christ-following miracle-worker*, in response to possible historical accusations that Jesus and the Christ-following miracle-workers practiced popular μαγεία.

To understand how Acts categorizes the wonder-workers as miracle-workers and popular μάγοι, my analysis will focus on the interactions between the characters in each of the four μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, especially the interactions between the miracle-workers and the popular μάγοι. These interactions provide access to the symbolic universe of the book of Acts and of the writer Luke. In particular, Acts' μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes will reveal the writer Luke's moral boundaries regarding legitimate and illegitimate wonder-working, that is, the symbolic dividing line between miracle-working and μαγεία.

As with the general classification of Greco-Roman μάγοι, the classification of some characters in Acts as miracle-workers and some as μάγοι is an example of referential classification. The dividing line between miracle-worker and μάγος corresponds to Acts' moral boundary between legitimate wonder-working (miracle-working) and illegitimate wonder-working (μαγεία). Acts places outside the boundaries of the Christ-movement those characters, specifically the workers of popular μαγεία, whose actions place them outside the boundary of legitimate wonder-working. Furthermore, Acts portrays these outsider wonder-workers (μάγοι) as opponents of Acts' miracle-worker protagonists.

In accordance with prototype theory, the degree to which a character resembles Acts miracle-working exemplar(s) determines to what degree the character is representative of the category of miracle-worker. In Acts, some wonder-workers are so far from the miracle-worker exemplar(s) and so much closer to the μάγος stereotype that Acts places them in the category of μάγος.

Figure 4.1 is a basic prototype model that I will employ in my analysis of the μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts. The model is a continuum, which appears as large horizontal lines. The opposing ends of the continuum are the *miracle-worker exemplar* and the *μάγοι prototype*. As

further analysis of the μαγεία-miracle conflicts will demonstrate, the negative stereotype of a Greco-Roman popular μάγος provides an accurate description of what is typical of μάγοι in Acts. Although the writer Luke's exemplars of popular μάγοι, if he had any, are not available to modern scholars, the stereotypical-prototypical Greco-Roman popular μάγος (charlatanistic sorcerer) will serve as the prototype for μάγοι in my model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts. In the middle of the continuum is the vertical dividing line between the two categories of wonder-workers; however, the dividing line is a broken line for two reasons. First, according to prototype theory, cognitive categories are not completely discrete. Second, from a deviance theory perspective, persons are able to move across the boundary line between normals and deviants. In fact, it is the movement from the normal side of the boundary to the deviant side that forms the basis of all contemporary approaches to deviance. The left half of the continuum represents the in-group in Acts, which is the Christ-movement. The right half is the out-group in Acts. Each circle labeled wonder-worker represents an individual wonder-worker in the model.

I wish to add a further element to the model. Religio-ethnic affiliations of the wonder-workers in the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes also need representation in the model. Since Simon of Samaria is possibly affiliated with the Samaritan religious tradition,¹⁷² a simple dichotomy or continuum of Judaism and Gentile will not do. Thus, I provide three additional categories of religio-ethnic affiliation (Judean, Samaritan, and Gentile) within and relatively independent of the horizontal categorization of wonder-workers.¹⁷³ Lastly, the circles

¹⁷² For Simon of Samaria's possible connection to Samaritan religion, see F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations*, JSNTSup 67 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 92–93; Witherington, *Acts*, 284.

¹⁷³ Cf. R. J. Coggins, "The Samaritans and Acts," *NTS* 28 (1982), 431–432. R. J. Coggins demonstrates that Acts does not consider Samaritans to be Gentiles because Samaritans successfully join the Christ-movement (Acts 8:5–8, 14–17, 25) before the acceptance of Cornelius and his Gentile associates (Acts 10:1–11:18). Although the Jerusalem church does send Peter and John to check on the evangelization of the Samaritans (Acts 8:14), no serious opposition to the inclusion of the Samaritans appears in Acts. However, the possibility of including Cornelius and his associates, whom Acts 11:18 clearly designates as Gentiles, raises serious concern among Christ-followers in

representing individual wonder-workers and the placement of these circles in the model do not necessarily foreshadow the results of my analysis, but these particular circles are only examples, which I will replace later with the particular wonder-working characters in Acts. As my analysis of the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts proceeds, I will revise the model to reflect the findings of my analysis.

Identifying the characteristic qualities of a $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ in Acts primarily involves identifying how Acts utilizes the $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ stereotype to portray a character; however, the identification of not only the characteristic qualities of Acts' miracle-workers but also Acts' miracle-working exemplar(s) requires a careful analysis of how miracle-working characters develop throughout Acts. Furthermore, the characterizations and categorizations of the wonder-workers in Acts are thoroughly dependent on Acts' in-group bias toward the Christ-movement and its ideology. Hypothetically speaking, if a wonder-working Judean outside the Christ-movement were narrating the episodes in Acts 13:4–12 (Elymas episode) and Acts 19:13–16 (Sons of Sceva episode), the portrayal of the wonder-working characters would be much different; consequently, the placement of the individual wonder-workers on the model's horizontal continuum also would be much different.

The identification of the common characteristics of miracle-workers in Acts and the plotting of the miracle-workers on the model will allow me to identify which characteristics are most important in determining whether Acts places a character on the miracle-workers or $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$ side of the continuum. The identification of characteristics of miracle-workers in Acts will help me to identify Acts' symbolic universe and moral boundaries in regards to wonder-working.

Judea. The two different reactions by the Judean Christ-followers to the inclusion of the Samaritan converts and the Caesarean converts suggest that Acts does not present the Samaritans to be Gentiles.

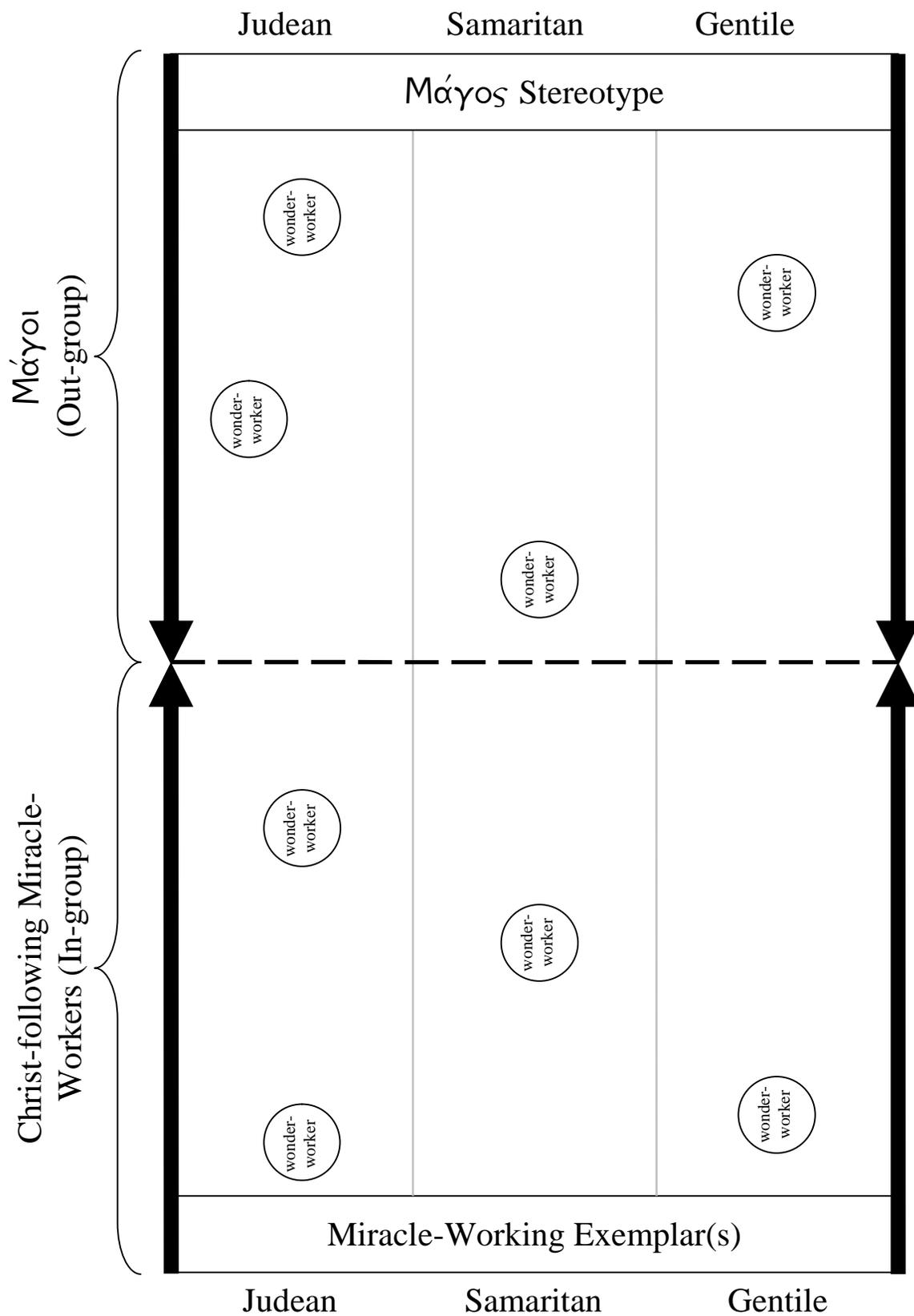


Figure 4.1 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts.

Subsequently, I will then be able to make some significant observations regarding Acts' ideological, including theological, perspectives on legitimate and illegitimate wonder-working.

In addition, I will suggest that the contrasting of the Christ-following miracle-working characters with μαγεία-working characters most likely stems from the writer Luke's awareness that wonder-working activities and traditions within the early Christ-movement were liable to accusations of popular μαγεία. Thus, the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts are likely an attempt to address the attempted historical deviantization of Christ-follower wonder-working as popular μαγεία. Thus, my analysis of Acts' μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes will allow me to understand better not only the writer Luke's response to attempts to discredit the Christ-movement as misguided or deceptive charlatanism but also the writer Luke's attempts to discredit rival wonder-workers and wonder-working traditions as popular μαγεία.

The symbolic significance of the stereotypical actions of the rival popular μάγοι and the deviance neutralizing characterization of the miracle-workers not only provide an explanation for the social relations between the Christ-following miracle-workers and their rival popular μάγοι but also help develop the social identity for Christ-following miracle-workers through the establishment of the moral boundaries of legitimate Christ-following wonder-working, that is, miracle-working. My synthesis of sociological, symbolist, and functional analyses facilitates my analysis of Acts' participation in miracle discourse and the identification of Acts' moral boundaries in regards to wonder-working. The symbolic significance of the ritual actions, which is Act's interaction with the popular μάγος stereotype, provides the means by which Acts narrates the antagonistic relations between Christ-following wonder-workers and all other wonder-workers they encounter. The relationship from Acts' perspective is one of legitimate miracle-workers versus deviant popular μάγοι. I will argue that the function of these

antagonistic social relations appears to be four-fold: (1) the communication of the writer Luke's understanding of legitimate wonder-working, which is Christ-follower miracle-working, (2) the communication of the social identity of legitimate Christ-following wonder-workers, who are miracle-workers, (3) the designation of all other wonder-working as illegitimate popular μαγεία and all other wonder-workers as popular μάγοι, and (4) the neutralization of the labeling of Christ-following wonder-workers as popular μάγοι and Christ-follower wonder-working as popular μαγεία. Nevertheless, I ultimately attribute these functions to the writer Luke. Therefore, the book of Acts is ultimately the writer Luke's interaction with the social context in which he lives.

Therefore, my analysis must distinguish between two distinct, yet related, levels of significance. First, the historical level involves the purposes and results of the writer Luke's employment of the miracle discourse. At this level of analysis, I will concentrate on examining how Acts employs the social interactions between miracle-workers and popular μάγοι to achieve certain social and ideological results. Second, the narrative level is the narrative world of Acts. At this level, Christ-following characters' miracles achieve some very practical straightforward results and serve as a testimony to the theological/ideological message that Acts attributes to them. This combination of practical result and testimony is readily apparent in Acts 3, where Acts presents Peter healing a lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Not only does Peter cause the man to gain use of his legs, but also Peter takes this as an opportunity to credit the healing to God and to proclaim the good news to the amazed crowds. As Daniel Marguerat explains, the Christ-followers' miracles and proclamation are mutually interpretive of one another: "Without miracle, the word is empty. Without word, the miracle is in danger of saying

too much.”¹⁷⁴ In Acts 3, for example, Peter’s direct speech provides the correct interpretation of the healing. In particular, the power of God mediated through Jesus Christ to Peter has caused the miracle in order that God may glorify Jesus Christ (Acts 3:6, 12–13). Nevertheless, the healing serves as visible confirmation of Peter’s message.

III. Conclusion

Miracle-working appears as a prominent aspect of the Christ-movement from the very beginning of the book of Acts. In fact, the earliest narration of miracle-working occurs in Acts 3:6–8, long before the first mention of μαγεία in Acts 8:9. Thus, the first characterizations of Christ-following miracle-workers occurs several chapters before any of them encounter a practitioner of popular μαγεία. Therefore, the next chapter of this study will focus on miracle-working in Acts 1–7, especially in Acts 2, because miracle-working in these first seven chapters set the stage for the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in subsequent chapters.

¹⁷⁴ Daniel Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 124.

CHAPTER 5
INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MIRACLE-WORKER IDENTITY IN ACTS 1–7

Although the first interaction between miracle-working Christ-followers and a worker of μαγεία does not occur until Acts 8, the first seven chapters of Acts contain important descriptions of miracle-workers. By the time the reader arrives at the first μαγεία-miracle conflict episode in Acts 8:4–25, the author of Acts has already introduced three individual miracle-workers and one group of miracle-workers—Peter (Acts 3:1–10; 5:15–16), Stephen (6:8), and the Twelve (2:43; 5:12). Thus, prior to Acts 8, the character type of *Christ-following miracle-worker* already has been presented and significantly developed. To understand adequately the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts, it is necessary to investigate Acts 1–7 to identify the elements of the developing miracle-worker character type.

The first reference to the Christ-followers having spiritual power occurs in Acts 1:8, where Jesus tells the apostles, “You will receive power (δύναμις) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth.”¹ Jesus, however, does not elaborate on the exact relationships among the Holy Spirit, power, and miracles;² nevertheless, these three related motifs are essential to the development of the *miracle-worker* character type in Acts.

¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 58; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 42–43.

² Acts refers to extraordinary deeds as δυνάμεις (miracles) only twice. In Acts 2:22, Peter mentions Jesus’ “miracles, wonders, and signs” (δυνάμεισι καὶ τέρασιν καὶ σημείοις), and Acts 8:13 refers to Philip’s wonders as “signs and miracles” (σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις). The root concept behind the term “miracle” (δύναμις) is the manifestation of power, particularly extraordinary spiritual power.² Although Acts only twice refers to extraordinary deeds as δυνάμεις, the concept of “power” appears frequently in connection with wonder-working in Acts. For example, the Judean leaders in Acts 4:7 ask Peter and John by what power (δυνάμει) or name (ὀνόματι) did they miraculously heal the lame man at the temple.

When Acts presents the Holy Spirit coming upon the Christ-followers and filling them on Pentecost, their reception of power manifests initially in the Christ-followers “speaking in other tongues” (Acts 2:4) and the Christ-followers performing miraculous “signs and wonders” (Acts 2:43). Furthermore, the Pentecost event proves to be foundational not only for the Christ-followers’ miracle-working but also for their evangelistic mission. Therefore, an analysis of the Pentecost episode is crucial to understandings Acts’ initial development of the miracle-working character, particularly the miracle-worker’s relationship with the Holy Spirit and power.

This chapter will investigate the narration of the Pentecost event in Acts 2 and its results in Acts 3–7. I will give special attention to the portrayal of the relations among the Holy Spirit, power, and miracles. The culmination of this chapter is a character sketch of miracle-workers in Acts 1–7. This character sketch will provide a description of a prototypical miracle-worker and his or her actions that will allow me to determine the prototypicality of each miracle-worker in Acts 1–7. The miracle-worker character sketch drawn from Acts 1–7 provides a basis by which to compare wonder-workers and their activities in the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts. Furthermore, since the character sketch is an abstract composition drawn from the narrative of Acts 1–7, it ultimately represents the initial stage of the writer Luke’s development of a Christ-follower identity in regards to wonder-working. Lastly, I will conclude this chapter by plotting the miracle-workers in Acts 1–7 onto the model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts.

I. Pentecost: The Coming of the Holy Spirit and Power (Acts 2)

I am starting my discussion of miracle-working in Acts with an investigation of the Pentecost episode because, although the Christ-followers perform no miracles in Acts prior to Pentecost, miracle-working becomes a typical activity of several Christ-followers during and after

Pentecost. Thus, in order to understand fully miracle-workers in Acts, I must first understand the significance of Pentecost in regard to miracle-working in Acts.

Preparation for Pentecost (Acts 1:1–11)

Jesus' final words to his disciples in Acts 1:4–8 prepares the Twelve and Acts' audience for the Pentecost event. First, in vv. 4–5, Jesus begins his final instructions to the Twelve by saying, “Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait upon the Father’s promise which you heard from me, that John baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit not after many of these days.” Then, a few verses later, he continues, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Two elements of Acts 1:4–5 reflect back on earlier material in Luke’s Gospel. First, Jesus refers to “the Father’s promise which you heard from me.” Already in the closing of Luke’s Gospel, the resurrected Jesus instructs his disciples, “You will stay in the city until you are clothed from on high in power” (Luke 24:49). These instructions are likely part of “the Father’s promise,”³ but it is quite possible that “the Father’s promise” is merely Acts’ way of signaling to the reader that this is not a new topic of instruction to the Twelve.⁴ Second, Jesus reminds the apostles of John’s baptism and compares it with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which will occur in a few days (Acts 1:5).⁵ The reference to John’s baptism refers back not only to the apostles’ previously unreported baptisms but also to Jesus’ baptism in Luke 3:21–22, where also the Holy

³ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 1:73; Bock, *Acts*, 56.

⁴ Cf. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 141–142.

⁵ Pervo, *Acts*, 38.

Spirit comes down upon Jesus.⁶ Just as Luke 3:23 indicates that Jesus' baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit initiate his ministry, the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the effective beginning of the Jerusalemite church's ministry.⁷ Acts 1:8 indicates that the coming of the Holy Spirit also corresponds with the beginning of the Christ-followers' mission throughout the world. Furthermore, Acts 1:8 also provides an initial hint for understanding the identity of the apostles in Acts. This verse does not narrow down the Christ-followers' role to that of prophet, miracle-worker, healer, or preacher; instead, it tells them to be "witnesses," a role that, as I will discuss later, encompasses all of these other roles.⁸ This identification of the Twelve as "witnesses" is significant for understanding miracle-workers in Acts because all of the Twelve work miracles in apparent fulfillment of their roles as "witnesses" (Acts 5:12).

Nevertheless, one additional aspect of Luke's Gospel makes Pentecost an appropriate place to begin studying miracle-workers in Acts. Although the Pentecost event marks the beginning of miracle-working in Acts, a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke could recall that the followers of Jesus have already worked miracles in Luke's Gospel. The Twelve perform their first miracles in Luke 9:6: "When [the Twelve] went out, they were passing through every village proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere." The ability to perform these healings is not inherent to the Twelve; instead, Jesus in Luke 9:1–2 delegates to them the power

⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 38–39; Pervo, *Acts* 62–63; Matthias Wenk, *Community-Forming Power: The Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSup 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 255.

⁷ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 26; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 128–129; cf. Mark McVann, "Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 341–360.

⁸ Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, "Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (London: Mowbray, 1965), 166.

to control δαίμονια and to heal illnesses (Luke 9:1–2).⁹ Later, Jesus sends out seventy of his followers to preach and to heal (10:9). When the seventy return, they report to Jesus that even the δαίμονια are subject to the authority (ὑποτάσσεται) of Jesus’ name (10:17).¹⁰

Nowhere does Luke’s Gospel or Acts indicate that the Christ-followers perform miracles between Jesus’ death and Pentecost. Furthermore, Jesus claims in Acts 1:8 that the Christ-followers will simultaneously receive the Holy Spirit and power; thus, Acts 1:8 would suggest to a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke that in the narrative worlds of Luke’s Gospel and Acts, the Christ-followers cease performing miracles sometime prior to Jesus’ ascension—likely just prior to Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem—and they start working miracles again only after Pentecost.¹¹

Nevertheless, an intimate relationship exists between the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the commencement of miracle-working in Acts. The indication that the apostles “will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes” is the most explicit explanation of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Christ-followers’ miracle-working; therefore, the

⁹ Although the term “demon” and “demonic” still appear in anthropological literature, particularly in reference to evil spirits, I will avoid these terms. I will either use the untranslated Greek terms or their transliterations because δαίμων and lexically related Greek terms refer to a variety of spiritual beings, including deities, ghosts, morally neutral spirits, unclean spirits, and evil spirits. See Werner Foerster, “δαίμων, δαίμονιον, δαίμονίζομαι, δαίμονιώδης, δεισιδαίμων, δεισιδαίμονία,” *TDNT*, 2:1–20; Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), x–xi.

¹⁰ Luke’s Gospel first refers to miracles performed through Jesus’ name in Luke 9:49, where John reports that Jesus’ disciples encountered a person, who is not a disciple, casting out δαίμονια in Jesus’ name. Jesus ultimately tells them not to prevent this unnamed exorcist, or anyone else, from performing exorcisms in his name (Luke 9:50; cf. David E. Aune, “Magic in Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2 [1980], 1545).

¹¹ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:78–79; Bock, *Acts*, 63; Bruce, *Acts*, 38; Haenchen, *Acts*, 231; Albrecht Oepke, “δύναμις, δυνατός, δυνατέω, ἄδυνατος, ἄδυνατέω, δύναμις, δύναστης, δυναμόω, ἐνδυναμόω,” *TDNT* 2:310–311. It is quite likely that the miracle-working activity of Jesus’ followers ceased sometime just prior to Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. The miracle-working activity of the Twelve (Luke 9:1–2) and seventy other disciples (Luke 10:9) occurs in Galilee prior to Jesus’ turning toward Jerusalem in Luke 9:51. In Luke 9:54, James and John ask Jesus whether he wants them to command fire down upon a Samaritan village, thus indicating that the disciples still considered themselves able to perform miracles while in Samaria. After Jesus enters Judea, the Gospel of Luke makes no further mention of the disciples’ ability to perform miracles.

exact relationship between the Holy Spirit and miracle-workers in Acts will be the focus of my investigation of Acts 2.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13)

In Acts 2:1, the Christ-followers are once again gathered in a house (cf. Acts 1:13; 2:1–2). The gathering of Jesus’ followers is interrupted by theophanic phenomena (wind-like sound and tongues of fire; Acts 2:3). Then, the promised Holy Spirit fills the disciples, so that the Christ-followers “speak in *other* tongues” (λαλεῖν ἑτέροις γλώσσαις; Acts 2:4). The adjective “other” (ἑτέροις) indicates to the reader that the Christ-followers are participating in *xenoglossia*, not *glossolalia*. Whereas *glossolalia* is the speaking of unintelligible ecstatic speech, *xenoglossia* is the speaking of foreign languages in which the speaker has no training (Acts 2:4).¹² Acts 2:6 indicates that “this sound” (τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης), which is presumably the xenoglossic speech,¹³ draws together a crowd of Judeans “from all the nations,” and the crowd hears the Christ-followers speaking in their native languages.

¹² Bock, *Acts*, 97, 99, 101; Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke’s View of the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 73–74; Witherington, *Acts*, 133–134; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:119, 124; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 14–16; Pervo, *Acts*, 59, 64–65; Haenchen, *Acts*, 168, 175; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 7, 9. The phrase “speaking in other tongues” (Acts 2:4) suggests that the miracle involves the alteration of the Christ-followers’ speech; thus, the Christ-followers likely participate in *xenoglossia* (Bock; Twelftree; Witherington). However, Barrett suggests that the miracle is actually an alteration of the audience’s hearing; thus, the Christ-followers are likely participating in *glossolalia*. Although I favor interpreting the extraordinary speech at Pentecost as a miracle of speech, interpreting this as a miracle of hearing does not significantly change the meaning of the passage.

The accusation that the Christ-followers are inebriated in Acts 2:12–13 makes more sense if the Christ-followers are participating in *glossolalia*, rather than *xenoglossia*. Pervo insightfully claims that this ambiguity results from Luke’s redaction of his sources in order to remove references to Christ-followers participating in *glossolalia* (Pervo; *Acts*, 64–65; 68). Bock, however, suggests that Acts 2:13 indicates that some people in the crowd understood xenoglossic speech as “drunken gibberish,” when they did not understand the particular human language being spoken (Bock; *Acts*, 99–100).

¹³ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:119; Bruce, *Acts*, 59; contra Conzelmann, *Acts*, 14; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 239. τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης likely refers to the Christ-followers’ *xenoglossia* for three reasons. First, the last sound mentioned to Act 2:6 is the *xenoglossia*. Second, the second half of v. 6 explains that “each one of them was hearing in his own dialect while they were speaking.” It seems more likely that the sound that has drawn the people in the crowd together is the same sound about which they would be

Acts 2:4–13 is not the only place where Christ-followers participate in ecstatic speech, although it is the only instance of *xenoglossia* in Acts. In two other places in Acts, ecstatic speech, specifically *glossolalia*, is the immediate result of the Holy Spirit coming upon Christ-followers. When the Holy Spirit spontaneously falls upon Cornelius and those gathered in his house, they all speak in tongues (Acts 10:44–46). Later in Acts 19:6, the Holy Spirit comes upon some recently baptized Christ-followers, and as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit, they speak in tongues. Thus, a connection exists in Acts between ecstatic speech (*xenoglossia* and *glossolalia*) and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon a person.

Ecstatic speech, particularly *glossolalia*, is a behavior that cultural anthropologists closely link to certain altered states of consciousness, particularly trance.¹⁴ However, Acts narrates several other magico-religious activities typically associated with trance and other altered states of consciousness, specifically dreams, revelatory visions, and spirit possession. In order to understand better the ecstatic behavior of those that receive the Holy Spirit, I will briefly introduce the scientific study of altered states of consciousness (ASCs).

Altered States of Consciousness in Acts

The trances, visions, and revelatory dreams in Acts are likely the writer Luke's representation of early historical Christ-followers' experiences of magico-religious ASCs. In addition, some instances of spirit possession in Acts may involve specific magico-religious understandings of dissociative ASCs, namely possession trance. The focus of this section is not a discussion of whether historical Christ-followers in the first century CE experienced possession by the Holy

talking to one another. Lastly, since the term *φωνή* carries additional connotations of vocal sound, musical sound, and language (LSJ, s.v. “*φωνή*”), τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης would more likely refer to human xenoglossic speech than a harsh wind-like noise.

¹⁴ Felicitas D. Goodman, *How about Demons? Possession and Exorcism in the Modern World*, Folklore Today (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 8; Erika Bourguignon, *Possession* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1991), 12–13.

Spirit, but whether Acts' portrayal of the relationship between Christ-followers and the Holy Spirit substantially resembles spirit possession phenomena enough to conclude that Acts is narrating ASCs. In this section, I will proceed successively through discussions of ASCs, the anthropological study of spirit possession, and the role of divine possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts. In particular, I will argue that Acts' narration of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Christ-followers significantly resembles spirit possession, according to leading anthropological understandings of spirit possession. Lastly, I will argue that Acts presents the Christ-followers' ability to participate in extraordinary magico-religious activities, such as seeing visions and performing miracles, as the results of the Holy Spirit's possession of the Christ-followers.

Altered States of Consciousness

Psychiatrist Arnold M. Ludwig provides a detailed and useful definition of an *altered state of consciousness*:

For the purpose of discussion I shall regard altered state(s) of consciousness [hereafter referred to as ASC(s)] as any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological maneuvers or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself [or herself] (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness.¹⁵ (first bracketed material in the original)

The greatest difficulty in defining ASCs is the determination of an individual's *normal, alert, waking state*.¹⁶ Some ASCs can occur without either the individual's awareness or an *objective*

¹⁵ Arnold M. Ludwig, "Altered States of Consciousness," in *Altered States of Consciousness: A Book of Readings*, ed. Charles T. Tart (New York: Wiley, 1969), 9–10; see also Stanley Krippner, "Altered States of Consciousness," in *The Highest States of Consciousness*, ed. John White (Garden City, NY: Anchor / Doubleday, 1972), 1.

¹⁶ Charles T. Tart, introduction to *Altered States of Consciousness: A Book of Readings*, ed. Charles T. Tart (New York: Wiley, 1969), 1; cf. Caryl Marsh, "A Framework for Describing Subjective States of Consciousness," in *Alternate States of Consciousness*, ed. Norman E. Zinberg (New York: Free Press, 1977), 152; Norman E. Zinberg, "The Study of Consciousness States: Problems and Progress," in *Alternate States of Consciousness*, ed. Norman E.

observer's presence. For instance, many who experience a spirit-possession trance do not remember anything they did during the trance;¹⁷ thus, to expect them to recognize a significant deviation in their mental functioning is impossible. Ultimately, social scientists and psychologists recognize that a person's normal waking state of consciousness is affected by the person's particular physical, social, and cultural environments.¹⁸

Psychologist Stanley Krippner provides a non-exhaustive list of twenty different states of consciousness:

- Dreaming state
- Sleeping state
- Hypnagogic state
- Hypnopompic state
- Hyperalert state
- Lethargic state
- States of rapture
- States of hysteria
- States of fragmentation
- Regressive states
- Meditative states
- Trance states
- Reverie
- Daydreaming state
- Internal scanning
- Stupor
- Coma
- Stored memory
- "Expanded" conscious state
- "Normal," everyday, waking state

Most important to my study of Acts 2 are the ASCs most commonly associated with revelatory dreams, visionary trances, and spirit possession, since these phenomena appear in Acts.

Three ASCs are primarily associated with dreams: dreaming state, hypnagogic state, and hypnopompic state. These three ASCs represent successive stages within the sleep-dream cycle. The *hypnagogic state* occurs between the waking state and sleeping. This state typically involves visual imagery, but it sometimes also includes aural experiences. The *dreaming state* occurs

Zinberg (New York: Free Press, 1977), 1, n. 1. Altered states of consciousness are also sometimes referred to as *alternate states of consciousness*.

¹⁷ Goodman, *How about Demons*, 12.

¹⁸ Tart, introduction to *Altered States of Consciousness*, 2–3.

during sleep and will involve mostly visual imagery. The *hypnopompic state* occurs between the sleeping state and the waking state and involves both visual imagery and aural experiences.¹⁹

No single ASC exists for magico-religious visions, which can occur in several of the states listed above. The type of ASC that anthropologists and psychologists most commonly associate with visions is *trance states*. Trances, according to Krippner, “are characterized by the absence of continuous alpha waves on the EEG, hypersuggestibility (but not passivity), alertness, and the concentration of attention on a single stimulus. . . .”²⁰ Although Krippner’s definition places emphasis on the absence of alpha waves on an EEG during trance states, an observer within an indigenous socio-cultural context typically is unable to employ an EEG to observe the brain waves of one suspected of entering a trance state. Consequently, trance states are often identified through the observation of symptomatic behavior. In addition to ASCs associated with visionary dreaming and trance, *rapture* involves “intense feeling and overpowering emotion, subjectively evaluated as pleasurable and positive in nature.” Among the many inducers of rapture are dancing, physically intense ritual, and magico-religious activity, such as conversion or *glossolalia*.²¹

The absence of a specific visionary state of consciousness emphasizes the necessity to distinguish between a particular state of consciousness and the cultural interpretation of that state of consciousness. For instance, in regards to spirit possession in Haitian Vodou, the particular ASC is a trance; however, the practitioners of Vodou will interpret the trance as a deity or spirit “mounting” the human actor much the same way as a rider mounts a horse.²² Furthermore,

¹⁹ Krippner, “Altered States of Consciousness,” 1–2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²² Vincent Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, eds. Vincent Crapanzano and Vivian Garrison, *Contemporary Religious Movements* (New York: Wiley, 1977), 9; Leslie G. Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press,

Haitian Vodou also demonstrates that a particular culture may have more than one explanation for the same ASC, since in addition to the primary metaphor of “mounting,” possessing deities and spirits in Vodou may also “dance in the head” of a person.²³

As anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano indicates, the key element within spirit possession is an alien personality exercising direct controlling influence over its human host. Although the *entrance* of an alien personality into a human body is a common cultural idiom for describing spirit possession, it is not an absolutely essential element within all indigenous concepts of spirit possession.²⁴ Alternatively, a Siberian shaman may enter a trance, but the cultural interpretation of the trance typically will be that his or her soul has left the body on a *soul journey* into the spiritual realm.²⁵ Both the Siberian shaman and the Vodou practitioner experience a trance, but the cultural explanations of the two trances are entirely different.²⁶ Thus, in order to understand the role of ASCs in wonder-working within Acts, I must not only identify Acts’ narration of

1992), 3–4; cf. Jeffrey G. Snodgrass, “Imitation Is Far More Than the Sincerest of Flattery,” *Cultural Anthropology* 17 (2002), 32. Snodgrass notes that in Rajasthan, India, “mounting” is also a common metaphor for possession.

²³ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 17.

²⁴ Vincent Crapanzano, “Spirit Possession,” *ER* 14:12–13; cf. Wesley D. Smith, “So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece,” *TPAPA* 96 (1965), 413, 420, 425. Crapanzano warns that too narrow a definition of possession limits possession primarily to specifically Western conceptions of possession. For example, Smith limits possession strictly to a spirit’s invasion of a human, and this highly limited definition predetermines that Smith will not find possession within Greek culture prior to the emergence of the Christ-movement.

²⁵ Mircea Eliade, “Shamanism (An Overview),” *ER* 13:205–206; Richard Noll, “Mental Imagery Cultivation as a Cultural Phenomenon: The Role of Visions in Shamanism,” *Current Anthropology* 26 (1985), 447, 449; Michael Winkelman, “Altered States of Consciousness and Religious Behavior,” in *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 411–412; cf. Linda L. Giles, “Spirit Possession,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:228–229; Felicitas D. Goodman and Seth Josephson, “Demonic Possession and Exorcism,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:74–75; Michael Winkelman, “Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Shamans,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:61–70. Some disagreement exists as to whether “spirit-possession is a type or attribute of shamanism” (Giles, “Spirit Possession,” 1:228). Since possession involves a spirit or deity exerting some degree of direct control over the behavior of the human host (Goodman and Josephson, “Demonic Possession,” 1:75), I do not agree with Giles that soul absence or soul journey is a form of possession (Giles, “Spirit Possession,” 1:229). Soul absence or soul journey seem to qualify as possession only if the absent soul is replaced by another personality.

²⁶ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 10; Luc de Heusch, *Why Marry Her? Society and Symbolic Structures*, trans. Janet Lloyd, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 151–153.

ASCs, but I must also identify Greco-Roman cultural understandings of the narrated ASCs within Acts.

Altered States of Consciousness and Their Interpretations in Acts

Since I am treating Acts primarily as a narrative, rather than history, I must reinforce that the possible descriptions of ASCs in Acts are not actual ASCs but the narrative portrayal of ASCs, which in order to generate plausible dramatic illusion for the reader, must accord with typical Greco-Roman knowledge of such experiences. Therefore, I cannot say that Peter, for instance, has an ASC in Acts; however, I can say that a certain narrative event involving the character Peter resembles actual ASCs. Nevertheless, since Acts interacts with culturally-conditioned Greco-Roman knowledge of experiences that a modern observer would label as ASCs, I am able to utilize the social-scientific study of ASCs to understand better the narrated ASCs in Acts.

In ethnographic research, the presence of ASCs is identified through the manifestation of behaviors and culturally defined experiences resulting from the psychological alterations that typically occur during ASCs. Acts contains accounts of visions, revelatory dreams, and spirit possession, all of which anthropologists and psychologists typically associate with ASCs. Before I conclude my investigation of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and miracle-working in Acts, it is necessary to explain how each of these three forms of magico-religious experiences in Acts involves ASCs.

Visions in Acts as ASCs. The first vision that a character in Acts actually experiences is the theophanic signs of wind-like sound and fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4).²⁷ The next vision is

²⁷ It is unlikely that Acts 1:9–11 is presenting Jesus' ascension and the men in white at the end of the ascension as visions. Acts 12:6–10 clearly indicates that not all appearances of angels in Acts are to be considered visions. The indication that the angel in Acts 10:3 is part of a vision is anomalous in Acts. In light of both Acts 12:6–10 and the uniqueness of the notice that the angel in Acts 10:3 is part of a vision, most appearances of angels

Paul's vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–7), which is immediately followed by Ananias' vision (Acts 9:10–16). Ananias' vision refers to another of Paul's visions, in which Ananias restores Paul's sight (Acts 9:12). In Acts 10:1–6, Cornelius has a vision in which an angel instructs him to send for Peter. Subsequent to Cornelius' vision, Peter has a trance (ἔκστασις) in which he sees a sheet-like vessel containing animals and hears instructions to eat. Later, Acts 11:5 depicts Peter explicitly describing what he experiences in Acts 10:1–6 as a “vision” (ὄραμα).

The Greek word in Acts that modern English translations commonly render as *trance* is ἔκστασις.²⁸ The basic meaning of the word is *displacement* as reflected in the word's etymology (ἐκ [outside] + στάσις [standing]). In contexts involving revelatory visions, ἔκστασις typically seems to denote the ASC known as *trance*.²⁹ The three appearances of ἔκστασις in Acts all occur in the context of a divine revelation (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17); thus, *trance* is the best translation of ἔκστασις in Acts.

The first juxtaposition of visions, prophecy, and the Holy Spirit in Acts is Peter's quotation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) in Acts 2:17–21, which does not make direct reference to “trance” (ἔκστασις); however, it does foreshadow the prophecies, visions, and revelatory dreams that the Christ-followers will have in subsequent chapters of Acts.³⁰ Thus, the quote from Joel in Acts 2:17–21 intimately links the Holy Spirit with the Christ-followers' visionary and dream experiences, including Peter's rooftop vision (Acts 10:9–16) and Paul's temple vision (Acts 22:17–21), which Acts 11:5 and 22:17 respectively label as *trance* (ἔκστασις).

in Acts are not to be considered visions. In addition, Jesus' ascension is not visionary; instead, Acts presents it as an actual historical event.

²⁸ E.g., see Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17 in KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV; contra TEV.

²⁹ LSJ, s.v. “ἔκστασις;” Albrecht Oepke, “ἔκστασις, ἐξίστημι,” *TDNT* 2:449–458.

³⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 79; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:29–30; Witherington, *Acts*, 143.

In cultural anthropology, visions are a common feature of magico-religious ASCs.³¹

From a psychological perspective, Ludwig lists several “general characteristics of ASCs”:

- Alterations in thinking
- Disturbed sense of time
- Loss of control
- Change in emotional expression
- Body image change
- Perceptual distortions
- Change in meaning or significance
- Sense of the ineffable
- Feelings of rejuvenation
- Hypersuggestibility³²

Not every experience of an ASC will demonstrate all of these characteristics; however, three characteristics seem very applicable to visions in Acts: perceptual distortions, change in meaning or significance, and sense of the ineffable.

In regards to perceptual distortions, Ludwig explains, “Common to most ASCs is the presence of perceptual aberrations, including hallucinations, pseudohallucinations, increased visual imagery, subjectively felt hyperacuteness of perception, and illusions of every variety.”³³ Although an ancient Christ-following reader would not likely regard the Christ-followers’ visions as “distortions,” Ludwig’s explanation of “perceptual distortion” seems to be descriptive of the narrative representation of visions in Acts. For instance, during his rooftop vision in Joppa, Peter sees a sheet-like vessel carrying all “the quadrupeds and reptiles of the earth and the birds

³¹ E.g. Eva Jane Neumann Fridman, “Ways of Knowing and Healing: Shamanism in the Republics of Tuva and Buryatia in Post-Soviet Russia,” in *Divination and Healing: Potent Vision*, eds. Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 141–142; 151; Felicitas D. Goodman, *Ecstasy, Ritual and Alternate Reality: Religion in a Pluralistic World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 115; Goodman, *How about Demons*, 10; Goodman and Josephson, “Demonic Possession,” 1:76; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 33–34; Winkelman, “Cross-Cultural Perspectives,” 1:63–64; Michael Winkelman, “Divination,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, ed. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:80–81; Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek, introduction to *Divination and Healing: Potent Vision*, eds. Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 11–12.

³² Ludwig, “Altered States of Consciousness,” 13–17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 15.

of the sky” (Acts 10:10–12). This sheet-like vessel and its contents certainly defy and distort typical Greco-Roman expectations of what one sees in the sky.

Furthermore, Peter’s rooftop vision illustrates the characteristic of “change in meaning or significance,” which Ludwig ascribes to “the predilection of persons in these states [ASCs] to attach increased meaning or significance to their subjective experiences, ideas or perceptions.”³⁴ Peter immediately understands that the vision is about more than literal animals and birds, and he eventually comes to identify the entire vision as a symbolic message, in which “God showed me to call no human common or unclean” (Acts 10:10–16; 27). Lastly, the sense of the ineffable is readily apparent in that Acts portrays the Christ-followers’ visions as being sent from the Lord (e.g. Acts 2:17; 9:10–16; 10:3–6, 10–16).

Revelatory Dreams in Acts as ASCs. In Acts, revelatory dreams are closely related to visions, to the extent that revelatory dreams may be considered a type of visionary experience (cf. Acts 2:17; 16:9; 18:9). Anthropologist Roger Ivar Lohmann identifies five cultural “theories” by which people may understand dreams to be forms of magico-religious revelation:

- *Discernment theory* considers dreaming to be “a more powerful state of consciousness” that “enable[s] special discernment of manifest symbols or extrasensory perception.”
- *Message theory* regards dreams as communication to the dreamer from a person, including spirits, deities, and even the dreamer.
- *Generative theory* holds that dreams actually affect the future, rather than merely predict it.
- *Soul travel theory* understands dreams to be a soul journey, in which the soul or some other part of the dreamer travels outside the dreamer’s body.

³⁴ Ludwig, “Altered States of Consciousness,” 15.

- *Visitation theory* holds that in a dream a spirit, deity, or some other personal entity visits the dreamer.³⁵

Lohmann notes that these “theories” of dreaming are not mutually exclusive and that a particular culture may subscribe to more than one theory.³⁶

The only explicit reference to revelatory dreams in Acts occurs in Peter’s quotation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET). Two narrations of revelatory dreams likely occur in Acts 16:9 and 18:9, in which Paul has nocturnal visions (ὄραμα διὰ [τῆς] νυκτὸς; ἐν νυκτὶ δι’ ὄραματος).³⁷ In regards to Lohmann’s theories of dreaming, Paul’s dream of the Macedonian man is a *visitation* only if the phrase “a certain Macedonian man” (ἀνὴρ Μακεδῶν τις) refers to an actual unnamed character. If the Macedonian man is a hypothetical or purely symbolic figure, this dream is not a “visitation”; instead, it would be a message dream.³⁸ The dream in Acts 19:9, in which “the Lord” instructs Paul to fear not and to speak courageously in Corinth, is most certainly a message dream. Although it is possible to identify which cultural theories of dreaming apply to these two dreams, Acts 16:9–10 and 18:9–10 do not provide enough information to determine whether Paul’s two nocturnal visions occur in the hypnagogic, dreaming, or hypnopompic state.

³⁵ Roger Ivar Lohmann, “Dreams and Ethnography,” in *The New Science of Dreaming*, eds. Deirdre Barrett and Patrick McNamara, Praeger Perspectives (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 3:41–43, 58–60; see also Kelly Bulkeley, “Sacred Sleep: Scientific Contributions to the Study of Religiously Significant Dreaming,” in *The New Science of Dreaming*, eds. Deirdre Barrett and Patrick McNamara, Praeger Perspectives (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 3:71–91; Ludwig, “Altered States of Consciousness,” 11; Marsh, “Framework for States of Consciousness,” 141–143. Lohmann provides an additional theory of dreaming, *nonsense theory*, which considers dreams to be “imagined nonsense” (“Dreams and Ethnography,” 3:41–42).

³⁶ Lohmann, “Dreams and Ethnography,” 3:43.

³⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:771, 869; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 127; Janet Meyer Everts, “Dreams in the NT and Greco-Roman Literature,” *ABD* 2:231; John S. Hanson, “Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 1422; Pervo, *Acts*, 391–392; Witherington, *Acts*, 479.

³⁸ Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 1992), 286; Witherington, *Acts*, 479–480.

Spirit Possession in Acts as ASCs. Spirit possession is a cultural phenomenon that anthropologists ubiquitously associate with ASCs.³⁹ Possession by an evil or unclean spirit is the most easily recognizable type of possession in Acts (Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12, 13–16). Of Acts' four references to possession by an unclean or evil spirit, three occur within the context of a μαγεία-miracle conflict episode (8:7; 19:12; 19:13–16). Eric Sorensen claims that two possible examples of *divine possession*, which is possession by a deity, also occur in Acts.⁴⁰ First, in Acts 16:16–18, a clairvoyant female slave has a Pythian spirit (πνεῦμα πύθωνα). Pythian spirits derive from the foundational legend of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, where Apollo killed the Python and subsequently gave oracles to a prophetess, known as the *Pythia*.⁴¹ Since the narrative of Acts 16:16–18 presents the slave as having a Pythian spirit, it is possible for the reader to regard the slave as experiencing divine possession. In ch. 8, I will discuss further the possibility of divine possession in Acts 16:16–18. Sorensen, however, is reluctant to accept the Pythian spirit in Acts 16:16–20 as a manifestation of Apollo, and he favors the traditional interpretation of πνεῦμα πύθωνα as a generic reference to any divinatory spirit.⁴²

Nevertheless, Sorensen claims that the most common example of divine possession in Acts is the Holy Spirit's possession of Christ-followers.⁴³ The most significant evidence in Acts

³⁹ E.g. Erika Bourguignon, "A Framework for the Comparative Study of Altered States of Consciousness," in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 12–15; Bourguignon, *Possession*, 10; Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 7–8; Giles, "Spirit Possession," 1:228–229; Goodman and Josephson, "Demonic Possession," 1:75; Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 25; Winkelmann, "ASCs and Behavior," 410–415.

⁴⁰ Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 157 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 144–145.

⁴¹ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 200–203; LSJ, s.v. "Πυθία" and "Πύθων; Robert F. O'Toole, "Slave Girl at Philippi," *ABD* 6:58.

⁴² Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 150.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; see also Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 28–31; Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Socio-Stylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 129–131; John J. Pilch, "Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 198; cf. Bourguignon, *Possession*, 4, 55–58; R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 94; M. J.

for possession by the Holy Spirit is the many references to Christ-followers being “filled with” or “full of” the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴ For example, Acts 2:4 reads, “All were filled with the Holy Spirit (ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου) and began to speak in other tongues just as the Spirit gave to them to speak boldly.” The phrase πνεύματος ἁγίου, which is a genitive of content, indicates that the Holy Spirit is the substance filling the Christ-followers,⁴⁵ therefore, Acts 2:4 involves an alien personality, namely the Holy Spirit, entering humans. Additionally, the immediate result of the Christ-followers being filled with the Holy Spirit is a dramatic change in their behavior, namely participation in *xenoglossia*. Thus, being filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4 involves not only the central characteristic of possession, specifically an alien spirit’s control of a human, but also Acts 2:4 also involves an alien spirit entering the bodies of the humans whom the spirit controls.

Other less explicit references in Acts to possible narrations of possession by the Holy Spirit include the following:

- The Holy Spirit comes upon someone (Acts 1:8; 19:6)
- The Holy Spirit falls upon someone (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15)
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:16)
- Pouring out of God’s Spirit upon someone (Acts 2:17)
- Pouring out of the gift of the Holy Spirit upon someone (Acts 10:45)⁴⁶

Field, “Spirit Possession in Ghana,” in *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, eds. John Beattie and John Middleton (New York: Africana Publishing, 1969), 9–10; Jeannette H. Henney, “The Shakers of St. Vincent: A Stable Religion,” in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 233–240.

⁴⁴ Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 146–147; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 7:5, 54; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 51.

⁴⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 98; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 94.

⁴⁶ For interpreting “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) as including an appositional genitive (the Holy Spirit as a gift) rather than a subjective genitive (the gift given by the Holy Spirit), see R. L. Roberts, Jr., “‘The Gift of the Holy Spirit’—Acts 2:38,” *ResQ* 4 (1960), 234–238.

- Anointing with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38)
- Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2)
- Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 11:17)
- The Holy Spirit speaks to someone (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11)
- The Spirit of the Lord snatches away someone (Acts 8:39)
- Speaking through the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:28; 21:4)
- Being sent by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4)
- Someone being given the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18; 15:8)
- Travel in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:21; 20:22)

Aside from the verses that speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit, these other possible references to possession by the Holy Spirit do not refer explicitly to the Holy Spirit being *inside* the Christ-follower(s), but only to some sort of relationship with the Holy Spirit or influence by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, as I already noted, indigenous language used to describe spirit possession does not always speak explicitly of the indwelling of the possessing spirit; instead, the primary aspect of possession is controlling influence from an alien personality. In light of the likelihood that Sorensen is correct in claiming that the relationship between the Christ-followers and the Holy Spirit qualifies as a form of spirit possession, a fuller discussion of the anthropological study of spirit possession is necessary.

⁴⁷ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 191. Aune suggests, “The Spirit can be referred to as speaking even when an unmentioned prophet was doubtless the revelatory medium (Acts 15:28; 20:23).” If Aune is right, much of the direct communication from the Holy Spirit to Christ-followers actually occurs through a human intermediary.

Cultural Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession

Anthropologist Erika Bourguignon, upon whose work Sorensen draws, explains that “‘possession’ is an idea, a concept, a belief, which serves to interpret behavior.”⁴⁸ Bourguignon states, “The anthropologist . . . can speak of ‘possession’ only when he [or she] finds such a belief among the people he [or she] is studying. On the other hand, he [or she] is also interested in their behavior and will want to know what types of behaviors are interpreted as possession by the particular group.”⁴⁹ Certain ASCs, particularly trance states, are behaviors that people often interpret as possession. Bourguignon also claims that people may use possession to explain behaviors that the society finds abnormal or relatively unexplainable. For example, she explains, “The Jews of the time of Jesus attributed two classes of behavior to possession by ‘unclean spirits.’ On the one hand, there were madmen; they were characterized by the states in which spirits spoke out of people—spirits who answered questions and revealed their names, and left when ordered to do so by Jesus. On the other hand, there were spirits that did not speak.”⁵⁰ She explains that possession by an evil spirit that can speak involves an explanation of a “psychological alteration.” Alternatively, possession by evil spirits that do not speak and only manifest their presence in physical limitations involves an explanation of a “physical alteration.” Thus, the same society may use the idea of spirit possession to explain two different types of behavior. Bourguignon applies the label *possession trance* to behavior that involves psychological alterations explained as “possession.” All other behaviors described as possession

⁴⁸ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 7; see also Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 147–148, n. 7.

⁴⁹ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; see also Goodman, *Ecstasy, Ritual and Reality*, 113, 164–165; see also Bourguignon, *Possession*, 6; Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 37, 39–40. Goodman notes that both magico-religious possession trance and possession beliefs as explanations for illness occur in most agrarian societies, such as Greco-Roman society. In addition, Goodman claims that trances within magico-religious cults in urban contexts tend to be primarily possession trances, and this insight is important to my study since many of the instances of spirit possession in Acts occur within Greco-Roman cities, such as Philippi (Acts 16:16–20).

are examples of *non-trance possession*.⁵¹ While possession trance is episodic and occurs primarily in ritual contexts, non-trance possession is typically a continuous state.⁵² Bourguignon adds that non-trance behaviors and conditions that people often consider to be possession are social deviance, physical illness, and physical disabilities.⁵³ Thus, to a large extent, the identification of non-trance possession functions as a form of social labeling, particularly deviance labeling.

Bourguignon's insistence on characterizing spirit possession as a belief or concept determines the way she defines spirit possession: "We shall say that a belief in *possession* exists, when the people in question hold that a given person is changed in some way through the presence in or on him of a spirit entity or power, other than his own personality, soul, self, or the like."⁵⁴ Consequently, Bourguignon's definition of spirit possession differs radically from those that treat spirit possession as only an ASC, such as Crapanzano's definition in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*: "Spirit possession may be broadly defined as any altered or unusual state of consciousness and allied behavior that is indigenously understood in terms of the influence of an alien spirit, demon, or deity."⁵⁵ By concentrating only on possession trance, Crapanzano has limited spirit possession to ASCs involving mental dissociation, or the displacement of a human's personality. Dissociation within spirit possession involves the replacement of the

⁵¹ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 7–8; see also Bourguignon, "Framework for Comparative Study," 12–17; Erika Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession Belief and Social Structure," in *The Realm of the Extra-Human: Ideas and Actions*, ed. Aghananda Bharati, World Anthropology (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 19; Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 25.

⁵² Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession and Social Structure," 20. Although I disagree with Bourguignon's claim that possession trance "occurs on ritual occasions only," I agree with her general understandings of non-trance possession as an on-going condition and possession trance as episodic. Evidence exists for spontaneous possession among experienced spirit mediums outside ritual contexts (e.g., see Esther Pressel, "Umbanda in São Paulo: Religious Innovation in a Developing Society," in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon [Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973], 299–300).

⁵³ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 8–9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7–8 (italics in the original).

⁵⁵ Crapanzano, "Spirit Possession," 14:12; see also Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 7.

human host's personality with the possessing spirit's personality.⁵⁶ Such dissociation, according to Bourguignon, happens only in possession trance.⁵⁷

Furthermore, dissociation in possession trances may occur in differing degrees from one trance experience to another.⁵⁸ In a study of spirit possession in Rajasthan, India, anthropologist Jeffrey G. Snodgrass illustrates how the behavior of the possessed human is learned, mimetic behavior. Furthermore, Snodgrass demonstrates how dissociation during different possession trances can vary in degrees of intensity ranging from minor changes in behavior to a complete exchange of the host's normal personality for the possessing spirit's personality.⁵⁹

Bourguignon admits that she employs the word *trance* rather loosely in comparison to the well-defined concept of *trance* used by psychologists and psychiatrists studying ASCs. Thus, she states, "In psychological and psychiatric terms, what we are calling *possession trance* includes a variety of different phenomena. However, they all share alteration of consciousness, of sensory modalities, and the like."⁶⁰ In other words, Bourguignon's concept of possession trance includes several types of ASCs, including trance states proper.⁶¹

Bourguignon also demonstrates her awareness that particular societies and groups interpret some instances of possession as harmful (such as possession by an evil spirit) and other

⁵⁶ Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 8.

⁵⁷ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 7–8, 10; Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession and Social Structure," 23–24; see also Emma Cohen and Justin L. Barrett, "Conceptualizing Spirit Possession: Ethnographic and Experimental Evidence," *Ethos* 36 (2008), 246–247.

⁵⁸ John Beattie, "Spirit Mediumship as Theatre," *RAIN*, June 1977, 2; Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 8–9; Giles, "Spirit Possession," 1:228; Daniel Halperin, "Memory and 'Consciousness' in an Evolving Brazilian Possession Religion," in *Anthropology of Consciousness* 6 (1995), 1–17; contra Cohen and Barrett, "Conceptualizing Possession," 246–247.

⁵⁹ Snodgrass, "Imitation More Than Flattery," 32–52; see also, Halperin, "Memory and Consciousness," 1–17; Pressel, "Umbanda in São Paulo," 309–310; J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Spirit-Possession and the Gerasene Demoniac," *Man*, n.s., 14 (1979), 287–288. Snodgrass categorizes three examples of possession according to the degree of mimesis: (1) possession that results in the possessing spirit only speaking through the possessed person, (2) possession in which the possessed person speaks and performs certain stylized behaviors as the possessing spirit, and (3) possession in which the spirit displaces completely the possessed person's identity ("Imitation More Than Flattery," 32–49).

⁶⁰ Bourguignon, *Possession*, 8; see also Bourguignon, "Framework for Comparative Study," 13.

⁶¹ See also Crapanzano, "Spirit Possession," 14:13; Goodman, *Ecstasy, Ritual and Reality*, 35–36.

instances as beneficial (such as divine possession).⁶² Anthropologist Ioan M. Lewis, however, clearly differentiates between possession by relatively harmful spirits and possession by relatively benevolent spirits. *Negative possession*, which is alternatively labeled *uncontrolled possession*, is typically undesirable and uncontrollable from the perspective of the possessed and those around him or her. Conversely, *positive possession*, or *controlled possession*, is desired and controllable.⁶³ Thus, divine possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts would qualify as positive possession.⁶⁴

Lewis further explains that the cultural responses to negative possession and positive possession are typically very different. The typical response to negative possession is exorcism, which is the ritual removal of the possessing spirit. Conversely, the typical response to positive possession is adoricism, which is primarily the cultivation of a stable relationship between the host and the possessing spirit. In instances of positive possession trance, adoricism is a means of controlling and regulating ASCs experienced by the human host.⁶⁵

Lewis' analysis of magico-religious possession is primarily a functional approach. In addition to drawing a distinction between exorcism and adoricism, Lewis makes a distinction between *central* and *peripheral* possession cults: "The differentiation (which is relative) between 'central' and 'peripheral' cults does not rest on their therapeutic (or medical) scope, but on whether they are inspired by spirits which directly uphold public morality (central) or those 'peripheral' agencies that threaten public order."⁶⁶ Although Lewis' use of a culture's dominant moral order as a moral standard demonstrates his functionalist perspective, he further explains

⁶² Bourguignon, *Possession*, 50–59.

⁶³ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 49; see also Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession and Social Structure," 21. Although Lewis prefers the terms *uncontrolled possession* and *controlled possession*, these terms are primarily descriptive of possession trance. The alternative terms—*negative possession* and *positive possession*—are easily applicable to both possession trance and non-trance possession because they describe the possession beliefs.

⁶⁴ Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 146–147.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, xv–xviii; see also, de Heusch, *Why Marry Her*, 156.

⁶⁶ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, xiii–xiv.

that his characterization of possessing spirits is quite subjective because in cases of positive, peripheral possession, the human hosts may consider the possessing spirits to be protectors and promoters of true morality.⁶⁷ Thus, Lewis admits that the characterization of possession cults as *central* or *peripheral* is also “relative and ambiguous.”⁶⁸

Lewis explains that peripheral possession cults often involve the possession of marginalized and disenfranchised members of a society, particularly women in traditional societies. Possession by the spirit, who often is typically male and has greater social power than the host has, functions as a means of protest against social inequity. Through possession, the marginalized host gains a social voice for addressing perceived wrongs inflicted by those with more social power.⁶⁹ In a possession trance, the human host’s body comes under the control of the possessing spirit, and indigenous observers will attribute anything that the human host says or does to the agency of the possessing spirit. Therefore, during a possession trance, it is the spirit who speaks and acts, and it is the spirit, not the host, that is responsible for the host’s actions.⁷⁰ Thus, the host is temporarily ascribed a new social identity and new social status through which he or she expresses discontent over perceived inequities.⁷¹ Nevertheless, society often takes steps either to eradicate or to limit peripheral possession.⁷² Exorcism is a common

⁶⁷ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 114–115.

⁶⁸ Ioan Lewis, “Spirit Possession and Biological Reductionism: A Rejoinder to Kehoe and Giletti,” *American Anthropologist* 85 (1983), 413.

⁶⁹ Field, “Spirit Possession in Ghana,” 12.

⁷⁰ Cohen and Barrett, “Conceptualizing Possession,” 247; Lenora Greenbaum, “Possession Trance in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Descriptive Analysis of Fourteen Societies,” in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 59; cf. Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 11–14; Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 9–10. Crapanzano and Keller point out that although most modern Westerners may not regard a possessing spirit as an ontological reality, they must take seriously indigenous persons’ treatments of possessing spirits as real personal agents, in addition to any analysis that treats possessing spirits as only symbolic reality.

⁷¹ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 26–27, 94; see also Janice Boddy, “Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), 415–422; Giles, “Spirit Possession,” 1:233; cf. Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *JRS* 61 (1971), 88.

⁷² Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 105.

means of eradicating peripheral possession by effectively silencing the protest. Even adoricism, which aims at appeasing a possessing spirit, can effectively limit the extent of social protest.⁷³

The irony of peripheral possession is that in order for a marginalized person to gain a greater social voice, the human host must take on the persona of someone else, who often represents the dominant social order. Such mimesis ironically reinforces the very social hierarchy that gives rise to the inequities under protest. For example, anthropologist Isabelle Nabokov warns that spirit possession among women can often function dually as resistance to and reinforcement of social hierarchies.⁷⁴ Nabokov explains in her study of *pey* possession among Indian Tamil women that negative spirit possession and exorcism serve as a single mechanism for providing not only a way for a disaffected wife to express her disappointment but also a means to return her to her culturally sanctioned role in patriarchal society.⁷⁵ Snodgrass also provides a brief study of a tribal woman in India who is a spirit medium. Although this medium is an influential voice in the local community, she must assume the identity of a male, Muslim saint to be so, thereby reinforcing the subordination of women and the low-status of tribal people in India.⁷⁶

Anthropologist Peter J. Wilson, however, argues that spirit possession is more than a means of protesting unfair treatment among women and marginalized men; instead, Wilson concludes his article “Status Ambiguity and Spirit Possession” with the following insights:

To posit that spirit possession is a means to status or identity definition, and arises in contexts where individual status is jeopardised or rendered ambiguous, provides us with a means of sociological conceptualisation better suited to elucidating behaviour than the vague general notions of ‘deprivation’ and ‘social peripherality.’ No matter what the society or what the social conditions, ambiguity of status is always a possibility and often an actuality, and is

⁷³ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, xvii.

⁷⁴ Isabelle Nabokov, “Expel the Lover, Recover the Wife: Symbolic Analysis of a South Indian Exorcism,” *JRAI*, n.s., 3 (1997), 297–299; see also Boddy, “Spirit Possession Revisited,” 421–422; Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 78.

⁷⁵ Nabokov, “Expel the Lover,” 311–312.

⁷⁶ Snodgrass, “Imitation More Than Flattery,” 43.

entirely relative depending on the life positions and personalities of individuals; while the manifestations of such ambiguity, or tension resulting therefrom, can be seen to be expressed within the terms of the culture. That this tension is so often expressed through illness leading to spirit possession, a form of *rite de passage*, seems to confirm its association with identity.⁷⁷

Wilson effectively incorporates Lewis' understanding of possession as protest into the related, but larger, processes of acquiring, developing, and negotiating *social status* and *social identity*.⁷⁸

Possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts

In order to discuss the possible narration of spirit possession in Acts, I must first identify the existence of possession beliefs in the writer Luke's socio-cultural context. Significant disagreement exists, however, whether possession beliefs existed in Greco-Roman culture. Indicative of the two opposing positions on the possible existence of possession beliefs in Greco-Roman culture are Wesley D. Smith's "So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece" and L. Maurizio's "Anthropology and Spirit Possession."⁷⁹ Smith argues that neither negative nor positive possession existed in Greek culture prior to Judean and Christ-follower influence on Greco-Roman culture particularly in the first-century forward.⁸⁰ Although Maurizio does not deal with negative possession, she utilizes anthropological theory on possession, particularly Crapanzano's and Lewis' theories, in order to analyze a possible instance of institutionalized positive possession in ancient Greece. Maurizio ultimately argues that the Delphic Pythia was a mediumistic diviner, who was possessed by Apollo.⁸¹ Using Lewis' analysis of possession,

⁷⁷ Peter J. Wilson, "Status Ambiguity and Spirit Possession," *Man*, n.s., 2 (1967), 376–377. For more on illness as the initial manifestation of spirit possession, see Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, xiv, xvii. 25–26, 60, 83–84, 112.

⁷⁸ See also Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited," 415–427; Crapanzano, introduction to *Case Studies*, 19–20.

⁷⁹ Cf. L. Maurizio "Anthropology and Spirit Possession: A Reconsideration of the Pythia's Role at Delphi," *JHS* 115 (1995), 69–86; Smith, "So-Called Possession," 403–426.

⁸⁰ Smith, "So-Called Possession," 405–425.

⁸¹ Maurizio, "Anthropology and Possession," 69–86; contra Frederick E. Brenk, "The Exorcism at Philippi in Acts 16.11–40: Divine Possession or Diabolic Inspiration?" *FN* 13 (2000), 12–13. Brenk argues that Lamprias in Plutarch's *Obsolescence of Oracles* employs the term πνεῦμα to refer to a "vapor," not an intermediary being that inspires the Pythia (435F–438E).

Maurizio claims that possession provided the Pythia a powerful social voice and a significant social identity that she would not have had otherwise.⁸² Although Maurizio admits that her identification of the Pythia as a possessed medium “might be said to be purely speculative as are all others,”⁸³ her argument seems strong enough to cast serious doubt on Smith’s claim that possession did not exist in Hellenistic culture and society prior to Judean and Christ-follower influence on Greco-Roman culture and society.

Even if one were to accept Smith’s argument, it is not very relevant to determining whether possession beliefs were part of the writer Luke’s cultural context because Acts is a Christ-follower document that is substantially influenced by Judean culture, particularly Judean religion. Nevertheless, possession seems to be a component of the writer Luke’s cultural context not only through Judean influence on the Christ-movement but also quite possibly because positive possession was a component of Hellenistic culture. Since possession beliefs are a part of the writer Luke’s socio-cultural context, it is permissible to seek and analyze the presence and influence of possession beliefs in Acts.

Anthropologist Linda L. Giles claims that both negative and positive possession occurs in the NT.⁸⁴ Of course, possession by evil or unclean spirits in the NT easily qualifies as negative possession. More importantly, Giles indicates that possession by the Holy Spirit in the NT is a form of positive possession. Her primary evidence for the presence of possession by the Holy Spirit in the NT is the connection between the Holy Spirit and *glossolalia* (a behavior associated with states of rapture and trance states).⁸⁵ Thus, she takes early Christ-follower *glossolalia* as a manifestation of positive possession trances among early Christ-followers. In addition, the close

⁸² Maurizio, “Anthropology and Possession,” 79–86.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁴ Giles, “Spirit Possession,” 1:232.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; see also Bourguignon, *Possession*, 12–13; Davies, *Jesus the Healer*, 33–34; Goodman, *How about Demons*, 8; Sorenson, *Possession and Exorcism*, 146–147.

relationship in Acts among the Holy Spirit, visions, and trances strongly suggests that Acts portrays the magico-religious ASCs of the Christ-following characters in Acts as the result of the Holy Spirit's presence. However, it is not safe to assume that all narrated ASCs in Acts are narrations of possession trances, even if a particular ASC is caused by God or the Holy Spirit. For example Peter's rooftop vision in Joppa (Acts 10:10–15) does not involve the Holy Spirit controlling Peter's behavior; thus, the vision is not likely part of a possession trance, although the Holy Spirit induces the vision. However, the vision may yet be a result of non-trance possession.

A more significant indicator of the existence of possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts is the behavioral results of the Holy Spirit's presence among Christ-followers. Acts most frequently describes the presence of the Holy Spirit among the Christ-followers as the Holy Spirit *coming upon* Christ-followers (Acts 1:8; 19:6), *falling upon* them (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15), and *filling* them (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 51). These three expressions typically introduce and explain changes of behavior among Christ-followers. For instance, in Acts 7:55–56, Stephen's ability to see Jesus standing at God's right in the sky appears to be a result of the Holy Spirit having filled him. In Acts 10:44, the falling of the Holy Spirit upon those gathered in Cornelius' house results in *glossolalia*. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon some new Ephesian Christ-followers in Acts 19:6 results in them participating in *glossolalia* and prophetic speech. Thus, the presence of the Holy Spirit upon or in a Christ-follower accounts for the Christ-follower's ability to participate in extraordinary activities, such as seeing visions, *glossolalia*, and prophetic speech. Acts' narration of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ-followers certainly fits Bourguignon's understanding of spirit possession because it provides explanations for dramatic changes in the Christ-followers' behavior. Thus, I conclude that the

way Acts describes the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ-followers resembles actual spirit possession phenomena, particularly positive possession, enough to qualify the relationship as spirit possession.

Furthermore, some of the instances of divine possession in Acts appear to be narrations of possession trances for two reasons. First, many of the Christ-followers' experiences of the Holy Spirit involve ASCs, and possession trance by definition involves ASCs. For instance, when Paul lays his hands upon some Ephesians in Acts 19:2–6, they prophesy and participate in *glossolalia*, and Paul takes the prophecy and *glossolalia* as signs of the Holy Spirit's presence. Second, Christ-followers in some instances prophesy by means of the Holy Spirit in a way that suggests the prophets function as oracular mediums for the Holy Spirit. For example, Acts 13:2 likely represents a narration of the Holy Spirit's possession of Christ-following prophets: "While [the Antiochene prophets] were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set aside now for me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have summoned them.'" The direct quotation of the Holy Spirit's instructions in Acts 13:2 suggests that the Holy Spirit takes over the prophets' vocal faculties in order to speak directly to the Antiochene church. Therefore, the prophets appear to have assumed the Holy Spirit's identity, thereby allowing the reader to understand the prophets' experience as mental dissociation, a sure sign of possession trance.⁸⁶

The presence of possession trances in some episodes in Acts does not indicate that all instances of possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts are narrations of possession trance. Some, if not most, references to possession by the Holy Spirit involve non-trance possession. For example, when Peter addresses the Judean leaders in Acts 4:8–12, he shows no signs of dissociation or mimetic assumption of an alternate personality; thus, the indication in Acts 4:8

⁸⁶ Cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 191; M. Eugene Boring, "Prophecy (Early Christian), *ABD* 5:496; Christopher Forbes, "Early Christian Inspired Speech and Hellenistic Popular Religion," *NovT* 28 (1986), 258–260.

that Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit is a means of explaining the confidence and rhetorical skill (παρρησία) of Peter, whom the Judean leaders in Acts 4:13 consider illiterate (ἀγράμματος) and uneducated (ἰδιώτης).

Therefore, possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts involves not only a relatively *permanent state of non-trance possession* but also *episodic possession trances*.⁸⁷ The typical explanation for this combination of continuous possession and episodic possession trances is that while Christ-following characters are in a continual state of possession by the Holy Spirit, God on specific occasions will provide a “special endowment” of the Holy Spirit that results in trance behavior.⁸⁸ Thus, a Christ-follower’s initial experience of possession trance by the Holy Spirit— such as on Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13), on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3–7), and at Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:44–45)—appears to inaugurate a person’s permanent condition of non-trance possession, which subsequent episodes of possession trance may supplement.⁸⁹

Finally, the previous example of Christ-following prophets in Acts 13:2 shows that Acts typically presents the Holy Spirit as the primary agent for any actions performed by those possessed by the Holy Spirit. The Christ-following prophet can either be an intermediate agent who is only partially responsible for his or her behavior or an instrument controlled by the Holy Spirit, who is solely responsible for the actions of the prophet’s body.⁹⁰ A case of intermediate agency may exist in Acts 21:11, which attributes a prophetic oracle to both Agabus and the Holy

⁸⁷ Cf. Bourguignon, “Spirit Possession and Social Structure,” 20.

⁸⁸ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:226; see also Bock, *Acts*, 210; Haenchen, *Acts*, 216.

⁸⁹ Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 67–70, 72.

⁹⁰ Aune, *Prophecy*, 191, 333–334; Mary E. Mills, *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition*, JSNTSup 41 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 116, 120; cf. Boring, “Prophecy (Early Christian), 5:496; Forbes, “Early Christian Speech,” 258–260; Keller, *Hammer and Flute*, 9–10. In regards to agency in possession phenomena, Keller draws special attention to *instrumental agency*, in which the possessing spirit employs the human host’s body as a pliable tool. In instrumental agency, the human host is not an agent at all; thus, he or she is not responsible in any way for his or her actions. Instead, the possessing spirit is the sole agent and bears sole responsibility for whatever the human host’s body does while the spirit possesses it. Therefore, Keller speaks of “possessed bodies,” rather than “possessed persons.”

Spirit. An example of instrumental agency is the prophecy in Acts 13:2, in which the Holy Spirit is credited with the direct speech that comes from the prophets' mouths.

The Pentecost Episode (Acts 2:14–40)

In light of the above discussion of the presence of possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts, the Pentecost episode appears to be the first narration of possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts.⁹¹ The results of the divine possession are immediate: the disciples bear witness to the “great things of God” by means of xenoglossic speech (Acts 2:11).⁹²

The Holy Spirit's possession of the Christ-followers at Pentecost is explained to the crowd of onlookers by one of the possessed, namely Peter. Although the ultimate goal of Peter's Pentecost speech is the crowd's repentance leading to the restoration of the covenant people of God, the speech begins with an apologetic explanation of the strange behavior exhibited by the divinely possessed Christ-followers. Accusations that the Christ-followers' *xenoglossia* is the result of them being inebriated (Acts 2:13) prompts Peter to explain that the Christ-followers' behavior is not drunkenness but the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:14–16).

Peter explains that the Pentecost event, particularly the xenoglossic preaching, is the initial fulfillment of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET).⁹³ This quotation from Joel divides easily into three parts (Acts 2:17–18, 19–20, 21). The first section, *Acts 2:17–18*, resumes the metaphorical baptismal language, which Acts 1:5 first introduces when Jesus metaphorically describes the coming of the Holy Spirit as baptism: “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized in (ἐν)

⁹¹ Davies, *Jesus the Healer*, 171.

⁹² Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 49–50; Bourguignon, *Possession*, 55; Goodman, *How about Demons*, 53.

⁹³ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:135; Haenchen, *Acts*, 178.

the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁴ The pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the quotation of Joel 3:1 (2:28 ET) in Acts 2:17 extends the metaphorical representation of the Holy Spirit as liquid that flows over the Christ-followers.⁹⁵ Joel’s prophecy becomes eschatological with the replacement of μετὰ ταῦτα (after these things) in Joel 3:1 LXX with ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις (in the last days) in Acts 2:17. The Holy Spirit will be poured upon all kinds of people—regardless of social status, age, or gender—who will participate in prophetic activities.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Acts 2:18 limits the identity of the recipients of the Holy Spirit by changing “upon the male slaves and the female slaves” (ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ τὰς δούλας) in Joel 3:2 (2:29 ET) to “upon *my* male slaves and *my* female slaves” (ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ τὰς δούλας μου); thus, the recipients of the Holy Spirit are God’s servants, who in this context are the Christ-followers.⁹⁷

Peter’s explanation of the Pentecost event creates a new identity for the Christ-followers. First, of all they will engage in prophetic activities, and as prophetic characters, the Christ-followers will speak on behalf of God. Thus, according to Lewis’ and Wilson’s analyses of spirit

⁹⁴ Considering that the instrument of baptism is typically water, the translation of ἐν as either “in” or “with” is not critical because in actual baptism one is simultaneously baptized “in” and “with” water; thus, by metaphorical extension, the disciples could metaphorically be baptized simultaneously “in” and “with” the Holy Spirit (Barrett, *Acts*, 1:74).

⁹⁵ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:136–137; Johannes Behm, “ἐκχέω, ἐκχύν(ν)ω,” *TDNT* 2:467; LSJ, s.v. “ἐκχέω”; cf. Gert J. Steyn, “ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος... (Ac 2:17, 18): What Is Being Poured Out?” *Neot* 33 (1999), 365–371. Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in the LXX and in Acts 2:17–18 contains two instances of the phrase ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου. Steyn lists three options for understanding the function of the preposition ἀπό in this phrase: (1) ἀπό translates the Hebrew accusative particle so that τοῦ πνεύματος is the simple direct object of ἐκχεῶ (“I will pour out my spirit”), (2) ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου is a partitive genitive so that only a portion of the Holy Spirit is poured out (“I will pour out some of my spirit,” “I will pour out of my spirit”), and (3) ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου is either a genitive of separation or a genitive of source indicating that God will pour out some unnamed direct object from the Holy Spirit (“I will pour out from my spirit”). Steyn chooses the third option and identifies δύναμις as the implied direct object of ἐκχεῶ; however, this third option is unacceptable because Acts 1:8 indicates the Christ-followers will receive *both* the Holy Spirit and δύναμις. I prefer the second option, which appears in most commentaries (e.g., Barrett, *Acts*, 1:136–137; Bock, *Acts*, 115; Haenchen, *Acts*, 179). Nevertheless, I have chosen to follow most English translations of Acts 2:17–18 and render the phrase “I will pour out my spirit” (e.g., NIV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV) because of the awkwardness of translations such as “I will pour out of my spirit” (KJV; NASB).

⁹⁶ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:136; Bock, *Acts*, 113.

⁹⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, 179; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 218–219, republished with English translations of Hebrew and Greek text as *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSUP 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 182–183; Pervo, *Acts*, 79; Johnson, *Acts*, 49.

possession, Peter claims that the Christ-followers have gained a powerful social voice, since their prophetic speech and actions communicate nothing less than messages from God. Although the Christ-followers do not possess any official religio-political authority in Jerusalem, Acts portrays the Christ-followers as prophetic witnesses possessed by the Holy Spirit in order to ascribe to them the authority to call the Judean people to repentance and salvation in Jesus' name (e.g. Acts 2:38–39). In regards to social identity and status, possession by the Holy Spirit is significant on several levels. This earliest group of Christ-followers that gathered on Pentecost consisted primarily of Jesus' Galilean disciples, who included not only the Twelve but also other male and female disciples (Acts 1:14). Thus, even the more marginalized members of the Jerusalemite church, particularly slaves and women, acquire the same basic social identity within the Christ-movement through the possession of the Spirit as do the rest of the Christ-followers.

If the Twelve in Luke's Gospel are any indication of the general makeup of the group, Acts presents the pre-Pentecost Christ-followers being primarily of non-elite, peasant status.⁹⁸ The Gospel of Luke provides very little by which to identify the social status of those who followed Jesus before his Ascension. The Christ-following characters prior to Jesus' ascension include, but were not limited to, the eleven remaining members of the original Twelve (Acts 1:13), certain women (Acts 1:14), Jesus' family (Acts 1:14), Matthias (Acts 1:23), and Joseph Barsabbas (Acts 1:23). Luke 5:1–11 tells that three members of the Twelve are fishers: Peter, James of Zebedee, and John of Zebedee. In addition, an ancient reader is likely to assume that Peter's brother Andrew is also likely a fisher (Luke 6:14). Only if someone assumes that Matthew is the same character as Levi the tax collector (a reading that has no support in Luke's Gospel or Acts) is Matthew's occupation known. Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:3) is quite

⁹⁸ Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 199–201.

possibly some sort of political revolutionary;⁹⁹ however, the extent of his revolutionary activity is unknown. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the Gospel of Luke is presenting him as a militant revolutionary or merely an outspoken person. Since I am engaging in a narrative reading of Acts, using the identification of Jesus' father as an artisan (τέκτων) in Mark 6:3 in order to identify the occupation of Jesus or his brothers in the Gospel of Luke and Acts is not appropriate. Thus, of all the Christ-followers prior to Jesus' ascension, the Gospel of Luke only provides the occupations of four members of the Twelve, namely the fishers Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Furthermore, the omission of Jesus' father being a τέκτων in Luke's Gospel may be an intentional move to conceal the historical Jesus' status as a lower class person. Such a lower class status for Jesus may have not accorded well with later portrayals of his brother as a competent rhetor (Acts 15:13–21). Finally, Luke 5:27–28 indicates that a tax collector named Levi is among Jesus' followers. Therefore, the Gospel of Luke only specifies two occupations among the Christ-followers prior to Jesus' ascension: fishers and a tax collector.

In order to understand better the social status of these Christ-following fishers and tax collector, I will employ sociologist Gerhard E. Lenski's model of advanced agrarian societies and Steven J. Friesen's "poverty scale" for Greco-Roman society. Within Lenski's model of agrarian social stratification, agrarian society divides into eight "classes" (see Figure 5.1).¹⁰⁰ At the top of agrarian society is the governing class, which typically composes no more than 2 percent of the entire population.¹⁰¹ Below the governing class, the *retainer class* is comprised of people whose primary function is to support the governing class through the performance of a

⁹⁹ Warren Heard, "Zealot," in *NIDB* 5:958–961; David Rhoads, "Zealots," in *ABD* 6:1043–1054.

¹⁰⁰ Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, McGraw-Hill Series in Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 189–296; Gerhard Lenski and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 202–204. Gerhard Lenski's original model of agrarian society in *Power and Privilege* included a ninth class of "unclean and degraded" people, who are located between peasants and expendables (*Power and Privilege*, 281–280).

¹⁰¹ Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 219; Lenski and Lenski, *Human Societies*, 195.

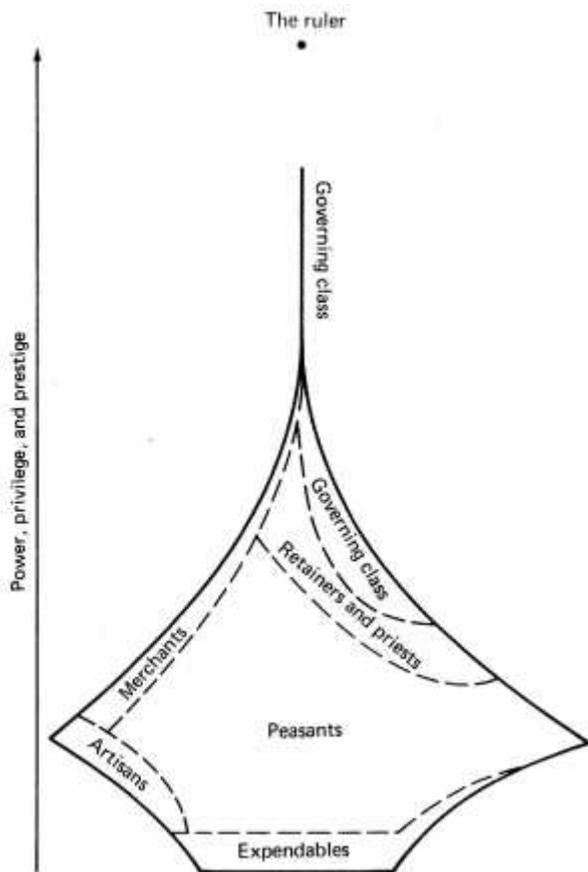


Figure 5.1 Class structure of advanced agrarian societies (Lenski and Lenski, *Human Societies*, 203).

variety of specialized skills and services. Retainers, who occupy approximately 5 percent of the society, are frequently the personal staff and representatives of members of the governing class.¹⁰² Occupying roughly the same position as retainers in advanced agrarian societies is the *priestly class*, which contains the *professional* overseers of a society's religious institutions. Priestly classes demonstrate much diversity from society to society.¹⁰³ In regards to Greco-Roman society, most of the priesthoods were offices held by members of the governing class;¹⁰⁴ thus, the remaining cultic *professionals* were typically very much a part of the retainer class. The

¹⁰² Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 243–246.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 256–266.

¹⁰⁴ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Christianity*, 172–174; Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 42, 45.

next class in Lenski's model is *merchants* whose economic status and social power could range from being equal to the middle sector of the governing class to the middle sector of the next class below, namely the peasants. Merchants averaged 5–10 percent of the population.¹⁰⁵ The above-mentioned classes comprise what Lenski designates as the “privileged classes.”¹⁰⁶ In the three lower classes, *peasants* are not only the largest lower class, but also since they comprise at least half of the population, they are the largest class in the whole society. The economic status of peasants varied greatly. Some peasants enjoyed a substantial amount of surplus wealth, while a portion of the peasants was abjectly poor; however, the majority of the peasants lived around the subsistence level.¹⁰⁷ Closely related to the peasants are the *artisans*, who occupy 5–10 percent of the population.¹⁰⁸ Lastly, the *expendables* included outlaws, beggars, the chronically unemployed, and other persons considered worthless to society. The expendables also occupied 5–15 percent of the population.¹⁰⁹

Within Greco-Roman society, the majority of the lower strata qualifies as living in poverty. Nevertheless, poverty comes in varying degrees. This is reflected in the two most common Greek words that translate as “poor.” *πενιχρός* refers to those who on average live around the level of subsistence.¹¹⁰ However, *πτωχός* refers to the abject poor, particularly beggars.¹¹¹ Thus, although the peasants and artisans of Greco-Roman society are characteristically poor (*πενιχρός*), only the destitute members of the expendables and the lowest members of the peasant class typically experience abject poverty (*πτωχεύω*).

¹⁰⁵ Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 248–256.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 231, 244, 266.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 266–278.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 278–280.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 281–284.

¹¹⁰ BDAG, s.v. “πενιχρός”; Friedrich Hauck, “πένης, πενιχρός,” *TDNT* 6:40; LSJ, s.v. “πενιχρός.”

¹¹¹ BDAG, s.v. “πτωχός”; Friedrich Hauck, “πτωχός, πτωχεύω, πτωχεύω,” *TDNT* 6:886–887; LSJ, s.v. “πτωχός.”

Since social class and economic status are only approximate equivalents in Greco-Roman society, I find it necessary to supplement Lenski's model with Friesen's "poverty scale" (Table 5.1). Being aware both that economic status is only one component of social status in Greco-Roman society and that a range of economic statuses exists within each social class,¹¹² Friesen develops an economic scale for indicating economic status in the early Roman Empire. The poverty scale consists of seven consecutive economic levels ranging from the wealthiest (PS1) to the most destitute (PS7). Despite the usefulness of Friesen's poverty scale, it contains two shortcomings. First, the scale makes little room for economic and status mobility, which in agrarian societies is primarily downward mobility.¹¹³ When upward mobility does occur in advanced agrarian societies, such as Greco-Roman society, it involves only modest advance within a single lifetime and typically within the same social class.¹¹⁴ Second, although Friesen's poverty scale is primarily concerned with economic status, he uses the social status term "elites" to describe the first three levels of the scale. Properly speaking, not all of those that Friesen includes in the PS1–PS3 are elites, in particular merchants. Rather than labeling PS1–PS3 as "elites," these three upper levels of the poverty scale are better described as "wealthy persons," since this label is primarily an economic term. The appearance of wealthy freedpersons and merchants in the same economic levels as elites is indicative of status ambiguity in Greco-Roman society, at least from the perspective of the elites. According to Gerhard E. Lenski and Jean Lenski, "[A]dvanced agrarian societies experienced a growing overlap in the status of different categories of people, especially in terms of wealth and property."¹¹⁵ Lenski's model

¹¹² Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004), 333.

¹¹³ Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 290.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 291.

¹¹⁵ Lenski and Lenski, *Human Societies*, 202.

therefore is not arranged as a strict hierarchy of classes, unlike Friesen's model, which is a simple linear hierarchy of economic levels.

A few comments are necessary to understand how the poverty scale interacts with Lenski's model. First, PS1–PS2 seem to coordinate approximately with Lenski's privileged classes. Second, in addition, economic status does not necessarily indicate social status, as is demonstrated by social ambiguity experienced by a PS3 level merchant who has the same wealth

Table 5.1 Poverty scale for Greco-Roman society (Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies, 341)

PS1	Imperial elites	imperial dynasty, Roman senatorial families, a few retainers, local royalty, a few freedpersons
PS2	Regional or provincial elites	equestrian families, provincial officials, some retainers, some decurial families, some freedpersons, some retired military officers
PS3	Municipal elites	most decurial families, wealthy men and women who do not hold office, some freedpersons, some retainers, some veterans, some merchants
PS4	Moderate surplus resources	some merchants, some traders, some freedpersons, some artisans (especially those who employ others), and military veterans
PS5	Stable near subsistence level (with reasonable hope of remaining above the minimum level to sustain life)	many merchants and traders, regular wage earners, artisans, large shop owners, freedpersons, some farm families
PS6	At subsistence level (and often below minimum level to sustain life)	small farm families, laborers (skilled and unskilled), artisans (especially those employed by others), wage earners, most merchants and traders, small shop/tavern owners
PS7	Below subsistence level	some farm families, unattached widows, orphans, beggars, disabled, unskilled day laborers, prisoners

as a PS3 municipal decurion. Finally, the primary benefit of the poverty scale is that it allows a means of discussing economic variation not only between but also within Lenski's social classes.

In regards to the Christ-followers initially gathered on Pentecost, the Gospel of Luke provides the occupations of only five persons, which include four fishers and a tax collector. The four fishers most easily fit within the PS4–PS5 levels for two reasons. First, they are owners of their own fishing businesses. Second, they own their own boats and equipment.¹¹⁶ Levi the tax collector quite likely fits in the high PS4 to low PS 3 range. His ability to throw a banquet for Jesus possibly indicates that Levi is in PS3. Furthermore, the stigma of dishonesty associated with tax collectors lowers Levi's social status, so that despite his wealth, he is not properly an elite person.

Turning to Lenski's model, the four Christ-following fishers are best described as middle to higher-level peasants. Levi is a retainer because his activities directly serve the interests of the governing class, whose socio-economic status is at least equal to, if not significantly higher than, the four fishers (Peter, Andrew, James, and John).

Finally, the Christ-followers are primarily from Galilee, which the Jerusalemites (particularly the Judean leaders) would likely consider a region more susceptible to Hellenistic assimilation.¹¹⁷ Peter's claim that the Christ-followers are God's prophetic messengers rearranges the social-symbolic universe and places non-elite men and women from Galilee at the

¹¹⁶ Cf. Mark 1:20. The reference to the hired laborers (μισθωτοί) in Mark 1:20 places the characters James and John of Zebedee within the PS4 level.

¹¹⁷ Cf. John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies, 1996), 96. I follow Barclay's use of the term *assimilation*, which indicates the number and quality of social contacts that a minority ethnic group has with a dominant culture. The higher the amount assimilation indicates decreased socio-cultural distinctiveness within the minority group.

center of God's saving activity, as opposed to the conventional Judean social map that would place the elite chief priests and the Sanhedrin at the center of life in Judea.¹¹⁸

The new identity ascribed to the Christ-followers through Peter's quotation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:23–32 ET) also describes the Christ-followers as slaves, which technically speaking was one of the lowest social roles in the Greco-Roman world. Ideologically, the Christ-followers were metaphorical slave envoys of the highest authority of all, namely God. Thus, the prophetic Christ-followers experience status ambiguity resulting from possession by the Holy Spirit. Those Christ-followers in possession trance are liable to experience temporarily increased respect and social power in regard to those observers who consider them truly possessed by God's spirit. Any actual or expected increase in a Christ-followers' social status or social power is not inherent in their own personal identity; instead, their identity as God's slaves is derived from their relationship to God. In addition, those Christ-followers that typically would have been liable to social disenfranchisement in the broader Greco-Roman society, such as women and the abject poor, are given hope of enjoying a powerful social voice and increased status within the Christ-movement. Acts 2:17–18 seems to indicate that all members of the Christ movement, including women, receive a social voice through possession by the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, this social voice is not inherent to the individual himself or herself; instead, it is derived from the Holy Spirit's own identity.

Finally, I need to point out that although Acts 2:17–20 indicates specifically that age and gender do not affect who experiences possession by the Holy Spirit, the changing of “upon *the*

¹¹⁸ John H. Elliott, “Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 229–240; Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: ‘They Turn the World Upside Down,’” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 286.

¹¹⁹ Mary Rose D'Angelo, “(Re)presentations of Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts,” in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 186.

male slaves and *the* female slaves” (ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ τὰς δούλας) in Joel 3:2 (2:29 ET) to “upon *my* male slaves and *my* female slaves” (ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ τὰς δούλας μου) in Acts 2:18 removes any indication that actual slaves will experience divine possession. Thus, Acts 2:18 turns Joel’s reference to literal slaves into a metaphorical reference to Christ-followers, thereby removing from the prophecy any reference to literal socio-economic status. Thus, it may be better to speak of Peter’s *adaptation* of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) than to speak of Peter’s *quotation* of the prophecy. It is also difficult to use Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) as evidence of *complete egalitarianism* in the Jerusalemite church. Nevertheless, the reader from this point forward in Acts should expect to see the Christ-follower identity, particularly in regards to prophecy, transcend both gender and age.

The next section of the adaptation of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:19–20) lists the theophanic phenomena that God will provide on the eschatological day of the Lord: wonders (τέρατα) in the sky and signs (σημεῖα) on the earth. Theophanic signs have already appeared at Jesus’ crucifixion when the sky grew dark and the sun did not shine (Luke 23:44–45). In addition, theophanic demonstrations occur at Pentecost, although they are not the same signs mentioned in Acts 2:19–20.¹²⁰

The third section of Joel’s adapted prophecy (Acts 2:21) introduces into Acts the motif of *the Lord’s name*, which is a frequent motif in Hebrew prophetic literature. The quotation of Joel 3:5 (2:32 ET), in particular, proclaims that salvation comes through the Lord’s name. In Joel 3:5 (2:32 ET), in the MT and τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου in the LXX refer to the divine name (YHWH). Although Peter does not introduce Jesus into his speech until after his quote of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET), succeeding verses of the speech indicate that τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου refers to

¹²⁰ Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 222–223, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 185–186; cf. Bock, *Acts*, 116; Bruce, *Acts*, 69.

Jesus' name (Acts 2:22, 36, 39).¹²¹ Thus, in v. 38, Peter instructs the crowd, "Each of you repent and be baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ* for the removal of your sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Although the initial fulfillment of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) appears to be the Pentecost event, continued fulfillment of the prophecy occurs through numerous future events that happen through the course of Acts.¹²² The ongoing fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is most noticeable in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Jerusalemites after Peter and John's trial (Acts 4:31), upon the Samaritans during Philip's missionary travels (8:15–17), upon Paul at Damascus (9:17–20), upon Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44–48), and upon some Ephesian "disciples" during Paul's third missionary journey (19:1–7).

The immediate result of Peter's Pentecost speech is an incredible positive response from the crowd. Three thousand people joined the Christ-movement. Such a massive influx of people should have a tremendous effect on the social life of the Jerusalemite Christ-followers. Accordingly, the summary in Acts 2:41–47 describes the Jerusalemite church's social and religious life as dedicated, pious, communal, and benevolent. The almost "utopian" character of the Jerusalemite church at the end of Acts 2 reflects the community's identity as the beginning of the renewed Israel.¹²³ Not only does the community express repentance and dedicated communal piety, but they also seem to follow the Pentateuchal commands to care for the poor.¹²⁴ Thus, the Jerusalemite church functions as an alternative religious community in its attempt to function as a renewed Israel; however, the community's continued participation in temple worship indicates

¹²¹ Bock, *Acts*, 118; Darrell L. Bock, "Jesus as Lord in Acts and in the Gospel Message," *BSac* 143 (1986), 147–148; see also Barrett, *Acts*, 1:139; Haenchen, *Acts*, 179; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 20.

¹²² Bock, *Acts*, 115; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:29–30; contra Merrill F. Unger, "The Significance of Pentecost," *BSac* 122 (1965), 177.

¹²³ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 265–273; James C. VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," *CTJ* 37 (2002), 252.

¹²⁴ Compare Acts 2:44–45 with Exod 23:11; Lev 19:9–10; 25:25, 35–55; Deut 15:4–5, 11.

that the reader should not consider the Jerusalemite church as a replacement for the current temple system, at least not at this point in Acts.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the great respect and authority granted to the apostles by the Christ-followers in Jerusalem does offer the potential for conflict between the Jerusalemite church and the official Judean leaders associated with the temple.

In Acts 2:41–47, the first reference to Christ-follower miracle-working occurs (Acts 2:43). Although “wonders” and “signs” in Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) refer to extraordinary phenomena wrought directly by God, the divine “wonders and signs” in Acts 2:43 occur through the Twelve, thus qualifying the Twelve as miracle-workers. Despite any expectation from Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) that all Christ-follower will perform miracles, only the Twelve actually work miracles in Acts 2–5. In addition, the uniqueness of the Twelve’s miracle-working activity in Acts 2–5 seems to increase the status and authority of the Twelve among other Christ-followers (Acts 2:43; 5:12–16). The authority invested in the apostles also should reinforce hesitancy toward characterizing the Jerusalemite church in Acts 2:41–47 as a radically egalitarian community, since a hierarchy does exist in which the apostles seem to enjoy greater authority and prestige as teachers and miracle-workers.

Since the Gospel of Luke also describes many of Jesus’ disciples that formed the original core of the Jerusalemite church as primarily skilled workers (fishers; Luke 5:1–11) and retainers (tax-collector; Luke 5:29–32; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 19:1–10), an ancient reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke would not likely consider most of the Christ-followers gathered on Pentecost as abjectly poor. The presence of Barnabas and others, who later donate the proceeds from land sales (Acts 4:34–37), even suggests that the reader consider some of the Christ-followers

¹²⁵ Cf. Elliott, “Temple vs. Household,” 216; see also 217, 223–224, 230–240. Elliott claims that ultimately in the Gospel of Luke and Acts, the house, as the primary meeting place of Christ-followers, gradually replaces the temple as the center for God’s redemptive activity (p. 216). However, in Acts 2–7, the church and the temple function more as complements than as competitors, but this will change as the Christ-movement extends beyond Jerusalem.

possessed some amount of surplus wealth. Moreover, the communal ownership of property among the characteristically non-elite Christ-followers stands in direct contrast to the extreme wealth of the elite Jerusalemite religio-political leaders, who are noticeably absent from the community both at the beginning and at the end of the Pentecost episode.

The Holy Spirit as the Source of Prophecy, Miracles, and Community

The association of prophecy, miraculous signs and wonders, and the Holy Spirit in Acts' narration of the Pentecost event has given rise to debate within modern biblical studies over whether the Gospel of Luke and Acts portray the Holy Spirit enabling only prophecy and no other works of power. On one side of the argument are Eduard Schweizer and Robert P. Menzies, who argue that the Gospel of Luke and Acts associate the Holy Spirit only with prophecy. According to Schweizer, "[The writer] Luke adopts the typically Jewish idea that the Spirit is the Spirit of prophecy. . . . Though the miracles are important for Luke, they are never ascribed to the Spirit."¹²⁶ Following Schweizer, Menzies argues that Judean theology during the Greco-Roman period associated the inspiration of the Holy Spirit only with prophecy and esoteric wisdom.¹²⁷

A significant challenge to Schweizer's and Menzies' arguments involves refutation of Schweizer's claim that the traditional Judean view of the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is only a spirit of prophecy. John R. Levison, for instance, claims that David E. Aune demonstrates the presence of a great deal of diversity within Judean prophecy.¹²⁸ According to Aune, "The Israelite prophet first appears in our sources in the eleventh century B.C. This prophetic type is

¹²⁶ Eduard Schweizer, "πνεῦμα, πνευματικός, πνέω, ἐμπνέω, πνοή, ἐκπνέω, θεόπνευστος," *TDNT* 6:407; see also Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 224–227, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 185–186.

¹²⁷ Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 53–112, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 49–402.

¹²⁸ John R. Levison, review of *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, by Robert P. Menzies, *JBL* 113 (1994), 343–344.

exemplified by such figures as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, and it combines the characteristics of the holy man, the sage, *the miracle worker*, and the soothsayer (1 Sam 9; 1 Kgs 17; 2 Kgs 1:2–17; 6:1–7, 8–10; 13:14–21; 20:1–11).¹²⁹ Accordingly, Max Turner argues that it is incorrect to claim that *the* Judean perspective on the Holy Spirit viewed the Holy Spirit as only a source of prophecy. Turner, instead, claims that this conception of the Holy Spirit is a thoroughly “Christian” perspective. Furthermore, Acts, in particular, portrays the Holy Spirit as not only the source of prophecy but also the source of powerful preaching. Turner, ultimately, claims that actual Judean understandings of the Holy Spirit do not prevent a person from understanding the Holy Spirit as an enabler of miracle-working.¹³⁰

Additional criticism of Schweizer’s claim that the Holy Spirit is only a spirit of prophecy challenges his separation of δύναμις and the Holy Spirit: “Though [the writer] Luke can use δύναμις and πνεῦμα almost as synonyms,¹³¹ the distinction between them is clear at this point.”¹³² The particular distinction to which Schweizer refers is his claim that the Gospel of Luke and Acts present prophecy occurring through the Holy Spirit and miracles occurring through δύναμις.¹³³ I find three problems with Schweizer’s sharp separation of δύναμις and πνεῦμα. First, Schweizer’s characterization of *impersonal* δύναμις as the source for the Christ-followers’ miracles in Acts resemble considerably Marcel Mauss’ problematic identification of δύναμις as Greco-Roman *mana*.¹³⁴ Second, the distinction that Schweizer makes between δύναμις and πνεῦμα in Acts is not as discrete as he argues. Closer inspection reveals a great

¹²⁹ Aune, *Prophecy*, 83 (italics added); see also Mark R. Saucy, “Miracles and Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God,” *BSac* 153 (1996), 285, n. 17.

¹³⁰ Max Turner, “The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins,” *NTS* 38 (1992), 87–88; Max Turner, “The Spirit and the Power of Jesus’ Miracles in the Lucan Conception,” *NovT* 33 (1991), 130–131, 135.

¹³¹ Luke 1:17; 4:14; 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8.

¹³² Schweizer, “πνεῦμα,” 6:407.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 6:407–408.

¹³⁴ Turner, “Spirit in Lucan Conception,” 141; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 137.

deal of interaction between the two concepts.¹³⁵ In particular, Jesus tells his disciples prior to his ascension, “You will receive power (δύναμιν) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Power, which Schweizer presumes is primarily for miracle-working, only comes to the apostles when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and the Spirit comes upon them so that they may be witnesses (Acts 1:8).¹³⁶ Third, within Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET), the eschatological signs and wonders seem to result from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Since the Christ-followers’ miracles in Acts are the fulfillment of the predicted signs and wonders, a connection certainly exists between the Holy Spirit and miracle-working.¹³⁷ Thus, the signs and wonders that Acts 2:43 attributes to the apostles occur only after the Holy Spirit has come upon them, just as Jesus indicates in Acts 1:8.

In the article “Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts,” Menzies’ directly responds to Turner’s criticisms of his understanding of the Holy Spirit in Acts. Menzies qualifies his understanding of the relationship between δύναμις and the Holy Spirit by stating, “Luke can use δύναμις and πνεῦμα together with little apparent distinction (Lk. 1.17, 35; 4.14; 24.29; Acts 1.8; 10.38).”¹³⁸ Along similar lines, Menzies comments, “I have argued elsewhere that although Luke can speak of πνεῦμα as the source of δύναμις, the two terms are not merely synonymous or co-referential.”¹³⁹ Thus, although Menzies says the Holy Spirit is not the source of miracles, the

¹³⁵ Turner, “Spirit in Lucan Conception,” 136–142.

¹³⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 58; Pervo, *Acts*, 42–43.

¹³⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:137; see also Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 136; contra Unger, “Significance of Pentecost,” 176–177. Unger claims that for Peter, the Pentecost event does not fulfill the prophecy in Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET); instead, Peter’s quotation from Joel is only “prophetic illustration.”

¹³⁸ Robert P. Menzies, “Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts: A Response to Max Turner,” *JSNT* 49 (1993), 16.

¹³⁹ Menzies, “Spirit and Power,” 18, see also p. 13; cf. Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 61–63, 77–90, 303–315, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 57–59, 71–82; Schweizer, “πνεῦμα,” 6:407. In “Spirit and Power,” Menzies also notes that although he characterizes his view of Lukan pneumatology (the Holy Spirit as only a source of prophecy and esoteric wisdom) as the Judean view on the Holy Spirit, two documentary exceptions exist. He points out that in *Development of Pneumatology*, he indicates that the Wisdom of Solomon does not treat the

Holy Spirit is the source of the δύναμις, which is the source of miracles. Despite Menzies' best efforts to portray the Holy Spirit as the source of only prophecy and esoteric wisdom, Menzies ultimately recognizes that in Luke's Gospel and Acts, the Holy Spirit is still the source of miracles, albeit the indirect source.¹⁴⁰

To claim that the Holy Spirit in Acts is only the source of prophecy and prophetic preaching is an overstatement that ignores the subtle connections between the Holy Spirit and miracles.¹⁴¹ M. Eugene Boring's explanation of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and prophecy seems more accurate: "[T]his Spirit is *preeminently* the Spirit of Prophecy (2:17–18, 38; 4:31; 6:10; 16:6–7)."¹⁴² Thus, Acts presents the Holy Spirit's *primary role* as the source of prophecy and prophetic preaching, but the Spirit has a *secondary role* of enabling of miracle-working.¹⁴³

Matthias Wenk, however, challenges another aspect of Menzies' characterization of the Holy Spirit as only the Spirit of prophecy. According to Wenk, Menzies' claim that the Pentecost event is not a "New Sinai" denies that the Holy Spirit is a source of moral and ethical guidance in Acts.¹⁴⁴ Although debate exists over whether Acts 2 portrays Pentecost as an equivalent to the giving of the Law at Sinai, I think that sufficient evidence exists to indicate that Acts 2 does portray Pentecost as a new Sinai event.¹⁴⁵ It is certain that at some point during the Greco-Roman period, Judeans began to observe Pentecost as a covenant renewal ceremony and a

Holy Spirit as a source of wisdom and that both the Wisdom of Solomon and the Qumran literature also attribute a soteriological function to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴⁰ Max Turner, "Interpreting the Samaritans of Acts 8: The Waterloo of Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology?" *Pneuma* 23 (2001), 277.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, "Relationships between Miracle and Prophecy in the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity," *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 1471–1472, 1495.

¹⁴² Boring, "Prophecy (Early Christian)," 5:499 (italics added); cf. Turner, "Spirit of Prophecy," 87.

¹⁴³ Harold E. Remus, "Miracle (New Testament), *ABD* 4:865; Turner, "Spirit in Lucan Conception," 130–131, 135, 148–149, 152.

¹⁴⁴ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 232–233; cf. Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 229–244, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 189–201.

¹⁴⁵ VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," 239–254.

commemoration of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:18). The earliest evidence for dating Pentecost as a covenant renewal ceremony commemorating the Law is *Jub.* 6.15–19 and *b. Šabb.* 86b, 88b.¹⁴⁶ It is important that *Jubilees* was likely written around 160–150 BCE, which predates Acts by well over two hundred years.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, although Acts 2 makes no direct reference to the Sinai event,¹⁴⁸ several elements in Acts 2 appear to be subtle allusions to the Sinai event. For example, Joseph A. Fitzmyer claims that Acts' narration of the twelve apostles preaching to the Judeans at Pentecost draws upon similar language from the Lukan Lord's Supper episode, especially Jesus' instructions to the apostles. For instance, Luke 22:20 reads, "Similarly after dining, Jesus took the cup, while saying, 'This cup, which is being poured out for you, is the new covenant in my blood.'" In Luke 22:29–30, Jesus continues, "I myself confer the kingdom upon you, just as my father conferred it upon me in order that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit upon thrones while judging the twelve tribes of Israel." At Pentecost, the new covenant is firmly established, and the twelve apostles judge the people. Even more significant for understanding Pentecost as a new Sinai is the appearance of theophanic elements reminiscent of those occurring during the Sinai event in Exodus.¹⁴⁹ James C. VanderKam also argues that the portrayal of the Jerusalemite church as an ideal community in

¹⁴⁶ Jud Davis, "Acts 2 and the Old Testament: The Pentecost Event in Light of Sinai, Babel and the Table of Nations," *CTR*, n.s., 7 (2009), 41–42; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Ascension of Christ and Pentecost," *TS* 45 (1984), 432–433; Howard Clark Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), 30–31; VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," 241–243; see also *Jub.* 1.1; 14.20. Additionally, VanderKam notes that the *Rule of the Community* (1QS 1.16–3.12) contains reference to an important covenant renewal festival at Qumran, and he suggests that the *Damascus Document* indicates that the Qumran community observed this covenant renewal at Pentecost (4QD^a [4Q266] 11.16–18; 4QD^e [4Q270] ii.11–12; VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," 243–244).

¹⁴⁷ VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," 241.

¹⁴⁸ Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 229–244, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 189–201; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 495; cf. Fitzmyer, "Ascension and Pentecost," 432–433.

¹⁴⁹ Fitzmyer, "Ascension and Pentecost," 433–434; see also Davis, "Acts 2 and OT," 42; Pervo, *Acts*, 61; VanderKam, "Covenant and Pentecost," 248–252; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:113. Barrett lists numerous examples of similar theophanic phenomena in the HB: Exod 19:18–19; 1 Kgs 19:11; Isa 66:15; 4 Ezra 13:10 (see also Philo, *Decal.* 33). VanderKam claims that Acts 1, which functions as preparation for Acts 2, also contains significant allusions to Moses and the Sinai event ("Covenant and Pentecost," 248–249).

Acts 2:41–47 is a parallel to the ideal Israelite community envisioned at the giving of the Law, a community devoted solely to God and holding all things in common.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, it is likely that Acts 2 subtly draws upon the tradition of Pentecost as a commemoration of the giving of the Law at Sinai.¹⁵¹ Thus, Acts portrays the Jerusalemite church as a counter-cultural movement that starts in contradistinction to the established religio-social system of Jerusalem, in which elite Judean leaders (chief priests, Sanhedrin, Sadducees) and their retainer scribes control most of the wealth and the religio-political system of Jerusalem.¹⁵²

Accordingly, Wenk claims that Pentecost is an eschatological event initiating *the restoration* of the “covenant people.”¹⁵³ The summary in Acts 2:42–47 describes the Christ-following community in Jerusalem as dedicated to religious instruction, fellowship, communal dining, communal property, and care for needy members. Additionally, the other summaries in Acts 4:32–35 and 5:12–16 are descriptions of the typical moral and ethical life of the Jerusalemite church.¹⁵⁴ Wenk, thus, argues that the Holy Spirit is a moral and ethical guide within the Jerusalemite church, since the Holy Spirit restores the covenant people of God, directs their social life (e.g., Acts 2:42–47), and even intervenes to maintain group cohesion when division seems imminent (e.g., Acts 15:28).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ VanderKam, “Covenant and Pentecost,” 252.

¹⁵¹ Davis, “Acts 2 and OT,” 43–45; Fitzmyer, “Ascension and Pentecost,” 440; Johnson, *Acts*, 46–47; Witherington, *Acts*, 131.

¹⁵² Cf. Carolyn Osiek, *What Are They Saying about the Social Setting of the New Testament?*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist, 1992), 50.

¹⁵³ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 258; see also Johnson, *Acts*, 60. I harbor some reservation toward describing the Pentecost event as the establishment of a *new* covenant and/or a *new* community for three reasons. First, Pentecost initiates a new phase in the life of an already existing community of Jesus’ disciples. Second, reference to the new covenant explicitly occurs in Jesus’ instructions at the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:20), which ties the initiation of the new covenant to Jesus’ passion. Third, at this point in Acts, the early church is not preaching a new faith community separate from Israel, but repentance and restoration among the already existing Judean people.

¹⁵⁴ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 170, 265; see also Gregory E. Sterling, “‘Athletes of Virtue’: An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts (2:41–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16),” *JBL* 113 (1994), 683.

¹⁵⁵ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 259–308; see also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:44–47.

Even more significantly, the Holy Spirit's role as moral-ethical guide derives from the Holy Spirit's role as inspirer of prophecy. The prophecy and prophetic preaching in Acts has important moral and ethical results. Thus, Peter through the Holy Spirit preaches salvation through Christ at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–36), and the result of his speech is the large community of Christ-followers described within the summary in Acts 2:42–47. Thus, Wenk writes, “The event experienced [at Pentecost] is identified with Joel's citation of the Spirit-outpouring, which anticipated not only a renewed prophetic activity but even more a renewed community and social order.”¹⁵⁶ The divine messages contained in prophecy and prophetic preaching are not ends in themselves, but they are a means of convincing people to do what God wishes of them.¹⁵⁷ In the case of Acts 2, the goal of inspired preaching is repentance, salvation, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:21, 38), and true repentance and salvation affect the way the Christ-followers interact with each other and the world around them.¹⁵⁸ Thus, an inherently counter-cultural element exists in the social identity of the early Christ-following characters in Acts, whose prophetic proclamation of salvation and repentance suggests that the status quo (the current state of affairs in Jerusalem and at the temple) is not sufficient and that society is in need of change. The change envisioned is repentant abandonment of conventional religious life and active participation in the renewed people of God, namely the Christ-movement. Thus, in addition to miracle-working, another *secondary* role of the Holy Spirit is facilitation of moral-ethical living as a part of a renewed covenant community.

As Wenk notes, the changes that Acts has the Jerusalemite Christ-followers experience as a community transform their symbolic universe, which affects their morality and ethics also.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 258; see also Neyrey, “Symbolic Universe,” 271–304.

¹⁵⁷ See also Fitzmyer, “Ascension and Pentecost,” 439–440.

¹⁵⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 265–266, 277.

As an influence upon the symbolic boundaries of the Christ-movement in Acts, the Holy Spirit also functions as one who initiates new members into the Christ-movement.¹⁶⁰ Thus, reception of the Spirit operates as a primary indicator of membership in the Christ-movement to the extent that, according to Coleman A. Baker, reception of the Holy Spirit is one of two initiation rites for the Christ-movement in Acts, with the other initiation rite being baptism in Jesus' name.¹⁶¹

In Acts, Pentecost signifies the initiation of the restoration of God's covenant community and the initial phase of Acts development of Christ-follower identity. The central event in Acts 2 is the coming of the Holy Spirit, since it is the coming of the Holy Spirit that sets into motion all the succeeding events. With theophanic demonstrations, the Holy Spirit comes upon the Christ-followers, who consequently participate in xenoglossic preaching (Acts 2:2–12). Furthermore, Peter quotes Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) to explain that the Pentecost event, particularly the *xenoglossia*, is the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Christ-followers.

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Christ-followers in Acts 2 results in more than theophanic signs and xenoglossic preaching. It also leads to the addition of three thousand people to the Jerusalemite church, which develops into a stable religious community characterized by piety, devotion to religious training, and the sharing of possessions. In addition, the Twelve function as the leaders of the community, and they are now empowered to teach the Christ-followers, to preach to outsiders, and to perform miraculous signs and wonders. It is further significant that the highest leadership positions, namely the Twelve, in this community are occupied not only by Galileans but also by non-elite men. The basis for the Twelve's authority in the Jerusalemite church seems to stem not only from their close relationship with Jesus himself but also from their experience of divine possession by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Acts does not

¹⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 131.

¹⁶¹ Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 10, 88.

indicate at this point that any priests or other Judean political leaders had joined the Jerusalemite church (cf. Acts 6:7), and even if the reader considers the possibility of any higher status persons were among the Jerusalemite Christ-followers, these higher status persons still submit to the authority of non-elite authorities, namely the Twelve, on a daily basis. Nevertheless, Acts no longer presents the Christ-movement as primarily a Galilean movement because the majority of the followers now come from the crowd of Judeans originating from all over the circum-Mediterranean (cf. Acts 2:9–11).

Since the Christ-followers in Acts 2–5 regularly visit the temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42), they so far do not seem inherently antagonistic toward the temple.¹⁶² In addition, the Christ-followers in Acts 2–5 neither demonstrate general hostility toward the official Judean leaders nor express any open criticism of the Judean leaders. Nevertheless, the community appears to have gained an authoritative group identity not only as the beginning of God’s renewed covenant people but also as God’s human spokespersons on earth. This authoritative group identity has its origin in the Pentecost event, where the Holy Spirit initially possesses the Christ-followers and Peter explains through Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) that possession by the Holy Spirit has marked the Christ-followers as “God’s slaves” and empowered them to prophecy and work wonders. Thus, the socio-religious identity of the Christ-followers in Acts 2 derives directly from the experience of divine possession in Acts.

II. Miracle-Working in the Jerusalemite Church (Acts 3–7)

The summary in Acts 2:41–47 introduces the narration of the earliest phase of the Jerusalemite church (Acts 2:41–8:1). However, Acts 2:19 has already begun to create subtly a link between Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) and miracle-working when Joel’s prediction of prophecy and cosmic

¹⁶² Cf. Acts 7:48–50.

portents (Joel 3:3 [2:30 ET]) functions to explain the extraordinary events at Pentecost,¹⁶³ particularly the Christ-followers' *xenoglossia*.¹⁶⁴ The link between Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) and miracle-working appears to be the work of the writer Luke because a close reading of the prophecy in both Acts 2 and the LXX reveals that the prophecy itself never refers to miracle-working. In the LXX, Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) speaks of God's people prophesying, dreaming, and seeing visions, but Joel's prophecy does not speak of either *xenoglossia* or *glossolalia*. In Acts, the link between Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) and ecstatic speech first develops when Acts 2:14–16 has Peter using the passage from Joel to explain the Christ-followers' *xenoglossia* at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–16). In addition, Peter's quotation of Joel 3:3 (2:29 ET) claims that God, without a human intermediary, will give wonders (τέρατα) in heaven and signs (σημεῖα) on earth (Acts 2:19).¹⁶⁵ Later, Acts 2:43 makes the link between Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) and miracle-working more apparent when it portrays the apostles as human intermediaries for divine wonders and signs (τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα). The connection becomes explicit in Acts 4:16, where the Sanhedrin calls Peter's healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1–10 a "sign" (σημεῖον). Finally, the connection between Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) and miracle-working is complete in Acts 5:12–16, which explicitly links "signs and wonders" performed through the apostles (5:12) with their healings and exorcisms (5:16). Thus, Acts 2–7 presents the Christ-followers' miracles as the initial fulfillment of Joel's prediction of eschatological wonders and signs (Acts 2:19). In order to understand adequately the initial development of the character type "miracle-worker" in Acts

¹⁶³ Haenchen, *Acts*, 186; Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1–2; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 82.

¹⁶⁴ Menzies, *Development of Pneumatology*, 222–223, republished as *Empowered for Witness*, 185–186; cf. Christopher Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16: Spirit Possession and Authority in a Non-Pauline Interpolation," *JBL* 124 (2005), 313–340.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 79. σημεῖα is a Lukan addition to Joel 3:3 (2:30 ET).

1–8, it is necessary to investigate the role of miracle-working and miracle-workers in Acts 3–7 as the subsequent results of the Pentecost event in the life of the Jerusalemite church.

Peter Heals a Lame Man (Acts 3–4)

The reference to the apostles' signs and wonders in Acts 2:43 prepares the audience for Peter's healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1–10. Not only is this healing a specific example of the signs and wonders performed by the apostles in Acts 2:43,¹⁶⁶ but it also seems to function as a partial fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the disciples will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (Acts 1:8).¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, Acts 3:6 continues the theme of *salvation through the Lord's name*, when Peter heals the lame man in Jesus' name.¹⁶⁸ The healing, thus, functions as experiential confirmation of the verbal testimony to the saving power of Jesus' name, which appears earlier in Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:21) and later in his testimony following the healing (Acts 3:16).¹⁶⁹

Performing Miracles in the Lord's Name

Acts indicates three times that the healing of the lame man in vv. 3–10 occurs through “the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10). Although Acts 3:1–10 provides the only narration of a healing by means of Jesus' name, a few other passages in Acts suggest that working miracles through Jesus' name is a common practice among Christ-following miracle-workers. First, in Acts 4:30, the Christ-followers pray that “healings, signs, and wonders may occur through the name of your holy servant (παῖς) Jesus.” In Acts 16:17, Paul exorcises a Pythian spirit through the invocation of Jesus' name. Finally, in Acts 19:13–14, the invocation of Jesus' name by

¹⁶⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 157.

¹⁶⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:73–74.

¹⁶⁸ Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 250.

¹⁶⁹ Johnson, *Acts*, 72, 79.

Judean exorcists appears as the conscious imitation of Paul's exorcistic practice. Thus, the reader would likely understand the invocation of Jesus' name as a typical feature of the Christ-followers' miracle-working.

Richard I. Pervo, while commenting on Acts 3:1–10, claims that Jesus' name “works *ex opere operato*” in regards to miracles, since the healing ability of Jesus' name is not explicitly linked to faith.¹⁷⁰ For Pervo, Jesus' name in Acts functions as an *automatically efficacious*, magical formula. However, C. K. Barrett rejects attempts to characterize the invocation of Jesus' name as a magical technique. He notes that since not all miracles performed by the Christ-followers occur through the invocation of Jesus' name, the efficacy of the Christ-followers' miracle-working likely results from something other than merely speaking Jesus' name (e.g., Acts 5:15, 13:9–11).¹⁷¹ Moreover, Barrett recognizes that, contrary to Pervo, the power involved in invoking Jesus' name in miracle-working is actually a manifestation of faith.¹⁷² For example, Peter in Acts 3:16 explicitly attributes the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1–10 to faith in Jesus' name.¹⁷³ Furthermore, Peter makes clear in Acts 3:12–16 that the healing results from *God's power*, not through any power inherent to Peter or through a generic magical force.¹⁷⁴ As Jesus' delegate, Peter and Jesus are in a relationship, in which Peter trusts in Jesus (cf. Acts 2:38, 44). The invocation of Jesus' name in miracle-working is efficacious because Jesus has delegated to Peter the ability to utilize Jesus' authority, which his name metonymically represents.¹⁷⁵ The use of Jesus' name to heal in Acts 3:1–10 functions as magic, according to my modern definition of “magic”—ritual manipulation of material and verbal symbols to achieve a specific empirical

¹⁷⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 100; cf. 106.

¹⁷¹ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:139, 176–177.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 1:139, 199–200, 249.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁷⁴ Bock, *Acts*, 161–162; John A. Hardon, “Miracle Narratives in the Acts of the Apostles,” *CBQ* 16 (1954), 307.

¹⁷⁵ Witherington, *Acts*, 175; cf. Luke 9:49–50, where Jesus allows someone to whom he has not delegated authority continue to exorcise δαιμόνια in his name.

result by means of superhuman forces, particularly impersonal forces. However, Acts presents the invocation of Jesus' name as neither coercive nor automatically efficacious. Within Acts, the efficacy of the Christ-followers' miracle-working derives from the authority of the person invoked, namely Jesus. Therefore, Acts' portrayal of the invocation of Jesus' name as neither coercive nor automatically efficacious functions to counter any suspicion that the invocation of Jesus' name is μαγεία.

Three religio-historical contexts provide further insight into understanding the use of Jesus' name in miracle-working: (1) the use of the Lord's name in the Hebrew prophetic traditions, (2) the use of divine names in the *PGM*, and (3) the use of Solomon's name in Judean exorcistic tradition. Not only do Hebrew prophets invoke God's name in relation to prophetic speech,¹⁷⁶ but also in a few passages of the HB, a connection exists between wonder-working and God's name. For instance, Elijah says in 1 Kgs 18:24, "Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord; the god who answers by fire is indeed God" (NRSV). Also in 2 Kgs 2:24 (4 Kgdms 2:24 LXX), in response to some boys' taunts, Elisha curses the boys in the Lord's name (; ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου). Thus, although limited, precedent exists in the HB for working wonders in the Lord's name.¹⁷⁷ The confluence of the themes of prophecy and the Lord's name in Acts 2–7 strongly suggests that Acts 2–7 draws upon the HB's presentation of prophets and their use of the Lord's name in prophetic speech and wonder-working.

It is significant that prophets in the HB are typically presented as *those whom God calls* to be his representatives on earth. For example, Moses assumes his roles as leader of Israel and spokesperson for God only after God, in the form of a burning bush, calls him to do so (Exod 3).

¹⁷⁶ E.g., Deut 18:15–22; Ezra 5:1 (2 Esd 5:1 LXX); Jer 11:21; 14:14–15; 20:9; 23:25; 26:9, 16, 20; 27:15; 29:9, 21, 23, 25; 44:16; Dan 9:6; Zech 13:3.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Neh 9:10 (2 Esd 19:10 LXX); Dan 2:20.

In addition, Ezekiel seems to receive his call in the midst of a prophetic trance that contains elements of positive possession (Ezek 2:1–4). In both these examples, the authority to act or speak in God’s stead is delegated authority. Accordingly, although less explicitly presented, Elijah’s ability to speak and act on behalf of God seems to be delegated authority, since the narrator of 1 Kings frequently indicates that “the word of the Lord” (ῥῆμα κυρίου) is the grammatically active subject that “came” (γίνομαι) to Elijah.¹⁷⁸ Even Elisha’s invocation of the Lord’s name in his cursing of the boys at Bethel (2 Kgs 2:24) is more likely an instance of Elisha accessing authority God has delegated to him than an example of the coercive use of the Lord’s name. As God’s delegated representative, Elisha has the God-given authority to act on God’s behalf and to curse someone in the Lord’s name. Thus, Elisha also likely does not invoke magical power (*mana*) or coerce a powerful deity or spirit power; instead, he utilizes *delegated authority*.

Just as 1 Kgs 18:24 presents Elisha invoking the Lord’s name to ensure the efficacy of his curse at Bethel, the texts in the *PGM* also frequently instruct the ritual actor to invoke divine names in order to achieve successful results. Often a single deity is given numerous names,¹⁷⁹ such as in *PGM* III.494–611, where Helios has a different name every hour of the day. In addition, *PGM* III.494–611 provides excellent examples of *voces magicae*, which are seemingly unintelligible lines that possibly derive from foreign languages and are typically secret divine names (for example, *PGM* III.501–535).¹⁸⁰ Although the attitudes toward deities and spirits in

¹⁷⁸ 1 Kgs 17:2, 8; 18:1; 21:17 [3 Kgdms 20:17]. 3 Kgdms 20:17 (LXX) reads differently than its parallel text in 1 Kgs 21:17 (*BHS*). According to 3 Kgdms 20:17, “the Lord spoke to Elijah” (εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Ηλίου); however, in 1 Kgs 21:17, “The word of the Lord came to Elijah” (ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐγένετο πρὸς Ηλίου).

¹⁷⁹ Hans Bietenhard, “ὄνομα, ὀνομάζω, ἐπονομάζω, ψευδώνυμος,” *TDNT* 5:251.

¹⁸⁰ Gideon Bohak, “Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*,” in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, eds. Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler, Magic in History (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 29–82; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 45–46; Pieter W. van der Horst, “The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris (*PGM* IV) and the Bible,” in *A*

the *PGM* range from reverence to pure coercion,¹⁸¹ the overall goal of the invocations of spirits in the *PGM* is the same, specifically to effect change through spiritual power. Nevertheless, the instrumentality of the rituals in the *PGM* is not so different from most biblical prayers, in which the person praying addresses God in order to have God do something. Although most of the texts in the *PGM* postdate the book of Acts, the use of divine names in the *PGM* likely provides some insight for better understanding wonder-working in Acts because the invocation of the names of deities, especially indigenous Asian and Egyptian deities, was likely common practice in popular Greco-Roman magico-religious rituals in the first-century CE.¹⁸² Thus, Graham H. Twelftree explains, “It is not that Jesus or others among his contemporaries coerced their spiritual supporters, but as reflected in the magical papyri, they assumed the right to use, at will, their chosen power-authorities.”¹⁸³ Although Twelftree may be right that those enacting the instructions in the *PGM* “assumed the right to use, at will, their chosen power authorities,” this does not necessarily indicate that the ritual actors did not employ coercion to achieve their desired goals. Some texts in the *PGM* use praise, offerings, and petitions to achieve the ritual actor’s aims.¹⁸⁴ In addition, some texts in the *PGM* instruct the ritual actor to persuade a spirit or deity to do his or her bidding either by invoking the authority of a stronger spirit or deity or by

Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 176–178.

¹⁸¹ A. D. Nock, “Greek Magical Papyri,” *JEA* 15 (1929), 230–231; Anna Scibilia, “Supernatural Assistance in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 75. See *PGM* III.440–465; VII.740–750; VIII.1–60, 65–105 for examples of pious reverence and *PGM* IV.270–286 for an example of explicit coercion.

¹⁸² Cf. Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 218; Daniel Ogden, “Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 46.

¹⁸³ Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 47; see also Graham H. Twelftree, “Jesus the Exorcist and Ancient Magic,” in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 74.

¹⁸⁴ *PGM* II.1–64, 64–183, 1331–1389, 1390–1495, 1596–1715, 1716–1870, 1928–2005; VII.528–539, 664–685.

petitioning a stronger spirit or deity to force a lesser spirit or deity to do the ritual actor's bidding.¹⁸⁵ However, many texts in the *PGM* instruct the ritual actor to employ explicit coercion to force a deity or spirit to do the ritual actor's bidding.¹⁸⁶ Thus, the texts in the *PGM* employ a variety of techniques, which ranged from threats and coercion to petitions and offerings. Even if a ritual actor assumed the right to employ powerful spirits and authorities, they still sometimes used coercion to access the authority of a spirit or deity. Although the person enacting the rituals that involved coercion may have not considered himself or herself to be a popular μάγος, such techniques opened him or her to accusations of being a μάγος from rivals and the general public. Nevertheless, what Twelftree says here about Jesus is descriptive also of Acts' depiction of Christ-following miracle-workers, whose lives and ministries frequently parallel the Lukan Jesus' life and ministry. Accordingly, Acts portrays the Christ-following miracle-workers as if they have the right to access divine power for healing and other wonders, and they appear to access this power through Jesus' authority, as it is represented by Jesus' name.

Another magico-religious tradition that will aid in understanding wonder-working in Acts is the exorcistic Solomonic traditions. Josephus provides evidence that by the late first century CE, many Judeans considered Solomon a highly effective exorcist.¹⁸⁷ Josephus also claims to have personally seen the Judean exorcist Eleazar in Vespasian's court employing Solomon's purported method of exorcism.¹⁸⁸ Eleazar would hold under the nose of a possessed person a ring containing a potent root, which would draw the possessing spirit out through the possessed person's nostrils. While mentioning Solomon and speaking spells that Solomon composed,

¹⁸⁵ *PGM* II.1–64; IV.2006–2125, 2145–2240; VII.628–642; XII.14–95.

¹⁸⁶ *PGM* I.1–42, 42–195, 262–347; VII.727–739, 862–918; XIa.1–40; XII.14–95.

¹⁸⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45; see also *T. Sol.* 2–107, whose earliest recensions date between the second and fourth centuries CE (Dennis C. Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," *HTR* 68 [1975], 242).

¹⁸⁸ Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46–49; see also Dennis C. Duling, "The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.42–49," *HTR* 78 (1985), 1–25.

Eleazar would then compel the spirit not to return to its former host.¹⁸⁹ Similar to the invocation of deities in the *PGM*, Eleazar's exorcistic procedure involves the invocation of the name of someone with authority over other spirits, namely Solomon. In Eleazar's ritual, Solomon's name itself does not seem to function as an automatically efficacious magical incantation; instead, Eleazar appears to invoke Solomon's name as a means of accessing Solomon's authority over *daimones*, similar to the way those enacting the rituals in the *PGM* assume the authority and identity of a deity or other spiritual being.¹⁹⁰

The invocation of authoritative names in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, the *PGM*, Eleazar's Solomonic exorcisms, and Acts is a means of accessing the authority of a more powerful being. In the case of the Christ-following miracle-workers, Acts portrays the ability to assume Jesus' authority as having been delegated to them starting at Pentecost, when they receive the Holy Spirit and power. Therefore, in Acts 3:6, Peter's invocation of Jesus' name is a means of accessing Jesus' authority to employ divine power. Peter's use of Jesus name to access Jesus' authority is illustrative of Lewis' and Wilson's explanations of how spirit possession causes the human host to take on the social identity and status of the higher status possessing spirit so that the host acquires the possessing spirits authority.

Reactions to the Healing of the Lame Man

Peter's successful healing of the lame man by means of Jesus' authority (Acts 3:1–8) invokes three responses from the people at the temple. The first two responses are positive, and the third is negative. First, the one healed walks with Peter and John into the temple, where he begins to walk, jump, and praise God. Acts 3:9 specifically indicates, "All the people saw him walking and praising God"; thus, the healing results in a testimony to God's power and salvation (Acts 3:10).

¹⁸⁹ Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46–49.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Scibilia, "Supernatural Assistance," 74–75; e.g., *PGM* XII.107–121; LXXXIX.1–27.

Second, the people, in response to the healed man's actions, are excited and amazed. Peter, in response to their amazement, delivers a prophetic speech that explains the significance of the healing by testifying to Christ and calling for the people to repent (Acts 3:12–26). Later, Acts 4:4 informs that approximately five thousand men (ἄνδρες) joined the Christ-movement. Third, in Acts 4:1–3, the official Judean leaders (priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees) respond negatively to Peter's speech and arrest the two apostles.

With Peter and John's arrest, a deviance process is initiated against the two Christ-followers (Acts 4:1–4).¹⁹¹ In accordance with the chief priests' and the Sanhedrin's status as the official religio-political leaders in Jerusalem, Acts presents them operating as if they have the authority to determine what activities and persons pose a threat to Judean society and its social institutions.¹⁹² From the outset of the trial, the Judean leaders seem inclined to label Peter, John, and the group that they represent as engaging in deviant activity. According to Acts 4:2, the primary reason for the Judean leaders' initial displeasure with Peter and John is the apostles' proclamation of "the resurrection of the dead." Thus, a reader familiar with Luke 20:27 or Judean sects prior to 70 CE would likely be inclined to attribute the displeasure against the apostles primarily to the Sadducees, of whom Acts 23:8 later claims, "the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, angel, or spirit." It is to the Sadducees also that the high priest would belong.¹⁹³ Therefore, the trial is primarily a confrontation between ruling Judean elites and the peasant apostles; consequently, the reader would likely be aware of issues of power and authority during the trial.

¹⁹¹ Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labelling and Deviance Theory," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 113.

¹⁹² Elliott, "Temple vs. Household," 223–240.

¹⁹³ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Christianity*, 486–487; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 1, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 218, 384.

During the trial narrative of Acts 4, the topic of “power” is central. The Judean leaders ask Peter and John, “By what power or by what name did *you* do this” (Acts 4:7)? Here the connection between power (δύναμις) and name (ὄνομα) becomes explicit.¹⁹⁴ It is interesting that although the initial reason for the trial is the Judean leaders’ displeasure over the preaching of the resurrection of the dead, their question implies that they are also displeased with Peter’s miracle-working. However, an explanation is never given for why the Judean leaders take offense at the healing of the lame man. Nevertheless, through the question posed to Peter and John, the narrative strongly indicates that a central issue in the trial is whether Peter and John have exercised legitimate authority and power in order to heal the lame man.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Judean leaders’ decision to order Peter and John to stop speaking and teaching in Jesus’ name (Acts 4:17–18) also presents the Judean leaders being opposed to Peter and John’s public preaching and teaching. Thus, also at the center of the Judean leaders’ displeasure is Peter’s and John’s apparent assumption that they have the authority to teach the people, particularly to teach them a doctrine that the Sadducees find unacceptable. Therefore, it seems that Acts portrays the Judean leaders being troubled by two uneducated peasants who have assumed the authority to lead and to instruct within the confines of the temple, which is a role that these Judean leaders themselves claimed as their own.

Peter’s response to the Judean leaders’ initial question comes while he is filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8). Peter’s behavior while he is filled with the Holy Spirit is not indicative of an ASC; instead, *being filled with the Holy Spirit* functions as a description of non-trance possession that explains Peter’s unexpected confidence and rhetorical skill. Of course, as Acts 2

¹⁹⁴ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:139; Johnson, *Acts*, 77; cf. Lampe, “Miracles in Acts,” 170.

¹⁹⁵ Of course, this line of questioning is then very similar to the question the very same Judean leaders ask Jesus in Luke 20:1–2: “It occurred one day, while [Jesus] was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the good news, that the chief priests and scribes, along with the elders, approached and spoke saying to him, ‘Tell us in what authority you do these things, or who is the one who gives to you this authority?’”

has already informed the reader and as Peter will indicate in Acts 4:8–11, 19, the Christ-followers' authority to heal and to preach comes from God.

In respect to the Judean leaders' command that Peter and John cease testifying in Jesus' name (Acts 4:18), the two apostles appear to attempt a neutralization of the Judean leaders' deviantization of them and their testimony. Employing the neutralization technique of *appeal to higher loyalties*,¹⁹⁶ they claim that their actions are performed in obedience to a divine command (Acts 4:19–21).¹⁹⁷ Thus, Peter informs the highest official representatives of the Judean religious system, namely the high priest and his elite associates, that God has authorized the Christ-followers to speak on God's behalf. An additional implication of the apostles' response to the Judean leaders is that the Judean leaders are opposing the work of God;¹⁹⁸ thus, the apostles also make an implicit use of the neutralization technique of *condemnation of the condemners*. As should be expected from our reading of the anthropological study of spirit possession, the Holy Spirit's possession of the Christ-followers involves a confrontation between the conventional authority figures and those who are supposed to submit to these authority figures. In response to the attempted deviantization of Peter and John, the prophetic speech of these two divinely possessed men effectively functions as resistance to the conventional religio-political authorities in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Acts 4:15–17 suggests that the popularity of the Christ-followers among the Jerusalemite populace is strong enough that the Sanhedrin releases the apostles. Yet, this changes in Acts 6.

After Peter and John are released, Acts depicts the Christ-followers in Jerusalem responding to the entire ordeal with praise-filled prayer to God, who responds by shaking the building they are in and filling them with the Holy Spirit so that they continue speaking God's

¹⁹⁶ Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 62–65.

¹⁹⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:237.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:289.

word with confidence. Although the Judean leaders attempt to put an end to the budding Christ-movement in Acts 4, the Christ-followers in Jerusalem become more zealous. They continue to speak the word of God with confidence (Acts 4:31), and the apostles continue testifying to Christ (Acts 4:33). In addition, the closing summary in Acts 4:32–35 indicates that the Jerusalemite church’s social cohesion actually increases to the point that they held all their property in common. The narrative also seems to employ more in-group language to describe the Christ-follower gathering after the trial, thus portraying the Christ-followers as beginning to see themselves as a distinct Judean sub-group. In particular, following the trial, Peter and John “went to *their own people*” (Acts 4:23; ἦλθον πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους), and the Christ-followers refer to *themselves as God’s “slaves.”* The narration of increased social cohesion within a sub-cultural group in response to external opposition correlates with sociological group studies that have found that external threats to a group typically increase social cohesion and solidify the group’s boundaries.¹⁹⁹

Peter as an Authoritative Miracle-Worker (Acts 5)

Although the end of Acts 4 draws attention to the piety and social cohesion within the Jerusalemite church, the first episode in Acts 5 narrates Ananias and Sapphira’s attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit and the church. Peter responds with what Aune would label a prophetic *announcement of judgment* that declares the instantaneous deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11).²⁰⁰ Six aspects of this episode are significant for my study. First, the narrative of Acts

¹⁹⁹ E.g., Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1956), 95–104, 152; Anthony Oberschall, “Theories of Social Conflict,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 4 (1978), 293; Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, *Groups in Harmony and Tension: An Integration of Studies on Intergroup Relations* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 260–266, 294.

²⁰⁰ Aune, *Prophecy*, 323; cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 111–112; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 38; Haenchen, *Acts*, 238–239; Witherington, *Acts*, 216–218. Bruce and Conzelmann warn against attributing to Peter direct responsibility for Ananias and Sapphira’s deaths as if Peter utters a deadly curse against them; instead, a better reading of this episode considers Peter to be only announcing a divine judgment against them. However, unacceptable are Witherington’s

continues its trend toward focusing on Peter. A second aspect is Peter's increasing similarity to the Hebrew prophets, particularly to those that both proclaim divine messages and work wonders. Third, a close connection between prophecy and wonder-working exists in Acts 5:1–11, since Peter's prophetic words initiate the miraculous deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. Fourth, the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira indicate that the wonder-working power given to the Christ-followers not only enables beneficial miracles (healing, exorcism) but also enables punitive miracles.²⁰¹ Fifth, Peter's question as to why Satan has filled Ananias' heart (Acts 5:3) stands in direct contrast to earlier indications that Christ-followers, especially Peter, are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31).²⁰² The implication is that while the Holy Spirit possesses Peter, Satan has taken possession of Ananias, who should be possessed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Ananias has become a deviant in the Christ-following community.²⁰³ Lastly, the Holy Spirit's relationship with moral-ethical matters is quite apparent in this narrative episode. Peter says that Ananias and Sapphira have attempted to deceive the *Holy Spirit* (Acts 5:3). If the Holy Spirit were only the inspirer of prophecy, Peter should not designate the Holy Spirit as the offended

and Haenchen's attempts to explain Ananias and Sapphira's deaths as the results of heart attacks resulting from shock. Equally unacceptable is Witherington's attempt to characterize Peter as confronting, but not judging, the couple. Peter's confrontational speech certainly implies that Peter has judged them, even if God is the one responsible for sentencing them to death. In addition, Conzelmann's claim that the portrayal of Ananias and Sapphira's deaths "derive" from a "magical" concept of power is unfounded (Acts, 38). Peter in this episode seems mostly to be acting out the role of prophet, not *μῦθος* (cf. 2 Kgs 2:23–25).

²⁰¹ Cf. Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 215. Despite Kee's recognition of the concepts of *magic* and *miracle* as social constructs (*Miracle in Christian World*, 100–101), he characterizes the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira as more magical than miraculous because "the incident lies close to the operation of unseen forces than to the fulfillment of a divine redemptive purpose" (*Miracle in Christian World*, 215). Kee's characterization of Ananias' and Sapphira's deaths as magical derives from his Maussian description of magic as "manipulation of forces" (*Miracle in Christian World*, 92) and from his unstated theological assumption that miracles are inherently redemptive. This assumption of the essentially redemptive character of miracles is also reflected in his concentration upon miraculous healings.

²⁰² Barrett, *Acts*, 1:266; Bock, *Acts*, 222; Haenchen, *Acts*, 237; cf. Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Fortress: Minneapolis, 1995), 22. As Richter Reimer notes, Peter indicates that Satan has filled only Ananias' heart, not Sapphira's also.

²⁰³ Bock, *Acts*, 222.

party of Ananias and Sapphira's plot. Since the Holy Spirit is the offended party, Acts presents the Holy Spirit having a stake in the moral-ethical leadership of the Jerusalemite church.

The opening of the summary in Acts 5:12–16 is a generalizing statement that effectively portrays not only Peter but also all the apostles as working signs and wonders.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Acts 5:15–16 concentrates on the wondrous healings and exorcisms that Peter performs either directly or indirectly. Healing by means of Peter's shadow could qualify as a magical act.²⁰⁵

Pieter W. van der Horst claims that in Greco-Roman culture, shadows were considered to be an extension of a person, particularly his or her soul; thus, the shadow carried all the personal qualities of the person to whom the shadow belongs. Consequently, contact with the shadow of a malevolent person could be harmful, and contact with the shadow of a righteous person, such as Peter, could be beneficial.²⁰⁶ Therefore, Baker claims that contact with Peter's shadow is

²⁰⁴ Haenchen, *Acts*, 242; Mills, *Human Agents*, 115; Sterling, "Athletes of Virtue," 682; Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 264; cf. Bock, *Acts*, 233; Haenchen, *Acts*, 200; Pervo, *Acts*, 135; Witherington, *Acts*, 224. I follow Pervo in translating διὰ in Acts 5:12 with an instrumental force, so that "through hands of the apostles" (τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων) is metonymy for the apostles themselves, who are the direct agents responsible for the miracles; however, Witherington translates διὰ with a force of intermediate agency, so that God is the direct agent who performs signs and wonders through the intermediate agency of the apostles' hands, which still may function as metonymy for the apostles (see also Bock, *Acts*, 233).

²⁰⁵ Susan R. Garrett, "Light on a Dark Subject and Vice Versa: Magic and Magicians in the New Testament," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 143; Kee, *Miracle in Christian World*, 215; cf. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 99; Bruce, *Acts*, 118; Haenchen, *Acts*, 246; P. W. van der Horst, "Peter's Shadow: The Religio-Historical Background of Acts v. 15," *NTS* 23 (1977), 204–212; John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition*, SBT 28 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1974), 107. Bruce notes a similarity between the automatically efficacious power of Peter's shadow and the automatically efficacious power accessed when the hemorrhaging woman touches Jesus' robe (Matt 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–44). Hull claims that the automatically efficacious power in the healing of the hemorrhaging woman is *mana*-like power. Of course, Hull's conception of *mana*-like power ultimately derives from Mauss' faulty understanding of *mana* (Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972], 108–121; cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss," in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, by Marcel Mauss [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950], xlv; see also E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Morphology and Function of Magic," *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 31 [1929], 622; David Pocock, foreword to *A General Theory of Magic*, by Marcel Mauss, trans. Robert Brain [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972], 5–6; Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Redfield [Boston: Beacon; Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1948], 57–58).

²⁰⁶ van der Horst, "Peter's Shadow," 207–212. Van der Horst claims that his non-biblical evidence "suffices . . . to prove" that in Greco-Roman culture, particularly popular culture, a person's shadow is an extension of his being or soul. Two aspects of van der Horst's article weaken the certainty of his conclusions. First, he relies too much upon James George Frazer's ethnocentric analysis of non-Western and traditional understandings of shadows,

effectively the same as touching Peter himself.²⁰⁷ However, this still does not require the reader to identify the healing power within Peter's shadow as a power inherent to Peter himself because any divine power for which Peter functions as an intermediary would also be available in his shadow. Although Twelftree suggests that the healing power associated with Peter's shadow is the divine power first imparted to him at Pentecost, Acts never makes such an explicit identification, and a Greco-Roman observer or reader outside the Christ-movement also might not make such an identification.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, in light of the foundational role that the Pentecost event plays for miracle-working in Acts, Twelftree's identification of the power of Peter's shadow as the divine power that Peter first receives at Pentecost is still a plausible reading. Ultimately, nothing in this passage, however, indicates that Peter is either practicing or not practicing *μαγεία*. Thus, although the possibility of characterizing Peter's healings in Acts 5:14–16 as *magic* may arise for the modern Westerner, the possibility that Peter's healings may be *μαγεία* does not appear in Acts 5:15–16.

Furthermore, the narrative presents the Twelve, particularly Peter, receiving much honor and authority from their miracle-working abilities, which up to this point is still the sole prerogative of the Twelve. The status and authority that the apostles within the Christ-movement receive from their miracle-working in Acts 2:43 continues to increase in Acts 5:12–16 to the point that they are receiving praise and honor from those outside the Christ-movement. The monopoly that the Twelve so far holds over miracle-working, however, seems to run counter to Peter's adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET), which indicates that God “will give . . . signs

which Frazer further decontextualizes into a hodgepodge of examples of “primitive” concepts of shadows. Second, his discussions of Greco-Roman understandings of shadows are much too brief and do not give enough attention to the historical and literary contexts of his textual evidence.

²⁰⁷ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 99.

²⁰⁸ Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 144.

upon the earth” (Acts 2:19) through *all* those whom God has poured the Holy Spirit, not just the Twelve.

As in Acts 3–4, Judean leaders, specifically the high priest and the Sadducees, arrest and try the apostles that are successful in their preaching and miracle-working (Acts 5:17–18, 24–40). This time, however, the Judean leaders arrest all of the Twelve. The conflict between the Judean leaders and the Christ-followers is more intense than in the previous trial in Acts 4. First, the perspective that Acts ascribes to the Judean leaders’ treats the apostles as if the apostles are now consciously disregarding official instructions to stop speaking in Jesus’ name (Acts 4:17–18; 5:27–28). Second, Acts 5:17 provides a new reason for the arrest of apostles, specifically that the Judean leaders arrest the apostles simply because they are jealous (ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου). Considering that the arrest immediately follows a recounting of the apostles’ popularity as wonder-workers, the reader is likely to attribute the Judean leaders’ jealousy to displeasure over the attention that the Jerusalemite public is giving the apostles. Nevertheless, it is possible to assume that in the narrative world of Acts, the high priest and Sadducees see the preaching and miracle-working of the apostles as a usurpation of their role as mediators between the Judeans and God.

Although modern English speakers tend to make no significant distinction between *jealousy* and *envy*, other cultures, including Greco-Roman culture, often distinguish between the two. *Envy* (φθόνος) is a person’s desire to possess that which does not rightfully belong to him or her. *Jealousy* (ζήλος), instead, is a person’s desire to possess or to maintain possession of something that rightfully belongs to him or her.²⁰⁹ Thus, Acts 5:17 portrays the Judean leaders as “full of jealousy” (ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου) because they are protecting what they consider to be

²⁰⁹ Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 109, 126–129.

their prerogative to mediate between God and the Judeans and are not willing to cede it to a low-status group of non-elites.²¹⁰ Of course, Acts portrays the Christ-followers as legitimately possessing the right to speak (prophesy) and to act (work miracles) on God's behalf; however, Peter and the apostles never seem to challenge explicitly the legitimacy of the Sanhedrin's authority.

During the trial, Peter resembles one of the Hebrew prophets, such as Elijah or Jeremiah, who defied the Israelite and Judahite rulers by preaching messages that challenged the rulers' policies. Acts portrays Peter once again attempting to neutralize the Judean leaders' deviantization of the Christ-followers, and just as in Acts 4:19–20, he employs the neutralization technique of appealing to higher loyalties (Acts 5:29).²¹¹ The opposition from Judean leaders does not seem to damage the Christ-following social identity of the apostles in anyway because Acts 5 ends with the apostles continuously teaching and proclaiming Jesus (v. 42).

The Story of Stephen (Acts 6–7)

Although Peter is the central character in Acts 1–5, Stephen occupies the spotlight in Acts 6–7. A social-ethical conflict at the beginning of Acts 6 causes the Jerusalemite church to choose seven men to administrate the Christ-following community's aid to widows. A prerequisite characteristic of the Seven is that each member be "full of spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3); thus, Acts portrays them as possessed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Acts 6:3–5 makes clear that the apostles are not the only Christ-followers possessed by the Holy Spirit.

The specific notes on Stephen being full of wisdom, faith, power, and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3, 5, 8; 7:55) emphasize Stephen's preeminence among the Seven to the extent that I

²¹⁰ Contra Albrecht Stumpff, "ζῆλος, ζηλόω, ζηλωτής, παραζηλόω," *TDNT* 2:880.

²¹¹ Cf. Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 225–226.

would consider him an exemplar of the Seven, which means that he is the most characteristically prototypical member of the Seven. Although Acts 6:2–4 indicates that the Seven’s primary role is administering the distribution of food to widows, the remainder of ch. 6 portrays Stephen as both a controversial preacher (Acts 6:9–10; 7:2–53) and a miracle-worker (Acts 6:8).²¹² Stephen is also full of grace (χάρις) and power (δύναμις), which appears to be the source of his miracles (Acts 6:8). With the appearance of the Hellenist Stephen as a miracle-worker, not only has the ability to work miracles extended beyond the Twelve, but Stephen is also the first miracle-worker who does not come from Galilee.

Although within the Christ-movement, Stephen, like the apostles, possesses the reputation of being an effective preacher and miracle-worker, his preaching angers a group of Judeans. Stephen not only faces opposition from the Judean officials, as Peter does, but he also experiences, unlike Peter, significant opposition from the Jerusalemite populace. Specifically, a group of Hellenist Judeans accuses Stephen of speaking against Moses and the temple (Acts 6:9–12).²¹³ Stephen, like Jesus, is put on trial before the Sanhedrin for his controversial teaching (cf. Luke 23:1–5). It is the Roman governor and his executioners, however, who officially execute Jesus, whereas a Judean lynch mob stones Stephen (cf. Luke 23:32–49; Acts 7:54–60).²¹⁴

During Stephen’s trial, the conflict does not involve Galilean leaders of the Christ-movement, as do the first two trials (Acts 4:1–22; 5:27–40); instead, the conflict is now between the Sanhedrin and a Hellenist Judean residing in Jerusalem. Ultimately, the conflict, however, is between Stephen and the Jerusalemite populace. Animosity toward Stephen stems from his purported criticism of the temple (Acts 6:13–14), and despite the narrative’s the claim that these

²¹² Pervo, *Acts*, 152.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 167.

²¹⁴ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:385; Bock, *Acts*, 313–315; Pervo, *Acts*, 196, Witherington, *Acts*, 276; contra Bruce, *Acts*, 169–170.

were false accusations (Acts 6:13), Stephen's subtle critique of the temple made by human hands (Acts 7:48–50) could easily leave doubt with the reader as to how "false" the accusations actually are. Thus, although Peter and the Twelve participate in temple activities and seem to be generally supportive of the temple, Stephen seems quite critical of the temple and its cult. Nevertheless, what ultimately enrages the Jerusalemite populace are Stephen's portrayal of the Jerusalemites as murderers and his vision of Jesus at God's right (Acts 7:51–59). The conflict is no longer between a Christ-follower and the Judean leaders; instead, it is between a Christ-follower and the Jerusalemite populace. Thus, Stephen's trial demonstrates that in Acts, miracle-working alone does not ensure positive public reputation outside the Christ-movement.

During Stephen's trial, Acts 7:51 has Stephen claiming that the Judeans have always opposed the Holy Spirit. Acts 7:51–52, thus, sets up a direct contrast between Stephen and Judeans outside the Christ-movement. Stephen, on the one hand, is an exemplary Spirit-filled Christ-following Judean, who is falsely labeled as a deviant Judean. On the other hand, Stephen claims that the Judeans murder prophets and oppose the Holy Spirit. Thus, the narrative depicts Stephen employing the neutralization technique of *condemnation of the condemners*.²¹⁵ However, Stephen's use of this neutralization technique does not function merely to evade deviantization, which is the typical function of neutralization, but it also redefines the situation.²¹⁶ By portraying Stephen as full of the Holy Spirit and having Stephen accuse the Judeans of opposing the Holy Spirit, Acts redefines the situation so that Stephen is a normal person and his opponents are the deviants. Of course, Stephen's accusations of murder and disobedience only further enrage his opponents.

²¹⁵ Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957), 668; cf. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 226–227.

²¹⁶ Cf. Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, "Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label," *Social Problems* 22 (1974), 110–111, 113.

At this point, the language of possession by the Holy Spirit appears again: “Being full of the Holy Spirit and staring into the sky, [Stephen] saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God’s right and said, ‘Look! I see the skies opening up and the Son of Man standing at God’s right’” (Acts 7:55–56). Stephen’s final vision functions as a final confirmation of Stephen’s innocence and the truth of his preaching.²¹⁷ Stephen’s vision seems to be related to his being full of the Holy Spirit; thus, the vision, of which the narrative portrayal certainly resembles an ASC, appears as the result of non-trance possession, since Stephen does not seem to experience mental dissociation. More importantly, the vision easily qualifies as a soul journey because Stephen sees into the celestial realm, where Jesus resides and where Stephen will permanently reside when Jesus receives his spirit.

The next episode is Acts 8:1–3, which introduces Saul of Tarsus and narrates the persecution following Stephen’s death. The dispersion of many of the Christ-followers from Jerusalem represents a critical point in the narrative portrayal of the Christ-movements’ social cohesion and social identity. Dispersion of some of the Christ-followers into surrounding regions could easily have led to the disintegration of the group. Nevertheless, following the trend set by Peter and the apostles after their trials, the dispersed Christ-followers use their experiences with opposition as an opportunity to fulfill Jesus’ instructions to carry the good news to the rest of Judea, to Samaria, and ultimately to the rest of the world (Acts 1:8).

The first episode following the persecution is Acts’ narration of the initial mission to Samaria. Acts 8:4–8 sets up the scene for the first *μαγεία*-miracle conflict in Acts, specifically the interactions between Simon of Samaria and the Christ-followers Philip, Peter, and John (Acts 8:9–25). Although miracle-working occurs quite early in Acts, conflict between the Christ-

²¹⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 310–311.

following miracle-workers and μάγοι does not occur until ch. 8; thus, Acts' characterization of miracle-workers is not entirely dependent upon a contrast between them and μάγοι.

III. Character Sketch of Miracle-Workers in Acts 1–7

By the time Acts 8:4–25 presents the first μαγεία-miracle conflict, the reader is already familiar with the character type of *Christ-following miracle-worker*. Two named individuals so far have occupied the role of miracle-worker: Peter and Stephen. In addition, the Twelve perform miracles (Acts 5:12). From the portrayal of these characters and additional remarks regarding miracles in Acts 1–7, I am able to draw a preliminary character sketch for miracle-workers in Acts. For convenience, I have arranged the elements of this sketch into six heuristic, interdependent groups: (1) position in the Christ-movement, (2) relationship with the Holy Spirit, (3) prophetic role, (4) service to others, (5) response to opposition, and (6) parallels with Christ. Furthermore, the resulting character sketch is tentative and subject to change as I continue to analyze the development of characters and themes through the course of Acts.

Position in the Christ-Movement

The most basic characteristic of miracle-workers in Acts is active membership in the Christ-movement. This characteristic is a pre-requisite for all other characteristics of a miracle-worker. In addition, the miracle-workers have so far occupied leadership positions in the Jerusalemite church. Peter is a member of the Twelve and a spokesperson for the church (Acts 1:15; 2:14; 5:29). Nevertheless, it is important to notice that Peter is not *the* leader of the Jerusalemite church; instead, the highest leadership role in the church is shared by the Twelve as is demonstrated in Acts 6:2, where the Twelve as a group suggest that the church elect the Seven. Although Peter's role as spokesperson for the Twelve seems to be an extension of his

outspokenness in the Gospel of Luke (9:20, 33; 22:33), his role as a church leader derives from Jesus' initial inclusion of Peter among the Twelve (Luke 5:12–16; cf. 5:10–11).²¹⁸ The church's election of Stephen to the Seven demonstrates that he also is not a self-appointed leader.

Although Acts draws specific attention to Peter's and Stephen's ability to speak confidently and prophetically,²¹⁹ Peter and Stephen also function as social and moral-ethical leaders for the church. Peter, for instance, confronts Ananias and Sapphira regarding their fraudulent scheme (Acts 5:1–11), and Stephen's initial leadership responsibility is to help oversee the fair distribution of food to widows (Acts 6:1–7).

Acts also emphasizes that these miracle-working leaders enjoy great respect among Christ-followers and sometimes among the general populace. Stephen, in particular, is elected to the Seven by the church membership because he is full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Stephen is unpopular with Jerusalemites outside the Christ-movement, but Peter is quite popular with the crowd witnessing his healing of a lame man in Acts 3:1–10. Thus, a direct relationship seems to exist between successful miracle-working and public popularity, especially popularity among the Christ-followers. Effective miracle-working seems to increase the personal status of the miracle-worker always within the Christ-movement and sometimes among the general populace. Furthermore, a Christ-follower's reputation as a successful miracle-worker seems to reinforce his reputation as a successful prophetic witness to the gospel. The relationship between effective miracle-working and a Christ-follower's status as a group leader appears to be reciprocal. With both Peter and Stephen, Christ-follower leaders are the only miracle-workers in Acts 2–7, and a leaders' ability to perform miracles effectively increases that leaders' status and functional

²¹⁸ Bruce, *Acts*, 47; Witherington, *Acts*, 139.

²¹⁹ Acts 2:14–40; 3:11–26; 4:8–14, 19; 5:3–4, 8–9, 29–32; 6:2–53, 56.

authority in the Christ-movement.²²⁰ Acts 5:11–16 presents both Christ-followers and those outside the Christ-movement as being in awe of Peter and considering him a great healer. Nevertheless, Peter does not seek notoriety; therefore, he gives credit for his miracle-working to God and Jesus (Acts 3:12–13; 4:10).

Despite the emergence of the Twelve and Stephen as prophetic miracle-workers in Acts 2–7, Peter’s adapted prophecy from Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) still awaits complete fulfillment. The adapted prophecy indicates that God will pour out the Holy Spirit on *all* of God’s slaves, including the young, old, men, and women; however, only male leaders, whose ages are not provided, engage in miracle-working and prophetic speech after Pentecost. Although no indication exists in Acts 2:1–13 that women did not participate in the xenoglossic preaching on Pentecost, Acts 2–7 contains no *explicit* reference to women Christ-followers engaging in prophetic speech and miracle-working, especially after Pentecost.²²¹ Furthermore, by the end of Acts 7, the audience has yet to read about any Christ-follower who is not a recognized male leader engaging in prophetic speech and miracle-working.²²²

Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Prior to the Pentecost event, the only other times that Luke’s Gospel and Acts present the followers of Jesus performing miracles are during Jesus’ ministry (Luke 9:1–6, 40; Luke 10:1–20). During Pentecost, the Holy Spirit causes the Christ-followers to perform xenoglossic preaching (Acts 2:4–13). Immediately following Pentecost, Peter works the first miraculous healing after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 3:1–10). Since the disciples’ ability to work miracles in

²²⁰ Cf. Acts 2:42–43; 4:33–35; 5:12–16; 6:5–8.

²²¹ D’Angelo, “(Re)presentations of Women,” 186; cf. Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online E-book, 29; Mount, “1 Cor 11:3–16,” 313–340.

²²² D’Angelo, “(Re)presentations of Women,” 186; F. Scott Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts,” *BibInt* 7 (1999), 136.

Luke's Gospel is delegated authority and since the Christ-followers' ability to work miracles in Acts comes only after they are baptized with the Holy Spirit, the power to perform miracles through Jesus' name is more a matter of exercising delegated authority than it is a matter of employing Jesus' name in Acts as an automatically efficacious, verbal instrument. The delegated quality of the Christ-followers' miracle-working authority is seen most clearly in Peter's claim that it is God, not power itself nor human ability, that has healed the lame man at the temple (Acts 3:12).²²³ Thus, the power of Jesus' name is the power of God, which Jesus himself delegated to the Christ-following miracle-workers.

By Acts 6:8, the ability to perform miracles has extended beyond the Twelve to Stephen, who has power and performs signs and wonders. Thus, just as Jesus initially delegates miraculous authority to the Twelve in Luke 9 and later delegates this authority to seventy others in Luke 10, the power to perform miracles extends beyond the Twelve to the Seven.

Some ambiguity exists as to whether the Holy Spirit fills only the Twelve or all the Christ-followers gathered in the house (οἶκος) on Pentecost. Typically, Acts is very specific as to when it is referring only to the Twelve.²²⁴ In addition, the presence of πάντες in Acts 2:1 more likely functions as a means of referring to the whole group of Christ-followers not just the Twelve, who are the main characters in the previous episode in Acts 1:15–26. πάντες in Acts 2:1 most likely refers to all the Christ-followers, not just the Twelve; thus, the Holy Spirit fills *all* the Christ-followers gathered on Pentecost.²²⁵ Furthermore, Peter in Acts 2:38 indicates that *all* Christ-followers will be possessed by the Holy Spirit.²²⁶ Thus, I conclude that Acts presents

²²³ Bock, *Acts*, 168; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:139, 200; Witherington, *Acts*, 179.

²²⁴ Cf. Acts 1:2, 26; 2:37, 42–43; 4:33–37; 5:2, 12, 18, 29, 40; 6:6; 8:1, 14; 9:26; 11:1; 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4).

²²⁵ Haenchen, *Acts* 167–168; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 85; Witherington, *Acts*, 132; contra Pervo, *Acts*, 75–76.

²²⁶ Witherington, *Acts*, 132; cf. Davies, *Jesus the Healer*, 172.

all Christ-followers as experiencing non-trance possession; however, Acts does not seem to portray all Christ-followers as experiencing possession trance. Nevertheless, the observance of theophanic signs and participation in *xenoglossia* at Pentecost indicates that the Christ-following characters *at Pentecost* experience possession trance (Acts 2:1–4).

Since Acts 1–7 indicates that only the Twelve and Stephen perform miracles and that all Christ-followers should be possessed by the Holy Spirit, possession by the Holy Spirit does not automatically indicate that every Christ-follower performs miracles. Therefore, the performance of miracles in the Christ-movement requires Holy Spirit possession, but not all of those possessed by the Holy Spirit perform miracles. Miracle-working in Acts 1–7, instead, seems to be the activity of leaders in the Jerusalemite church.

Prophetic Role

When the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost, Acts places the Christ-followers, particularly Peter, in the Hebrew prophetic tradition. Three major aspects of the Hebrew prophetic tradition appear in Acts 1–7—inspired prophetic speech, wonder-working, and invocation of the divine name. As in some Hebrew prophetic traditions, possession by the Holy Spirit in Acts 1–7 results in prophetic speech.²²⁷ Acts 4:8 specifically indicates that Peter’s first speech before the Judean leaders occurs while he is filled with the Spirit.

Although the primary role of the Holy Spirit in Acts is the inspiration of prophecy, Acts presents the Twelve and Stephen as performing miracles through *δύναμις* supplied by the Holy Spirit. The concurrence of prophecy and miracle-working in the same persons also occurs in the

²²⁷ E.g., 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 19:20, 23; 2 Chr 15:1; Ezek 3:12–14; 11:24; Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET); cf. Bock, *Acts*, 210.

Hebrew prophetic tradition, particularly in people like Moses and Elisha.²²⁸ In addition, the miracles and preaching in Acts 2–7 are mutually interpretive acts. The prophetic speeches provide the hermeneutical key for properly interpreting the significance of the miracles, and the miracles serve as experiential confirmation and demonstration of the good news that the Christ-following prophets proclaim.²²⁹ Therefore, Peter, for example, does not merely proclaim eschatological renewal and salvation in Acts 2:14–39; he also makes this salvation manifest by saving a lame man from his disability and its social implications in Acts 3:1–10.²³⁰

As in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, the divine name is an important motif in Acts 1–7. In Peter’s quotation of Joel 3:5 (2:32 ET), salvation comes through the Lord’s name, which for Peter is Jesus’ name (Acts 2:21–22, 38).²³¹ Peter’s healings in Jesus’ name are manifestations of salvation, specifically salvation from physical impairment (Acts 3:6; 4:10). Healing of physical ailments and impairments represents salvation as physical wholeness, which occurs in anticipation of eschatological wholeness (cf. Isa 35:5–6). Invoking Jesus’ name is a means by which the Twelve implement their delegated authority to carry out Jesus’ commission and to utilize his power.²³² Therefore, the Twelve’s prophetic authority and miracle-working ability are Jesus’ authority and God’s power, both of which Jesus has delegated to the Twelve.²³³ The ability to draw upon divine authority and power in Acts corresponds with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Therefore, the divinely possessed Christ-followers’ invocation of Jesus’ name is quite opposite the situation found in some texts of the *PGM*. In the *PGM*, the use of a divine

²²⁸ Lampe, “Miracles in Acts,” 166; e.g., Exod 7–11; 14:21–31; Deut 34:10–12; 2 Kgs 4:1–8, 34–44; 6:1–7; see also Acts 2:14–36; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32.

²²⁹ Daniel Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark / Continuum, 2003), 123–124; cf. Saucy, “Miracles and Proclamation,” 284.

²³⁰ Cf. Lampe, “Miracles in Acts,” 166.

²³¹ See also Acts 4:12.

²³² Bietenhard, “ὄνομα,” 5:277; cf. Lampe, “Miracles in Acts,” 170–171.

²³³ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 26; Mills, *Human Agents*, 109.

name often grants the human actor power over a spirit or deity; thus, the human actor demonstrates some degree of direct control over the spirit or deity. The miracle-workers in Acts employ authority that Jesus delegated to them, rather than authority that they claim for themselves.²³⁴ Accordingly, the adaptation of Joel 3:2 (2:29) in Acts 2:18 metaphorically refers to the possessed Christ-followers as God's "slaves," which stands in contradistinction to certain ritual attempts in the *PGM* to obtain a spirit or deity to be a personal assistant (πάρεδρος) for the human ritual actor. Some texts in the *PGM* allow a ritual actor to gain a spirit assistant through petition, offerings, or appeals to a spirit or deity more powerful than the potential spirit assistant.²³⁵ Several texts in the *PGM*, however, instruct the ritual actor to use direct coercion to force the spirit or deity to serve the actor. Yet, regardless of whether the ritual actor uses coercion or less forceful means of obtaining a spirit assistant, the spirit or deity who serves as the actor's assistant serves the human actor. Acts' presentation of the possession of the human miracle-worker by the Holy Spirit is more in line with the Hebrew prophetic tradition than the spells in the *PGM* for obtaining spirit assistants.²³⁶

Lastly, the miracle-working Christ-follower fulfills prophecy when he or she prophesies or works a miracle. Specifically, the prophetic and miracle-working activity within the Jerusalemite church is a fulfillment of Jesus' instructions concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8 and the fulfillment of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET).²³⁷ As fulfillers of prophecy, Christ-following miracle-workers are carrying out God's plan for salvation through Jesus. Nevertheless, despite Peter's proclamation in Acts 2:17–20 that both men and women will

²³⁴ Mills, *Human Agents*, 109.

²³⁵ *PGM* I.1–42, 42–195; IV.1331–1389, 1716–1870, 1928–2005, 2006–2125, 2145–2240; VII.862–928; XIa.1–40; XII.14–95; Scibilia, "Supernatural Assistance," 75–79; see also, Richard Gordon, "Reporting the Marvellous: Private Divination in the Greek Magical Papyri," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, SHR 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 72–75; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*.

²³⁶ Lampe, "Miracles in Acts," 166.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 173–174.

participate in prophetic activity, modern readers should be careful not to understand Acts to be portraying Peter and the Jerusalemite church as radical egalitarians. First, it is significant that Acts 2:18 transforms the reference to actual slaves in Joel 3:2 (2:29 ET) to a metaphorical description of Christ-followers as slaves, thereby removing the socio-economic dimension of the prophecy. Second, nowhere in Acts 2–5, does a woman, slave, or child actually prophesy or work a miracle; instead, these activities so far are the sole prerogative of church leaders, specifically the Twelve and Stephen. Therefore, despite Peter’s use of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) to explain the Pentecost event, Acts 2–7 provides only male leaders as examples of prophetic miracle-workers.

Service to Others

Eschatological salvation is anticipated in Acts by salvation as physical wholeness and salvation as social cohesion. Salvation as physical wholeness, in particular, occurs through Christ-following miracle-working. Accordingly, Christ-followers in Acts typically perform miracles as a service to others. Thus, Peter heals a lame man (Acts 3:1–10), and Peter claims that faith in Christ, not Peter himself, has caused the healing (Acts 3:12, 16). Peter’s subsequent miracles in Acts 5:15–16 are healings and exorcisms. Although Acts does not indicate exactly what kind of miracles Stephen performs (Acts 6:8), his role as an administrator of the community’s aid to widows suggests that he also was not self-serving. Peter’s cursing of Ananias and Sapphira, of course, is not a beneficial service to the couple (Acts 5:1–11); however, Peter does not perform the curses as a means for self-aggrandizement. The deaths of the couple, however, are a means by which the narrative presents God addressing behavior that opposes social cohesion in the Christ-movement, particularly selfishness and self-aggrandizement. Therefore, the miracle-

workers are to avoid self-glorification, and miracle-working should be service to God and to other people.

Facing Opposition

Just as the Hebrew prophets frequently faced opposition, the Christ-followers also face opposition to their prophetic preaching.²³⁸ Trials of Christ-followers before Judean leaders in Jerusalem are attempts to identify the Christ-followers as deviant criminals and to punish them as such. During Peter and John's trial in Acts 4:1–22, their response to the leaders is a perfect example of the deviance neutralizing technique of *appeal to higher loyalties* (Acts 4:19–20). At this point, the Judean leaders' attempt to deviantize Peter and John seems quite unsuccessful, due in part to the general public being pleased with Peter and John on account of the healing of the lame man (Acts 4:21).²³⁹

When the apostles continue their preaching and miracle-working, the high priest and the Sadducees are upset and put all of the Twelve on trial (Acts 5:1–40). Acts 5:17 actually sets up a nice contrast between the apostles who are *filled with the Holy Spirit* and the Sadducees who are *filled with jealousy*. During a second trial, Peter and the apostles again employ the neutralization technique of *appeal to higher loyalties* (Acts 5:29–32). The trial and the subsequent flogging of the apostles only serve to encourage the apostles to continue their teaching and preaching (Acts 5:41–42).

In Acts 6:8–7:60, opposition to the Christ-followers intensifies. “Some of those from the synagogue called the Freedmen, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asians” incite the elders and scribes to arrest Stephen. Stephen's speech is a complex example of deviance

²³⁸ Pervo, *Acts*, 11.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

neutralization.²⁴⁰ The overall effect of the speech is the neutralization technique of *condemning the condemners*, since the narrative depicts Stephen portraying his Judean opponents as historically disobedient to God (Acts 7:41, 47–53). Stephen’s heavenly vision of Jesus at God’s right hand further *redefines* the situation.²⁴¹ For Stephen, the true spokesperson for God at this trial is Stephen himself, not the Judean leaders. The heavenly vision validates Stephen’s belief by showing that Jesus, who authorizes Stephen to preach prophetically, is himself God’s closest associate. Finally, the narrative presents Stephen demonstrating mercy and moral superiority to his opponents, which is a further play on the technique of condemning the condemners. While a lynch mob stones him, he forgives his own killers, who do not show him mercy (Acts 7:55–60).²⁴²

In the three trials in Acts 2–7, Acts presents all those on trial (Peter, John, the Twelve, Stephen) as performing their prophetic and wonder-working activities by means of God’s authority delegated to them through Jesus by means of possession by the Holy Spirit. The Christ-followers’ primary opponents in the three trials are the official Judean leaders, whom the narrative portrays as considering themselves to wield authority delegated to them by God on the basis of their possession of institutional offices of religious leadership, specifically priesthoods and membership in the Sanhedrin. Interestingly, the apostles never attempt to replace the Sanhedrin or usurp their authority, and despite Stephen’s veiled criticism of the temple (Acts 7:48–50), he does not appear to launch a direct attack on the authority of the official Judean leaders. Instead, the Christ-following leaders on trial seem rather more interested in the Judean leaders recognizing the legitimacy of their authority to preach and work miracles. Nevertheless, their appeal to higher loyalties during the trials certainly indicates that they operate as if Jesus’

²⁴⁰ Cf. Malina and Neyrey, “Conflict in Luke-Acts,” 121.

²⁴¹ Rogers and Buffalo, “Fighting Back,” 113.

²⁴² Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 99–130.

commission in Acts 1:8 and their own divinely delegated authority supersede the commands of the institutional Judean leaders. Thus, within the first two trials (Acts 4:1–22; 5:27–40), the conflict ultimate becomes a confrontation between elite, institutional authority and non-elite, charismatic authority. In light of the anthropological analysis of spirit possession, the Holy Spirit’s possession of the Twelve seemingly provides them with the authority to challenge and counter the official Judean leaders. Thus, the narrative depiction of the Jerusalemite church presents the Jerusalemite Christ-followers as a counter-cultural movement whose activities, outspokenness, and qualified attitude toward conventional religious authority drew opposition from the official Judean leaders, who initiate a moral campaign to label the Christ-movement as deviant.²⁴³ Important to note here is that the counter-cultural ideology and praxis of the Jerusalemite church are a direct result of the Christ-followers being possessed by the Holy Spirit beginning on Pentecost.

Parallels with Christ

The deviantization of the Christ-followers by the Judean leaders would not be too surprising for a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke, since Luke’s Gospel portrays Judeans in both Galilee and Jerusalem deviantizing Jesus and his ministry, including his miracle-working activity (for example, Luke 11:15). Of course, the deviantization of Jesus culminates in his trial and crucifixion. Like Jesus, Stephen also is tried by the Sanhedrin and is killed. Many similarities exist between Acts’ narration of Stephen’s martyrdom and the narrations of Jesus’ passion in the Synoptic Gospels.²⁴⁴ For instance, no opponent in Jerusalem is able to successfully refute Jesus or Stephen (Mark 12:34; Luke 20:40; Acts 6:10). Both Jesus and Stephen are arrested on order of

²⁴³ Osiek, *What about Social Setting*, 50; Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 220.

²⁴⁴ P. A. Blair, “The Death of Stephen,” *Tyndale House Bulletin* 2 (1957), 2–3; Pervo, *Acts*, 168–169; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:99–100; Witherington, *Acts*, 253.

the Judean leaders in Jerusalem and tried before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:43, 46, 53–65; Luke 22:54–71; Acts 6:12–15). Both Jesus and Stephen speak of seeing the Son of Man seated at the right of God (Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:56). Jesus verbally commits his soul to God, and Stephen asks God to receive his spirit (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). Stephen's prayer that God not hold the lynch mob guilty of killing him is very similar to Jesus' request from the cross that God forgive those who are responsible for Jesus' death (cf. Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60). Like Jesus, Stephen cries out before dying (Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:60).

However, the writer Luke seems to have left out of his Gospel some details from the Markan passion narrative and used them in Acts 6:8–7:60 to present Stephen's martyrdom as a commendable imitation of Jesus' passion. In both the Markan passion and Stephen's martyrdom, false witnesses testify that the defendant spoke of destroying the temple (Mark 14:56–58; Acts 6:13–14); however, this detail is missing from the Lukan passion. The Markan Jesus, according to the false witnesses, speaks of the temple as being made by human hands, and Stephen similarly refers to the temple as made by hands (Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48). In the Lukan passion, no reference exists to the temple being made by human hands. Although Jesus' opponents in the Gospel of Luke do not accuse him of blasphemy, Stephen's opponents claim that he spoke blasphemy, just as the high priest in the Gospel of Mark says that Jesus spoke blasphemy (Mark 14:64; Acts 6:11). The Gospel of Luke does not indicate that the high priest personally questions Jesus; however, the high priest personally questions both the Markan Jesus and Stephen (Mark 14:60–61; Acts 7:1). All the parallels between Jesus' passion and Stephen's martyrdom stress that Stephen imitates Jesus, even to the point of dying as Jesus died.

Acts does not portray Stephen as the only prophetic imitator of Jesus. Peter, like Jesus, also prophetically proclaims the coming eschatological salvation, performs healing miracles,

exorcises possessing spirits, and stands trial before the Sanhedrin on account of his preaching.²⁴⁵ Since the summaries in Acts 2:41–47, 4:32–35, and 5:12–16 are generalizing statements indicating that the specific experiences immediately preceding the summaries are characteristic of the experiences of the entire Jerusalemite church, Acts presents all those who preached and worked miracles in Jesus’ name were facing some degree of opposition, especially following Stephen’s death.²⁴⁶ Thus, for instance, Acts 5:17–18, 27, 29 indicate that the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 expected all the Christ-followers to not speak in Jesus’ name (cf. Acts 4:18), although Peter and John are the only apostles arrested in Acts 4:1–3. Similarly, Stephen’s lynching results in the persecution of all the Christ-followers in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1–3).

Just as the Gospel of Luke presents Jesus, whom Acts labels as God’s “servant” (παῖς; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30), experiencing acceptance from God and rejection by human opponents (particularly the Judean and Roman leaders), Acts 1–7 presents the Christ-followers experiencing similar status ambiguity. Their authority to preach prophetically and work miracles derives directly from their role as God’s metaphorical slaves (δούλοι) possessed by the Holy Spirit; nevertheless, the Judean leaders do not recognize the Christ-followers’ new identity and the authority resulting from that identity. Thus, the Judean leaders’ opposition to the Christ-movement demonstrates a reality that anthropologists have long realized: the possessed person’s ability to gain an authoritative alternate identity and effective social voice depends upon whether other people accept the person as genuinely possessed by the particular spirit identified as the possessor.²⁴⁷ In the case of the Christ-followers in Acts 2–7, the Judean leaders do not appear to accept the Christ-followers as those possessed by the Holy Spirit and sent by God to proclaim salvation. Nevertheless, the narrative portrays the Christ-followers being convinced that they are

²⁴⁵ Witherington, *Acts*, 173.

²⁴⁶ Sterling, “Athletes of Virtue,” 682; Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, 264–265.

²⁴⁷ Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 152–153; Snodgrass, “Imitation More Than Flattery,” 33–37.

genuinely possessed by the Holy Spirit; therefore, when the Christ-followers experience opposition, they perform even more fervently their roles as God's slaves and prophetic witnesses to salvation through Jesus' name.

The parallels between Jesus' experiences in the Gospel of Luke and the experiences of the Christ-following miracle-workers in Acts suggest that not only does Acts use Jesus as a model for developing its miracle-working characters but also Acts presents the imitation of Jesus as a characteristic element of the miracle-workers' identity. Although Jesus technically cannot operate as an exemplar for Christ-following miracle-workers because he is not a Christ-follower, he still serves as a model of prophetic and miracle-working activity for Christ-followers in Acts. As Pervo explains, the biographical parallels in Luke's Gospel and Acts, particularly those involving Jesus and Peter, function primarily as a means of communicating "continuity in salvation history," which, in turn, legitimates the early Christ-movement through its various phases in Acts.²⁴⁸

Summary of the Initial Character Sketch

Through an analysis of the first miracle-workers in Acts, a composite character sketch for miracle-workers in Acts 1–7 has emerged. Table 5.2 summarizes the primary elements within the character sketch. Since I advocate the use of Rosch's theory of natural referential categorization and prototypes, not all of these characteristics will appear in every miracle-working character in Acts. The degree of prototypicality for each miracle-worker depends upon how many and which of these characteristics are present in each miracle-worker. The most prototypical miracle-

²⁴⁸ Pervo, *Acts*, 10; see also, A. J. Mattill, Jr., "The Jesus-Paul Parallels and the Purpose of Luke-Acts: H. H. Evans Reconsidered," *NovT* 17 (1975), 15–46; David P. Moessner, "'The Christ Must Suffer': New Light on the Jesus—Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts," in *NovT* 28 (1986), 220–256; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:74–76.

workers, which are miracle-working exemplars, will be the miracle-workers that demonstrate all or nearly all of these characteristics.

Table 5.2 Characteristics of miracle-workers in Acts 1–7

1. Christ-follower
2. Leader in the Christ-movement, especially a member of the Twelve
3. Non-elite in social status
4. Men, although Peter's adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) allows for women
5. Selected (not self-appointed) to a church leadership position
6. Provides social and/or moral-ethical leadership for the church
7. Respected by the church, and sometimes by the general populace
8. Respect he or she receives is a result, not a goal, of his or her ministry
9. Divinely possessed by the Holy Spirit
10. Experiences ASCs (evidenced by charismatic *xenoglossia*, visions, etc.)
11. Experiences possession trance
12. Performs miracles in service to God and other people
13. Opposes selfishness and self-glorification
14. Prophesies, including preaching prophetically
15. Provides witness to Jesus and salvation in Jesus' name
16. Miracle-working is an aspect of his or her role as witness
17. Possesses delegated authority to perform miracles
18. Speaks prophetically and works miracles in Jesus' name
19. Prophetic and miracle-working activity is fulfillment of prophecy
20. Faces opposition, particularly from Judean leaders

21. Leads a ministerial career that parallels or imitates Jesus' life²⁴⁹
22. Employs neutralization techniques (particularly appeal to higher loyalties and condemning the condemners) to counter the deviantization of the Christ-movement
23. Endures physical punishment, both official and unofficial (flogging, stoning)

Many of these characteristics are not exclusive to miracle-workers and are characteristics of Christ-followers in general. In particular, Sorensen notes that divine possession (characteristics 7–9) is an identity marker for all Christ-followers in Acts.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, Baker indicates that opposition, particularly violent opposition, (characteristic 18) is an identity marker for the entire Christ-movement.²⁵¹ In addition, other characteristics common to the prototypical Christ-follower, such as responsible relationship with material possessions,²⁵² are demonstrated by the miracle-workers, but I have chosen not to list them because, although they contribute to the overall identity of *Christ-follower* in Acts, they provide a minimal contribution to the intra-group identity of *miracle-worker*. Finally, “miracle-worker” is likely a subset of the character type “Christ-following prophet,” since Acts portrays the Holy Spirit as preeminently a spirit of prophecy and emphasizes so strongly the prophetic role of the Christ-following witnesses. Thus, the primary identity of miracle-working Christ-followers is *prophetic witness*, for whom miracle-working is one characteristic activity.

²⁴⁹ I use the word career here in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free, 1973], 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003], 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

²⁵⁰ Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 144–145; see also Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 85; Witherington, *Acts*, 140.

²⁵¹ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 93, 97.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 89; Pervo, *Acts*, 11.

Employing my analysis of Acts 1–7 and its resulting initial character sketch of miracle-workers, I will adjust the model for categorizing wonder-workers (see Figure 5.2). Two individual miracle-workers and one group of miracle-workers appear in Acts 1–7: Peter, Stephen, and the Twelve. At this point in Acts, Peter is the most prototypical miracle-worker; and he functions as a miracle-working exemplar. Jesus does function as an example for Christ-follower behavior; however, the fact that Jesus is not a Christ-follower, but the Christ himself, hinders me from listing Jesus as an exemplar for Christ-following miracle-workers. The difference between the miracle-working Jesus and the miracle-working Christ-follower is most obvious in the Christ-followers' practice of invoking the name of Jesus, who has no need of invoking his own name. This difference in miracle-working praxis further demonstrates that Jesus works miracles through his own God-given authority and the Christ-followers work miracles through Jesus authority delegated to them.²⁵³ Nevertheless, a prototypical characteristic of a miracle-worker is the imitation of Jesus.²⁵⁴

Furthermore, Stephen is not the most prototypical miracle-worker at this point because he is not a member of the Twelve.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, since Stephen possesses all other miracle-worker characteristics, I have placed him just to the right of Peter indicating his extremely close proximity to the exemplar. I have not plotted John separately from the Twelve because Acts narrates no miracle performed by John. The Twelve as a group are more difficult to place on the model, since we have few details regarding their miracle-working. However, since the summary statement in Acts 5:12 suggests that Peter's miracle-working is exemplary of the other eleven apostles' miracle-working, I have also placed the Twelve just to the right of Peter in the model.

²⁵³ Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 52; 141.

²⁵⁴ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 64; cf. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus*, 130–141.

²⁵⁵ Acts 6:5, 8, 15.

In the next chapter, I will analyze the first μαγεία-miracle conflict episode, which involves another miracle-working member of the Seven, Philip. The analysis of Acts 8:4–25 will enable further characterization of miracle-workers. In addition, the interaction among the miracle-workers (Philip, Peter, John) will also let us make important observations about Acts' ideology/theology regarding wonder-working and about Acts' employment of the deviance process to identify and develop a Christ-following social identity in regards to wonder-working.

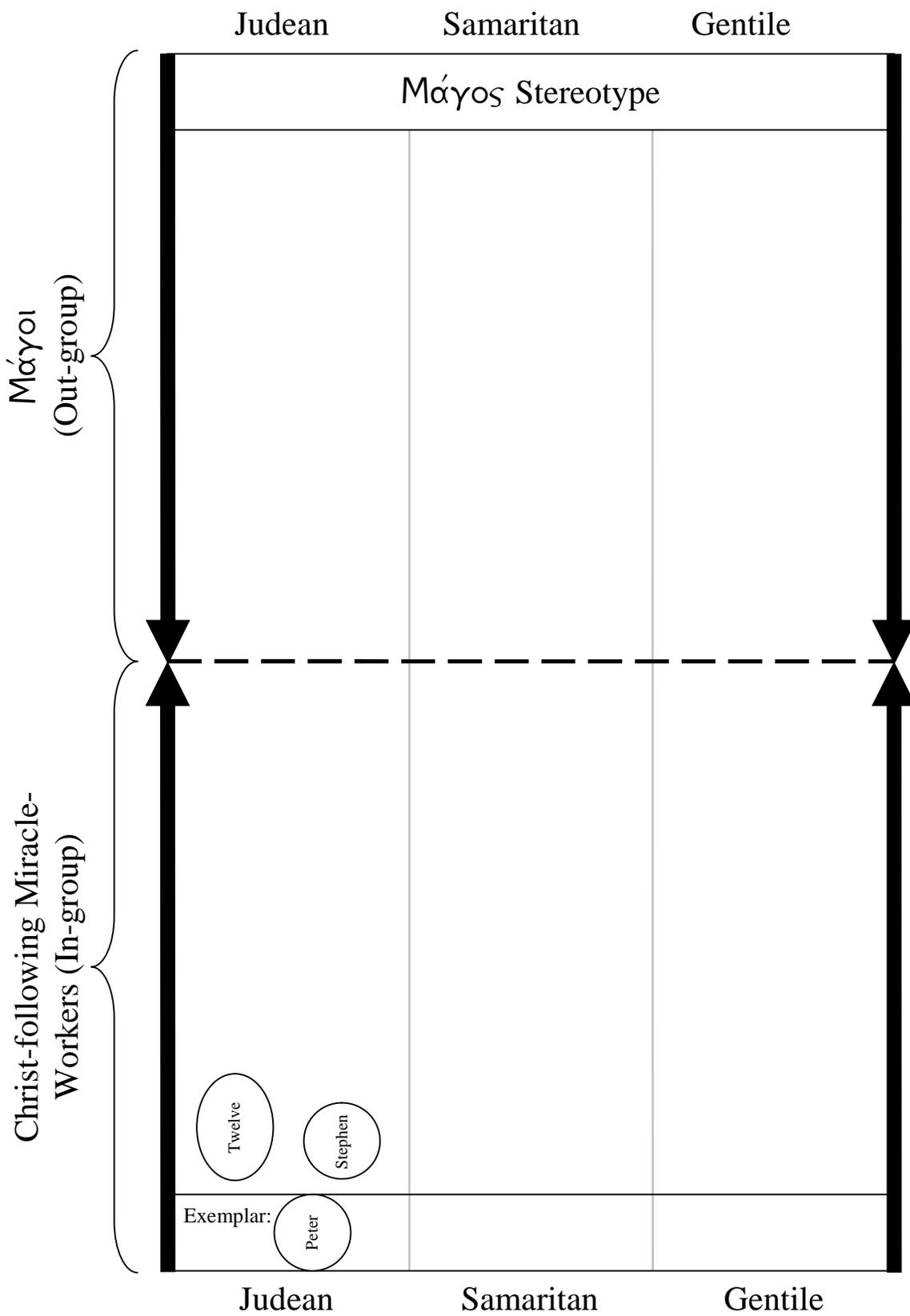


Figure 5.1 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 1–7.

CHAPTER 6
ΜΑΓΕΙΑ AND ΜΙΡΑΚΛΕΣ IN SAMARIA
(ACTS 8:4–25)

Acts 8 focuses primarily on the work of Philip, a member of the Seven, who ventures beyond the boundaries of Judea into Samaria (vv. 5–13), rural Judea (vv. 26–40), and Caesarea Maritima (v. 40). Acts 8:4–25, in particular, concentrates on the Samaritan mission initiated by Philip. In Samaria, the missionary miracle-worker Philip encounters the first *μαγεία*-working character in Acts, namely Simon of Samaria (vv. 9–13). Later in the narrative, the apostles Peter and John arrive in Samaria, and it is not long before conflict occurs between Peter and Simon (vv. 14–24). The episode ends with a successful mission in rural Samaria (v. 25), and the remainder of Acts 8 narrates Philip’s subsequent missionary work in rural Judea and Caesarea Maritima (Acts 8:26–40).

The Christ-followers’ interactions with people outside Jerusalem will affect the composition and ideology of the Christ-movement in Acts. As symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer explains, the social significance, or “meaning,” of people and objects develops through human social interactions.¹ Accordingly, the significance of miracle-working and *μαγεία* in Acts develops in large degree as the various wonder-workers in Acts interact with other people, particularly with other wonder-workers. In this chapter of my study, I will argue that in Acts 8:4–25, the character Simon of Samaria functions as a foil to three other Christ-following wonder-

¹ Herbert Blumer, “The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism,” in *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 5.

workers, primarily Philip and to a lesser degree Peter and John.² In this contrasting of Simon and the three other wonder-workers, the narrative portrays Simon, who represents wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement, as a negatively stereotypical, popular μάγος, and the narrative presents Philip, who represents Christ-following wonder-workers, as a miracle-worker that is legitimately empowered by God through the Holy Spirit. Thus, Acts 8:4–25 contains a narrative example of Kimberly B. Stratton’s miracle discourse, in which Christ-following wonder-workers are presented as legitimate miracle-workers and rival wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement are presented as μάγοι.³ As an instance of miracle discourse, Acts 8:4–25 relies on the negative stereotype of the popular μάγος, as opposed to the proper μάγος (a priest of the Persian fire cult), in order to portray rival wonder-working characters as magico-religious deviants (see chs. 3–4). Ultimately, the contrasting of characters in Acts 8:4–25 does not serve to warn Acts’ readers of the dangers and illegitimacy of μαγεία and μάγοι; instead, this contrasting of characters aids in Acts’ development of a positive social identity for Christ-following miracle-workers, particularly in the face of likely historical accusations that Christ-following miracle-workers were popular μάγοι and their miracles were popular μαγεία.

My analysis of Acts 8:4–25 differs from previous analyses of the passage in that the ultimate focus of my interpretation is more on the Christ-following miracle-workers and their activities than on Simon and his μαγεία. In my analysis, the focus of the passage is not upon the episode’s antagonist. The focus of the episode is upon those who appear at the beginning and at the end, namely the Christ-followers from Jerusalem (Philip, Peter, and John). Simon serves to direct the reader’s attention to the miracle-workers Philip, Peter, and John. Simon is a means for

² Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 157 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 153.

³ Cf. Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, Gender, Theory, & Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 112–114, 125–130.

the development of the character type of *Christ-following miracle-worker*, which contributes ultimately to the development of a social identity for miracle-workers in the Christ-movement. However, previous analyses of Acts 8:4–25, such as those by Jürgen Zangenberg, Florent Heintz, Hans-Josef Klauck, and Andy M. Reimer have concentrated more on Simon.

Zangenberg is explicitly concerned with discovering the historical Simon of Samaria.⁴ Like Zangenberg, Heintz is also mostly concerned with discovering the historical Simon; nevertheless, Heintz does provide a useful analysis of the way Acts 8:4–25 employs Greco-Roman stereotypes of the popular μάγος.⁵ Ultimately, both Zangenberg and Heintz stay firmly focused on Simon, and both spend little time discussing what the character Simon signifies concerning Christ-following miracle-workers and their miracles.

Klauck correctly understands that Acts 8:4–25 presents the character Simon negatively in order to “draw boundaries and indicate differences” between the Christ-movement and rival magico-religious groups.⁶ Klauck also considers the immediate historical context for the writing of Acts 8:4–25 to be conflict between two competing religious groups, who are represented respectively by Simon and by the missionaries and who both possibly claimed to be Christ-following groups.⁷ Significant are Klauck’s insights into the possible historical conflict between Simon and other first-century Christ-followers. However, Klauck does not always adequately take into account that both μαγεία and legitimate Christ-follower miracle-working are ideological constructs as reflected in his claim that a major function of the Acts 8:4–25 is to

⁴ Jürgen Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ: Das religionsgeschichtliche Profil des Simon Magus aus Sebaste,” *Religionsgeschichte des Neuen Testaments: Festschrift für Klaus Berer zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Axel von Dobbeler, Kurt Erlemann, and Roman Heiligenthal (Tübingen: Francke, 2000), 519–540.

⁵ Florent Heintz, *Simon “le magicien”: Actes 8, 5-25 et l’accusation de magie contre les prophètes thaumaturges dans l’antiquité*, CahRB 39 (Paris: Gabalda, 1997), 72–83, 102–135.

⁶ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

combat “the remnants of popular pagan belief in the Christian communities.”⁸ Since popular *μαγεία* was a ubiquitous social construct for deviant magico-religious practice, no need exists for the writer of Acts to warn his or her readers of the dangers of *μαγεία* in general. I will discuss further Klauck’s treatment of Acts 8:4–25 later in this chapter.

Two methodological difficulties hinder Reimer’s analysis of Acts 8:4–25. Most problematic is his failure to provide a well-developed, focused analysis of any of the four narratives involving *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts in Acts. Therefore, Reimer’s overall understanding of Acts 8:4–25 must be gleaned from numerous small discussions of this episode that are scattered throughout Reimer’s broader identification of the characteristics of legitimate “intermediaries” within Acts. In addition, since Reimer is concerned more with a general Greco-Roman distinction of legitimate and illegitimate wonder-workers, he does not provide a detailed, concentrated analysis of Acts’ particular development of the identity of Christ-following miracle-worker within the larger Greco-Roman framework of legitimate intermediary. Thus, Reimer’s analysis indiscriminately switches between a historical focus and a literary-rhetorical focus.⁹ My analysis of the Acts 8:4–25, however, will focus solely on how a comparison between Simon and the three Christ-following missionaries contributes to Acts’ development of a unique social identity for Christ-following miracle-workers, rather than Acts’ contribution to a broader Greco-Roman concept of *intermediary*.

I. The First Samaritan Mission (Acts 8:4–25)

For the sake of analysis, I will divide Acts 8:4–25 into four parts: vv. 4–8 (Philip’s mission in Samaria), vv. 9–13 (the encounter between Philip and Simon), vv. 14–24 (the encounter between

⁸ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 23.

⁹ Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 1–3, 48–49, 76–77, 117–119, 134–135, 148–149.

the apostles and Simon), and v. 25 (the return to Jerusalem). In this section of ch. 6, I will analyze each of these sections using my social-scientific-critical approach to understand how the conflict between Simon and the missionaries contributes to the development of the social identity of miracle-workers in Acts.

As I begin the analysis of this *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episode, it is necessary to note how much ethnicity factors into this episode, which contains interaction between two rival socio-cultural groups—Judeans and Samaritans. Furthermore, my analysis of the episode is attempting to read this narrative unity from a third cultural perspective, specifically that of my heuristic ancient Gentile reader. As I explained in ch. 1, my ancient reader is a heuristic construct that I have placed within the geographical regions of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia during the chronological period of 80 CE–135 CE. Thus, the following analysis of Acts 8:4–25 represents only one way to read this narrative unit. An analysis from an ancient Samaritan, for example, would provide a much different, yet just as valid, reading of the narrative.

Philip’s Mission in Samaria (Acts 8:4–8)

As a result of Stephen’s death, the plot of Acts takes a major turn away from Jerusalem and into Samaria. This movement in Acts 8 from Jerusalem to Samaria and then to rural Judea seems to be a partial fulfillment of Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, *in all Judea, Samaria*, and unto the ends of the earth.”¹⁰ With Stephen’s death, Acts places another member of the Seven, namely Philip, into the spotlight.¹¹ The reader knows very little about Philip at this point. His

¹⁰ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 203; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 279–280.

¹¹ Cf. F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations*, JSNTSup 67 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 106; Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:134. Wall’s assertion that Philip “has evidently succeeded Stephen as leader of the

Greek name (Φίλιππος) indicates that he likely is a member of the Hellenist Judeans within the Jerusalemite church.¹² As a member of the Seven, Philip is portrayed as holding a recognized position of leadership within the Jerusalemite church. As with the portrayal of Stephen in Acts 6:8–7:60, Acts 8:5–7 portrays Philip as a preacher and miracle-worker, although Acts 6:1–7 presents the Seven’s primary responsibility as the administration of the distribution of food to widows in the Jerusalemite church. Although this discrepancy between the stated role of the Seven and the actual practice of the Seven may be a redactional seam, the narrative ignores this discrepancy and leaves the reader to deal with it on his or her own. Ultimately, the portrayal of Stephen and Philip as preachers and miracle-workers overshadows the initial description of the Seven as administrators of aid to the widows.¹³ Furthermore, as a member of the Seven, Philip is “full of [the Holy] Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). Thus, he is possessed by the Holy Spirit, who is likely also the source of his wisdom. Although Acts 6–7 provides no indication as to what extent Stephen’s preaching and miracle-working activities in Acts 6:8 are typical of all members of the Seven, Acts 8:5–6 quickly informs that Philip preaches Christ and performed miraculous “signs” (σημεία).

Acts 8:5–6 contains two related and significant difficulties: (1) determining who exactly are the people to whom Philip preaches and (2) identifying the Samaritan city in which Acts sets this narrative episode. In regards to the identity of Philip’s target audience, two factors suggest that Acts presents Philip directing his mission primarily to culturally indigenous Samaritans. First, Acts 8:12 uses the third-person, plural pronominal suffix in the verb ἐπίστευσαν (they

persecuted Hellenists” rests upon an unfounded assumption that Stephen is the “leader” of the Hellenists; however, Acts nowhere indicates that Stephen is the “leader” of the Hellenists or the Seven, although he appears to be the most outspoken and controversial of the Seven.

¹² Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 45; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 266–267.

¹³ Cf. Acts 6:1–7:57; 8:4–13; 25–40; 21:8–9.

trusted) to refer to those who accepted Philip’s message about Christ, and the antecedent for the pronominal suffix is “the nation of Samaria” (τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας; Acts 8:9), who “all from least to greatest devoted themselves” to Simon (Acts 8:10). The word ἔθνος, according to BDAG, typically refers to a “body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions.”¹⁴ Similarly, Karl Ludwig Schmidt in *TDNT* claims that ἔθνος “probably comes from ἔθος, and means ‘mass’ or ‘host’ or ‘multitude’ bound by the same manners, customs or other distinctive features.”¹⁵ Thus, the word “nation” is a frequent English translation of ἔθνος in biblical texts, especially when it appears in singular form.¹⁶ However, the exact identity of the ἔθνος whom Simon amazes depends on the identification of the city in which the story occurs because τῆς Σαμαρείας (Samaria) in Acts 8:9 refers back to τὴν πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας (the city of Samaria) in Acts 8:5.¹⁷

Textual variation exists in Acts 8:5 as to whether Philip travels εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας (into *the* city of Samaria) or εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας (into *a* city of Samaria). The external evidence recommends the former reading;¹⁸ however, internal evidence may suggest the latter reading is better. The reading “*the* city of Samaria” indicates that the narrative occurs in the city named “Samaria”; however, Herod the Great reestablished Samaria as the Hellenistic city of Sebaste. Due to the thoroughly Hellenistic character of Sebaste, this city might not be a likely place to conduct a mission to the indigenous Samaritan people.¹⁹ The majority of

¹⁴ BDAG, s.v. “ἔθνος.”

¹⁵ Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “ἔθνος, ἔθνικός (NT),” *TDNT* 2:369.

¹⁶ BDAG, s.v. “ἔθνος”; LSJ, s.v. “ἔθνος”; Schmidt, “ἔθνος (NT),” 2:369. “Gentiles” is the typical translation of the plural of ἔθνος in biblical texts.

¹⁷ Cf. Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 523.

¹⁸ The major texts for the inclusion of τὴν include Φ^{74} , \aleph , A, B, 1175, and the major witnesses for the omission of τὴν include C, D, E, Ψ , 33, 1739. UBS⁴ prefers the inclusion of the definite article with a C rating.

¹⁹ Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BCENT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 325.

studies that favor the omission of the definite article suggest that Acts is referring to some other unnamed settlement.

Most of the arguments for the omission of τήν seem more concerned with reconstructing a historical setting for the episode, and they assume that the author Luke is aware of and concerned with the incredibly Hellenized character of Sebaste. However, since Acts does not inform the audience that Sebaste was a thoroughly Hellenized city, it may very well be that the author Luke does not know or care that Sebaste was a thoroughly Hellenistic city and not a center for Samaritan religious life.²⁰ However, most important in regards to the setting of the narrative is that Philip begins his ministry in a Samaritan *city*, just as subsequent missions in Acts will focus on urban centers.²¹ Within a narrative critical reading of Acts 8:4–25, it is best to retain the article τήν in Acts 8:5 and identify the city as Samaria/Sebaste.²²

Furthermore, since the Hellenistic character of the historical Sebaste seems to play no role in this episode, τὸ ἔθνος in Acts 8:9 likely retains its basic definition of “nation,” that is, a large ethnic-cultural group. Since the narrative does not specifically indicate the ethnicity of the inhabitants of the city, the best assumption at this point is that the ἔθνος of Samaria are culturally indigenous Samaritans.

Another significant factor for identifying the target population of Philip’s mission is that Gentiles do not join the Christ-movement until Acts 10:1–11:18, where the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household become Christ-followers. Much controversy erupts within the

²⁰ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 1:401–403; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 85; Witherington, *Acts*, 525. From a historical perspective, the Hellenistic character of a city, however, does not automatically signify that non-Greek populations are absent from the city. For instance, numerous major Hellenized cities (for example Rome and Alexandria) contained large Judean populations. Second, arguments for the omission of τήν rely heavily upon casting Hellenism and traditional Samaritan culture as mutually exclusive. Such arguments appear very similar to the outmoded dichotomization of Hellenism and Judaism; thus, they are likely based on a false assumption that Hellenism and Samaritanism were diametrically opposed.

²¹ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 13–14.

²² Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 521; contra Witherington, *Acts*, 282.

Jerusalemite church over whether Cornelius and his household should be admitted as full members into the Christ-movement because Cornelius is a Gentile. No such controversy erupts when the Samaritans become Christ-followers, which indicates that the narrative is not depicting the Samaritans as Gentiles.²³ Ultimately, the simplest identification of τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας is the culturally indigenous Samaritans, that is the cultural group who claimed to be the true Israelites and whose cultic traditions centered on Mount Gerizim.²⁴ Thus, Philip's work represents not only the spread of the Christ-movement beyond the borders of Judea, which Jesus instructs in Acts 1:8, but Philip's Samaritan mission also signifies the inclusion of the culturally indigenous Samaritans into the Christ-movement, which up to this point is solely a Judean religious movement.

Acts' description of Philip's mission to the Samaritans is very succinct. Philip's activity consists of two elements: preaching and miracle-working. In regards to preaching, Philip speaks about Christ (Acts 8:5); thus, his message is similar to Peter's Christ-centered preaching in Acts 2:14–39; 3:12–26. Acts 8:7 specifies that Philip performs exorcisms of unclean spirits and healings of the παραλελυμένοι (weak, paralyzed) and the χωλοί (lame). Philip's healings are substantially similar to the miracles performed by the apostles in Acts 3:1–10; 5:15–16.²⁵ Thus, Philip's missionary activity is a continuation of the preaching and miracle-working of the Christ-followers in Acts 2–7. The immediate positive reaction of the Samaritan populace to Philip's

²³ Bock, *Acts*, 324–325; R. J. Coggins, “The Samaritans and Acts,” *NTS* 28 (1982), 431; A. Andrew Das, “Acts 8: Water, Baptism, and the Spirit,” in *Concordia Journal* 19 (1993), 128; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 85–86.

²⁴ If Philip and Simon's primary audience were Greeks or Romans, Acts 8:9 would likely have referred to their shared audience as τὰ ἔθνη (nations, Gentiles). In addition, it is not likely that Acts would refer to Philip and Simon's audience as τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας if their primary audience were Judeans in Samaria. Furthermore, Cornelius' messengers to Peter in Acts 10:22 use the phrase ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Ἰουδαίων to speak of “the whole nation of Judeans”; thus, it is unlikely that Acts would use “the nation of Samaria” to refer to Judeans, who had a history of antagonism toward the culturally indigenous Samaritans.

²⁵ Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 45–48; see also Frans Neiryneck, “The Miracle Stories in the Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Gembloux, Belgium: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 205.

activity is incredibly similar to both the Jerusalemites' typically favorable response to Peter and the rest of the Twelve and also to Jerusalemites' initially favorable reception of Jesus (Luke 19:47–48; 21:38; Acts 2:14–39; 3:9–10; 5:11–12).²⁶

Up to this point in the episode, the initial character sketch of the Christ-following miracle-worker, which I laid out in the previous chapter, seems to fit Philip very well. In particular, Philip as a member of the Seven is an elected leader within the Christ-movement. Like all other previously named miracle-workers in Acts 2–7, he is a Judean and a man. As Acts 6:3 indicates, a qualification of all members of the Seven is that they are full of the Holy Spirit; thus, the Jerusalemite Christ-followers treat Philip as if he is possessed by the Holy Spirit. However, Acts gives no direct indication that Philip experiences possession trance, although the ancient reader may take the description of the Seven being “*full of [the Holy] Spirit*” (πλήρεις πνεύματος; Acts 6:3) as an indication that Philip experiences possession trance. The narrative also presents Philip performing miraculous signs as part of his witness to Christ and as service to others. Lastly, the general response to his mission activity is positive.

The Encounter between Philip and Simon (Acts 8:9–13)

Simon is the first wonder-worker in Acts who, at least initially, is not a member of the Christ-movement. Acts' initial description of Simon as one “*practicing μαγεία*” (μαγεύων) in Acts 8:9 should predispose the reader to be suspicious of Simon because it is unclear whether Simon is a *proper μάγος* (that is, a Persian priest) or a *popular μάγος* (that is, a charlatan or sorcerer).

However, Philip, as a member of the Seven and a miracle-working witness to Christ, is the hero

²⁶ Cf. Das, “Acts 8,” 130; Christopher R. Matthews, “Philip and Simon, Luke and Peter: A Lukan Sequel and Its Intertextual Success,” *SBL Seminar Papers, 1992*, SBLSP 31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 142. Also interesting is that although the Samaritans accept Philip and his message, Jesus himself is not received by the Samaritans because he is journeying to Jerusalem (Luke 9:52–53); however, Philip is headed away from Jerusalem.

of the first half of the episode (Acts 8:4–13). Therefore, the reader is inclined to see Simon as a foil to Philip.²⁷ Nevertheless, several similarities exist between Philip and Simon.

First, the most obvious similarity between the two is that they are both wonder-workers. Philip performs miraculous “signs” (σημεῖα; Acts 8:6), and Simon performs “acts of μαγεία” (Acts 8:11). The second similarity between Philip and Simon is that both of them are successful and garner crowds of devoted followers (Acts 8:6, 8–11). The result of Simon’s μαγεία is amazement on the part of the people in the city (Acts 8:9).²⁸ Third, devotion to Simon transcends boundaries of social status. According to Acts 8:10, not only do the low status Samaritan peasants devote themselves to Simon, but also the higher status members of the community are also amazed and devote themselves to him. Similarly, since the same people whom Simon amazes in Acts 8:9–11 are the people who trust Philip in Acts 8:12, the narrative seems to present the Samaritan Christ-movement as also transcending the boundaries of social status.

Despite the similarities between Philip and Simon, the differences between them are glaring. The *first difference* is that the narrative describes Simon’s wonders as μαγεία (Acts 8:9, 11), but Acts 8:6 describes Philip’s wonders as *signs* (σημεῖα). However, since the narrative provides no details regarding Simon’s μαγεία, there is no way of further comparing Philip and Simon’s wonder-working.²⁹ Acts 8:9 also indicates that Simon’s wonder working activity occurs prior to Philip’s arrival in the city.

²⁷ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 110; Pervo, *Acts*, 204; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 88–89; Witherington, *Acts*, 285.

²⁸ Cf. Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 102–108. Heintz points out that “the people of Samaria” (τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας) is the grammatical direct object of προὑπήρχεν . . . ἐξιστάων. Heintz, thus, argues that Acts 8:9 portrays Simon as casting a spell of μαγεία on the people through which he forces them to be amazed. Although Heintz is correct that v. 11 does establish that the cause of the Samaritans’ amazement is Simon’s wonders, nothing in the Acts 8:4–25 explicitly indicates that a spell causes the Samaritans’ amazement. Simon’s acts of μαγεία, like Philip’s miracles, seem to cause amazement simply because the Samaritans considered the wonders extraordinary.

²⁹ Cf. Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 111. Heintz suggests that the author of Acts avoids describing in detail the types of wonders performed by Simon (e.g., exorcisms and healings), lest they appear too similar to Philip’s miracles.

Grammatically, the most significant difficulty in v. 9 is translating the sentence's main verb προῦπήρχεν. Most English translations render Acts 8:9 in a way similar to the NRSV: "Now a certain man named Simon had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great." The NRSV takes μαγεύων and ἐξιστάνων to be auxiliary participles in a complex pluperfective, periphrastic construction with προῦπήρχεν, "had previously practiced magic . . . and amazed the people." In addition, the NRSV moves the translation of the prepositional phrase ἐν τῇ πόλει from its original position immediately following the verb προῦπήρχεν. Now, "in the city" follows "magic," thereby clarifying the ambiguous Greek syntax, which allowed the prepositional phrase to modify either προῦπήρχεν or μαγεύων.

An alternate translation of Acts 8:9 renders προῦπήρχεν as an ingressive or progressive imperfect, to which the participles μαγεύων and ἐξιστάνων are still auxiliaries in a periphrastic relationship with the verb προῦπήρχεν³⁰ and according to which Simon would still be practicing μαγεία when Philip arrives in the city.³¹ Although the NRSV's pluperfective rendering of the Greek imperfect προῦπήρχεν is grammatically possible, pluperfective imperfects occur much less frequently in the NT than do ingressive or progressive imperfects.³² Furthermore, reading προῦπήρχεν as an ingressive or progressive imperfect allows the prepositional phrase "in the city" to occupy roughly the same syntactical position in the sentence as does its Greek counterpart ἐν τῇ πόλει. The alternate translation treats ἐν τῇ πόλει as if it modifies the entire verbal construction προῦπήρχεν . . . μαγεύων καὶ ἐξιστάνων, unlike in the NRSV where it

³⁰ Cf. BDF § 414.1; Patrick L. Dickerson, "The Sources of the Account of the Mission to Samaria in Acts 8:5–25," *NovT* 39 (1997), 225. A variation of the alternate translation is to view the two participles μαγεύων and ἐξιστάνων as circumstantial participles; thus, the phrase προῦπήρχεν ἐν τῇ πόλει would signify merely that Simon was already present in the city before Philip's arrival there.

³¹ Contra BDAG, s.v. "προῦπάρχω"; cf. LSJ, s.v. "προῦπάρχω."

³² See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 541–545, 549.

only modifies “practicing magic.” The resultant alternative translation of the first two-thirds of Acts 8:9 reads “Now a certain man named Simon was already in the city practicing μαγεία and amazing the people of Samaria”³³ Thus, Acts 8:9 presents Simon as actively performing μαγεία when Philip arrives in the city, and nothing in v. 9 indicates that Simon ever stops practicing μαγεία after Philip’s arrival. The NRSV and similar translations seem to assume that Simon would have to stop practicing μαγεία in order to become a Christ-follower in Acts 8:13; thus, they translate the verb προῦπηρχεν with a pluperfective force. The alternate translation, which I prefer, makes no such assumption.

Acts 8:4–25 does not explicitly designate Simon as a popular μάγος, that is, a charlatanic wonder-worker; instead, Acts 8:9 simply narrates that Simon “was practicing μαγεία” (μαγεύων).³⁴ Later, Acts 8:11 describes Simon’s wonders as μαγείαι, that is, acts of μαγεία. Instead of providing technical details regarding Simon’s wonder-working, Acts 8:9–11 describes the resulting interactions between Simon and the public. Heintz indicates the possibility that the description of Simon as practicing μαγεία (μαγεύων), rather than simply describing Simon as a μάγος, is the writer Luke’s attempt to indicate that Simon did not consider himself a μάγος, at least in the popular sense of the word.³⁵ Nevertheless, Heintz’s insight is pure speculation and seems tied to his attempt to uncover the historical Simon. From a narrative-focused perspective, the appearance of the term μαγεύων at the beginning of v. 9 is still not a sufficient cue at this point to allow the reader to make a definitive judgment as to what type of worker of μαγεία Simon might be—a practitioner of Persian religion or a popular charlatan.

³³ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:406.

³⁴ BDAG, s.v. “μαγεύω”; G. Delling, “μάγος, μαγεία, μαγεύω,” *TDNT* 4:359; LSJ, s.v. “μαγεύω.”

³⁵ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 103–104.

The *second difference* between Simon and Philip is that Acts 8:9 presents Simon as proclaiming himself as “someone great” (εἰνάί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν), while Philip preaches Christ (Acts 8:5). Simon’s self-description in itself contains no explicit or implicit reference to μαγεία.³⁶ His self-description is a means by which the narrative has Simon “draw attention to himself.”³⁷ Nevertheless, unclear is the exact relationship in v. 9 between the independent clause and the dependent clause beginning with λέγων. Although it is technically possible that λέγων begins a causal clause in which the self-description gives rise to Simon’s wonder-working and the crowd’s amazement, a resultative force seems more likely than a causal force. If the reader understands the clause as resultative, Simon’s self-description occurs in response to his wonders and the Samaritans’ amazement. Equally attractive is interpreting the clause as purposeful so that Simon performs wonders and amazes the crowd with the express purpose of enabling himself to claim that he is great. If the dependent clause in v. 9 is a purpose clause or even a resultative clause, Simon’s self-description becomes an instance of self-aggrandizement, which is a stereotypical quality of a religiously deviant person, including a popular μάγος in Greco-Roman culture.³⁸ Simon’s self-description, thus, functions as the first cue indicating to the reader what type of μάγος Simon may be. Since Simon engages in self-aggrandizement, the reader is more inclined to understand the narrative to be portraying Simon as a stereotypically negative, popular μάγος. Previously in Acts, Christ-following prophetic preachers turn attention away from themselves and toward God and Jesus Christ (Acts 2:15; 3:6; 4:18–20; 5:29). As a Christ-

³⁶ Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 141.

³⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 327.

³⁸ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 116; e.g., Lucian, *Alex.*; Plato, *Republic* 6.486B.

following missionary, Philip is primarily a prophetic witness to Christ, whose miracles are a means of testifying to Christ.³⁹

The *third difference* between Simon and Philip is that Philip has a religious message, namely preaching Christ; however, Acts presents Simon as preaching no religious message, other than proclaiming himself as “someone great.” Thus, my ancient Gentile reader’s initial impression of Simon would likely be that he is nothing more than an entertainer, whose wonders are ends in themselves. Therefore, the narrative subtly evokes another element of the stereotypical popular *μάγος*, namely a popular *μάγος* is primarily a showman.⁴⁰ However, in v. 10, the Samaritans’ description of Simon as “the power of God that is called great” appears to develop further Simon’s description of himself as “great” by ascribing to Simon some relationship with divine power (ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ), which could suggest to the reader that Simon has a theological message centered on the proclamation of his relationship with divine power. Nevertheless, if Simon does have a theological message, it is a charlatanistic message.

In regards to the identity of the deity with whom the Samaritans associate Simon, it is important to recognize that the only information given concerning the deity is that the divine power associated with the deity is customarily called “great.” Two basic possibilities exist for the identity of the deity: an unnamed Hellenistic deity or the Hebrew God. The designation of a deity or a divine attribute as “great” (μέγας) occurs within most religious traditions of the Greco-Roman period.⁴¹ Within the text of Acts, a form of the adjective μέγας describes only one deity,

³⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 177; Susan R. Garrett, *Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 63; Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 135; Pervo, *Acts*, 205–206; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 48.

⁴⁰ Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 139; Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 191–192; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 83.

⁴¹ Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 530–531; see also Barrett, *Acts*, 1:407; Pervo, *Acts*, 210. cf. Coggins, “Samaritans and Acts,” 430. In regard to Greek deities, an inscription from Samaria around 300 CE reads: “One god, the ruler of all things, great Maiden, the invincible” (Ἐἷς Θεός / ὁ πάντων / δεσπότης / μεγάλη κόρη / ἡ ἀνείκητος; translation and Greek text from *NewDocs* 1 (1976), no. 68).

namely Artemis (Acts 19:27, 28, 34, 35). The only deity whose attributes or works are described as “great” (μέγας) in Acts is the Hebrew God.⁴² Thus, although Acts frequently describes that which is associated with the Hebrew God as “great,” the description of Artemis as great (Acts 19:27, 28, 34, 35) illustrates that in Acts, the use of μέγας or a lexically related word to describe a deity or something pertaining to the divine is, of course, an exercise in in-group language.

Since Acts seems to portray Philip’s ministry as directed toward the indigenous Samaritans of the city of Samaria, historical speculations regarding the possibility that Simon associates himself with an unidentified Hellenistic deity or that Simon practices some sort of syncretism of Samaritan religion and Hellenistic religion, although interesting, provide little insight for my narrative analysis of Acts 8:4–25. Thus, my ancient Gentile reader is likely to understand Acts 8:4–25 to be portraying the Samaritans associating Simon with the traditional Samaritan deity, that is, the monotheistic Hebrew God.⁴³

To determine more exactly the relationship that Acts’ portrays the Samaritans ascribing to Simon and the traditional Samaritan deity, I suggest adopting a method opposite to Zangenberg’s, which argues that Simon’s relationship with divine power is approximately the

Numerous instances exist in the HB that describe the Hebrew God as “great;” see Deut 10:17; 2 Sam 7:22; 1 Chr 16:25; Neh 4:8 (4:14 ET; 2 Esd 14:8 LXX); 9:32 (2 Esd 19:32 LXX); Job 36:26 (); Pss 48:2 (48:1 ET); 86:10; 96:4; 135:5 (134:5 LXX); 145:3 (144:3 LXX); Jer 10:6; 32:18 (39:18 LXX). The HB also describes attributes of God as “great;” see Exod 32:11; 2 Kgs 17:36; Num 14:17; Neh 1:10 (3 Kgdms 17:56 LXX); Job 23:6 (; ἐν πολλῇ ἰσχύι); Ps 147:5 (; μεγάλη ἡ ἰσχὺς [Ps 146:5 LXX]); Jer 27:5 (34:5 LXX); 32:17 (39:17 LXX); Nah 1:3. Examples of other “great” attributes of God include “great signs” performed by God (Josh 24:17; Dan 3:33 (4:3 ET;), God’s “great name” (1 Kgs 8:42; 2 Chr 6:32; Jer 10:6; 44:26 [Jer 51:26 LXX]; Ezek 26:23; Mal 1:11), and God’s “great mercy” (1 Chr 21:13).

The Samaritan Targum from the fourth century CE provides evidence of Samaritans referring to God as “the great power;” see Bock, *Acts*, 327; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 92–93. The *Memar Marqah*, a Samaritan document from the fourth century CE, also refers to God as “the power” (; e.g., *Memar Marqah* 1.1; 2.8; 3.4, 10). See Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 93; Witherington, *Acts*, 284. Although the evidence from the Samaritan Targum and the *Memar Marqah* may seem to be attractive for linking Simon with traditional Samaritan religion, the date of these documents hinders such an argument. If ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ is a hypostatization (or even a circumlocution) for the traditional Samaritan God as it is in the fourth-century CE Samaritan Targum and the *Memar Marqah*, the Samaritans are claiming that Simon is the human manifestation of God (Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 92–93).

⁴² Acts 2:11 (τὰ μεγαλεῖα, “great things”), 20.

⁴³ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 15; contra Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 524.

same as Philip's relationship with divine power. Zangenberg, on this issue, treats Simon and Philip as complementary rivals. However, if Simon functions as a foil to Philip, it is possible that Simon's and Philip's relationships to the Hebrew God are not similar, but contrasting.

Acts 2–7 provides an adequate context for understanding Philip's role with divine power in Acts 8:4–25. The narrative portrays Philip, a member of the Seven on an evangelistic mission, as a prophetic witness to salvation through Christ. Through the out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit upon the Christ-followers, Jesus has delegated divine power for prophetic preaching and miracle-working, according to Acts 1:8; 2:14–40. Thus, in Philip's case, he is a human intermediary of divine power. Philip's authority to employ divine power comes from Jesus Christ, whom Acts portrays as the son of God.⁴⁴

Zangenberg wishes to present Simon as an exact syncretistic counterpart to Philip; thus, Zangenberg claims that Simon is nothing more than a human intermediary of divine power, thereby denying that Simon is any sort of messianic figure, particularly the *Taheb*.⁴⁵ Zangenberg's means of identifying Simon's relationship with divine power is problematic because if, as I am arguing, Simon functions as a foil to Philip (and not as a syncretistic complement),⁴⁶ Acts 8:4–25 is likely portraying Simon's relationship to divine power as being different than Philip's relationship to divine power.

⁴⁴ Acts 9:20; see also Luke 1:32; 3:22; 10:22; 22:70, which portray Jesus as the "son of God."

⁴⁵ Cf. Zangenberg, "Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ," 531, 533–534; see also Pervo, *Acts*, 210. Zangenberg's primary support for this argument is an undated Lydian altar inscription describing Men as the divine intermediary of divine power (Zangenberg, "Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ," 531): "One god in the skies, great Men of the sky, great power of the immortal god" (Ἐἷς θεὸς ἐ- / ν οὐρανοῖς, / μέγας Μῆν / Οὐράνιος, / μεγάλη δύ- / ναμις τοῦ ἄ- / θάντου θε- / οῦ; translation and Greek text from *NewDocs* 3 (1978), no. 7). Zangenberg argues that this altar inscription strongly suggests that the Samaritans consider Simon as only an intermediary of divine power (Zangenberg, "Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ," 532; see also Bruce, *Acts*, 179). Nevertheless, Zangenberg admits two difficulties with his argument. First, no direct connection exists between the Lydian inscription to Men and Acts' account of Simon. Second, the inscription to Men refers to a *lesser deity* as an intermediary of divine power; thus, the comparison between Men and Simon is not exact (Zangenberg, "Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ," 532).

⁴⁶ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 110; Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 2.

Since Acts 8:4–25 presents Philip as a Christ-following miracle-worker, the narrative presents Philip as a human *intermediary* of divine power; thus, the narrative is also likely presenting Philip’s foil, Simon, as a human *manifestation* of divine power, which is how the text of v. 10 literally reads.⁴⁷ Taking Simon as one who accepts divine honors is certainly in line with his self-promoting behavior and with the narrative’s portrayal of Simon as a popular μάγος.⁴⁸ Furthermore, reading Simon as someone claiming to be a manifestation of divine power corresponds better with the Samaritan’s proclamation of Simon as “the power of God that is called great.” Philip, like Peter and Stephen in Acts 2–7, preaches Christ; however, Simon proclaims himself, which is exactly what Simon does when he calls himself “great” (v. 9). Thereby, Simon, as a foil to Philip, is ultimately comparable to Christ, whom Acts presents as the son of God.⁴⁹

Although Simon only proclaims himself as “someone great,” the Samaritans’ proclamation of Simon as the manifestation of divine power stands in stark contrast to Peter’s earlier proclamation of Jesus Christ as God’s servant and whose name is the only means of salvation (Acts 2:22–39). The Gospel of Luke and Acts present Jesus as the true intermediary of divine power to God’s people. Therefore, the Samaritans’ description of Simon runs completely contrary to Philip’s proclamation of Christ.⁵⁰ Acts, thus, applies to Simon another stereotypical element of the popular μάγος. Simon is a deceiver.⁵¹ Since the previous chapter of my study

⁴⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 327; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 92–93; contra Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 532.

⁴⁸ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 119; cf. Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book, 65.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 327; Acts 9:20; see also Luke 1:32; 3:22; 10:22; 22:70.

⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 427; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 19; cf. Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 66–67.

⁵¹ Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 49–50; Georg Luck, “Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 102. Nevertheless, it is not likely the narrative presents the Samaritans proclaiming Simon as the Samaritan *Taheb* (the expected prophet like Moses from Deut 18:15–19) since nothing in Acts 8:4–25 specifically

identified miracle-working in Acts as an activity of prototypical prophetic preachers in the Christ-movement, the portrayal of Simon as a deceiver stands in stark contrast to Philip, who preaches the prophetic “word of God” about Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God (Acts 8:5, 12, 14).⁵²

Acts’ use of μέγας and lexically related words can be categorized into four groups (1) describing the large size or large degree of something, (2) describing a possession, (3) describing wonders, and (4) describing a person. The numerous instances of the first category are mundane uses of μέγας,⁵³ and they are irrelevant to my discussion of Acts 8:4–25. However, the other three categories are significant to my study. Concerning the use of μέγας and lexically related

refers to the Samaritan concept of *Taheb*. Cf. John 4:25, in which a Samaritan woman’s reference to the Messiah/Christ possibly contains a confusion of the Samaritan concept of *Taheb* with the Judean concept of Messiah. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I–XII)*, AB 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 172.

⁵² Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo convincingly argue that although the Gospel of Luke and Acts are products of the same author, biblical scholars cannot assume that a simple narrative unity or theological unity exists between the two books (Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 45–114). Furthermore, in my particular narrative-focused approach to Acts, I cannot assume that my heuristic ancient reader would also be familiar at all, or at least enough, with the Gospel of Luke to allow the reader to use the Gospel of Luke in his or her interpretation of Acts 8:4–25. Nevertheless, if a particular reader were familiar with the Gospel of Luke, he or she may notice similarities and differences between the use of μέγας and lexically related words in Luke’s Gospel and their use in Acts.

An ancient reader familiar with Luke’s Gospel might be aware that Luke 7:25–27; 9:43–48; 22:25–27 present Jesus teaching that the two signs of true greatness are *humility* and *selfless service*. However, the Twelve’s decision in Acts 6:2–4 to not “abandon the word of God in order to serve tables” exemplifies how Acts presents prophetic proclamation as being greater than engaging in tasks that Greco-Roman society regarded as menial labor for slaves and other low-status persons. Furthermore, all portrayals of the Seven subsequent to Acts 6:1–7 depict the Seven, specifically Stephen and Philip, engaging in prophetic activity and not in meeting the physical needs of other people (Acts 6:8–10; 8:4–8). Moreover, Acts shows a predilection for giving accounts of people of intermediate to elite social status joining the Christ-movement (e.g., Acts 13:12; 16:14–15, 27–34). Thus, although the Lukan Jesus insists that true greatness is found in serving others, greatness in Acts is not as counter-cultural as it is in the Gospel of Luke (Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity*, *Contraversions* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001], ACLS Humanities E-book, 87; Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2010], Oxford University Press Scholarship Online edition, 40–41).

Nevertheless, if an ancient reader were to use the Gospel of Luke as an interpretative lens for reading Acts 8:9–13, he or she would notice that the portrayal of Simon in Acts 8:9 stands in direct opposition to the image of greatness that Jesus advocates in Luke 7:28; 9:48; 22:26. Thus, through the lens of Jesus’ teachings on greatness in the Gospel of Luke, Simon’s self-description appears as a deception leading the Samaritans away from what the Gospel of Luke presents as true greatness, specifically lowliness and selfless service.

⁵³ E.g., Acts 5:5, 11 (great fear; φόβος μέγας); 7:11 (great trouble; θλίψις μεγάλη); 8:1 (great persecution; διωγμὸς μέγας); 8:2 (great beating; κοπετὸν μέγαν); 8:10 (great person; μεγάλου); 11:28 (great famine; λιμὸν μεγάλην); 15:2 (great joy; χαρὰν μεγάλην); 16:26 (great earthquake; σεισμὸς μέγας); 26:22 (great person; μεγάλω).

words to describe a personal possession, all five instances involve the possessions of a deity (Acts 2:11, 20: 4:33; 8:10; 19:27), and the first three are explicitly possessions of the Hebrew God. In addition, Acts 8:10 refers to the divine power with which Simon is associated, which is likely the power of the Hebrew God as worshiped by the Samaritans. Only the reference to the “magnificence” (μεγαλειότητος) of Artemis in Acts 19:27 does not refer to a possession of the Hebrew God. Concerning the third category of uses of μέγας and lexically related words, Acts uses twice the neuter form of μέγας to describe miracles performed by Christ-followers (Acts 6:8; 8:13). In both instances, Acts refers to miracles by members of the Seven (Stephen and Philip) as “great” (μεγάλα). For the fourth category, μέγας or a lexically related word is used seven times to label a person as “great.” Of course, Acts 8:9 is Simon’s self-description of himself as “great” (μέγαν). Two of the other instances (Acts 8:10, 26:22) are used to refer to the members of the upper ranks of society in general. The remaining four instances involve Ephesians calling the goddess Artemis “great” (μεγάλη). Since the Samaritans associate Simon with divine power (Acts 8:10), it is most likely that Simon’s self-description in Acts 8:9 is a claim to more than simply high social status. Therefore, Simon’s self-description uses the word μέγας in a way that is used only once more in Acts, for the Greek deity Artemis.

Concerning Acts’ use of μέγας and lexically related words, Acts 8:9 presents Simon describing himself using a word (μέγας) that frequently describes divine possessions, divinely empowered miracles, and even a divinity (albeit the Greek deity Artemis). Similarly, Simon’s self-description indicates that Simon himself is a superior person because of his wonder-working activity, that is, his μαγεία.

The *fourth difference* between the portrayals of Simon and Philip is that unlike Simon’s self-promoting activity, Philip is not only involved in promoting someone else, namely Christ,

but he also engages in wonders that serve other people, particularly healings and exorcisms (v. 6). Therefore, not only is Simon self-promoting, but also, in comparison to Philip, he is self-serving.⁵⁴ Self-aggrandizement and self-serving activity are stereotypical qualities of charlatans, including popular μάγοι,⁵⁵ and these qualities provide distinct cues for the reader to categorize Simon as a stereotypical popular μάγος. However, Acts frequently refers to the activity of Christ-followers' acts of charity, leadership, and missions as "service" (δικακονία).⁵⁶ The use of "service" (δικακονία) in reference to Christ-following activity and the frequent reference to Christ-followers as slaves (δουλοί)⁵⁷ demonstrates that Acts presents Christ-followers' activities as a service not only to other people but also to God. Unlike Philip's service of preaching, healing, and exorcisms, Simon's μαγεία in Acts 8:9–11 is self-promoting and self-serving, and Simon's self-centered μαγεία deceptively leads the Samaritans away from understanding the true Great One, at least until Philip arrives preaching Christ.

The *fifth difference* between Simon and Philip concerns the way in which the narrative describes how each of these two characters employs divine power. Although the narrative portrays Philip as a divinely sent missionary and Simon as a self-promoting crowd-pleaser, the Samaritans' description of Simon involves a theological element. They proclaim him as "the power of God that is called great" (v. 10). No explicit indication exists in the narrative as to whether Simon accepts or rejects the Samaritans' description of him as "the power of God that is called great"; however, Simon's own self-aggrandizing proclamation of himself as "someone great" (Acts 8:9) may incline the reader to assume that Simon does accept the Samaritans'

⁵⁴ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 115–118.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 116; e.g., Lucian, *Alex.*; Plato, *Republic* 6.486B.

⁵⁶ Acts 6:1–2, 4; 11:29; 12:25; 19:22; 20:24; 21:19.

⁵⁷ Acts 2:18; 4:29; 16:17; 20:19.

description of him.⁵⁸ Regardless of exactly how the reader understands the significance of the Samaritan's description of Simon, the epithet "the power of God that is called great" indicates Simon's ability to control divine power. Of course, this harkens back to the most prominent of all characteristics of a stereotypical popular *μάγος*—the coercion of spiritual or divine power. Unlike for Philip, whom the Holy Spirit possesses and empowers, no substantial indication exists in Acts 8:9–11 that Simon is possessed by a spirit or deity; instead, Simon is the possessor and manipulator of divine power.⁵⁹ Conversely, the reader could view Philip's status as one possessed by the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew God as the means by which the Judean Philip gains a powerful social voice among the culturally indigenous Samaritans, who are not only rivals to Philip's own ethnic group (the Judeans) but who also claim to worship the Hebrew God.

A contrasting of Philip and Simon reveals just how much each character develops in opposition to one another. The narrative emphasizes Philip's continuation of the burgeoning character type of "miracle-worker" in contradistinction to Acts' portrayal of Simon as a negatively stereotypical popular *μάγος*. However, the Samaritans' proclamation of Simon as "the power of God that is called great" undermines the portrayal of Simon as a self-serving, wonder-working showman. The Samaritans' description of Simon provides a theological aspect to Simon's activity, even if it is a self-serving message. This paradox in Acts' portrayal of Simon is not unlike Lucian's description of Alexander of Abonoteichos. In order to undermine popular

⁵⁸ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:407; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 63; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 92.

⁵⁹ Contra J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Simon Magus (Act 8 9–24)," *ZNW* 73 (1982), 53–55. Derrett claims that the Samaritans' identification of Simon as "the power of God which is great" indicates that Simon experiences spirit possession, in which God or the power of God possesses Simon. However, nothing else in the narrative's presentation of Simon sufficiently resembles spirit possession. In addition, nowhere in Acts 8:4–25 does a deity or divine power seem to control or to influence Simon's behavior; instead, the opposite appears to be the case, specifically that Simon controls divine power. Thus, it is unlikely that Acts portrays Simon as possessed.

In addition, the portrayal of Simon as a popular *μάγος* is incompatible with any possibility that the narrative presents Simon already in possession of the Hebrew God's divine power; otherwise, he would not be a *μάγος*. Furthermore, since the narrative contains no exorcism of the divine power from Simon, it is also unlikely that the narrative ever presents Simon being possessed by the hypostatized power of any Hellenistic deity. Therefore, Acts does not likely present Simon as possessed by any hypostatized divine power prior to him joining the Christ-movement.

acclamation of Alexander as a divine intermediary, Lucian goes to great lengths to reveal that Alexander is a trickster and a deceiver. Thus, although Alexander and the people of Abonoteichos consider Alexander to be a prophet of Asclepius, Lucian considers him nothing more than a charlatan and a μάγος.⁶⁰ At this point, the narrative may strain the reader's credulity as the dramatic illusion of the narrative becomes apparent and the narrative loses some cohesiveness. If Simon is as self-centered and impious as Acts seems to portray him, why would the Samaritans praise him and follow him? Acts does not give the same answer to this question that Lucian gives to explain why people believe and follow Alexander of Abonoteichos, specifically that Alexander's followers are "thick-witted" (παχέης), "silly" (ἡλίθιοι), "uneducated" (ἀπείδευτοι), and "senseless" (ἀνόητοι).⁶¹ If Acts 8:4–25 were to attribute the Samaritans' devotion to Simon to their incompetence, the narrative would also call into question the moral integrity of Philip, who later earns the trust of these same Samaritans. Acts also does not resort to the answer that Justin Martyr uses to explain how people come to worship "false" deities, specifically that evil *daimones* posing as deities deceive these people.⁶² Justin also utilizes a theme also found in *1 Enoch* that evil *daimones* introduced μαγεία to humans, thus making μαγεία into diabolical deceit.⁶³ Instead, Acts does not answer the question of why the Samaritans praise and follow Simon, whom the narrative characterizes as a deceitful μάγος. The failure to address this question provides room for a skeptical reader to question the cohesiveness of Acts' portrayal of Simon as a popular μάγος. Nevertheless, Acts' omission of why the Samaritans are deceived reinforces the common modern scholarly identification of Acts' implied reader as a sympathetic, or friendly, audience for whom there is likely little need to defend the

⁶⁰ Lucian, *Alex.* 6, 10–15, 26.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9, 17, 42.

⁶² Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 5.1–4; 9.1; 25.1–3; 41.1; 54.1–10; 56.1–4; 62.1–2; 64.1–6; 66.4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; Justin Martyr, *Dialog.* 7.3; 55.2–3; 73.2–3; 83.4; 91.3.

⁶³ Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; *1 En.* 6:1–4; 8:3.

portrayal of Simon as a popular μάγος. In other words, Acts' characterization of Simon confirms that Acts' implied reader is a Christ-follower.

Nevertheless, the rapid switch of the Samaritans' allegiance from Simon to Philip in Acts 8:12 provides an opportunity for the reader to be suspicious of the moral integrity of Philip, who is the new focus of attention for those whom Simon misled. The narrative, however, indicates that Philip, unlike Simon, is neither self-aggrandizing nor self-centered. Philip preaches Christ and the Kingdom of God, not himself.

The overall result of Philip's mission is that the Samaritans trust Philip and receive baptism, thus becoming Christ-followers. Surprisingly, Simon is also one of those who trusts Philip and receives baptism; thus, formally, Simon also becomes a Christ-follower.⁶⁴ The implication of Simon's entrance into the Christ-movement is that he is no longer the premier wonder-worker in Samaria.⁶⁵ Since Acts 8:12 presents the Samaritans as devoted to Philip and the Christ-movement, the reader is left to assume that the Samaritans are now quite unconcerned with the man whom they once proclaimed "the power of God that is called great." Simon loses his popular prominence.

Simon's devotion to Philip (Acts 8:13) signifies that Philip is a more effective and more powerful wonder-worker.⁶⁶ Although Simon is baptized, the narrative does not indicate the status of Simon's relationship to μαγεία following his conversion. On one hand, Simon seems to be a

⁶⁴ Zangenberg, "Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ," 534; cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 288. Witherington expresses doubt as to whether Simon is actually "converted;" however, Witherington is unclear as to exactly what he means by "conversion." If conversion simply means membership in the Christ-movement, Simon is a convert. It seems, however, that Witherington conceives of "conversion" as more of a psychological and moral transformation, which would indicate that Simon is not a true convert. Nevertheless, it is unfair to assume that Simon or any new convert should demonstrate a completely accurate and faultless understanding of any religious movement and its ideology immediately upon joining the movement. Although Luke's portrayal of Simon may cast doubt on the adequacy of Simon's faith and understanding of the Christ-movement, this should not lead to an explicit declaration that Simon is not a true convert, especially since Peter's rebuke even leaves open the option for Simon to repent and remain in the Christ-movement. In the end, Peter's rebuke is more of an opportunity for Simon's own spiritual growth as a Christ-follower than it is an irrevocable condemnation.

⁶⁵ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:406.

⁶⁶ Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 69.

genuine Christ-follower because Simon trusts Philip and receives baptism (Acts 8:13). On the other hand, the narrative provides room for doubt concerning Simon.⁶⁷ First, although Acts 8:12–13 presents the Samaritans as focused on Philip’s message, Simon is focused on Philip’s miracles. Just as the Samaritans were devoted to Simon because of his acts of *μαγεία*, Simon is devoted to Philip because of Philip’s miracle-working. Simon’s fascination with Philip’s miracles may lead the reader not only to question the genuineness of Simon’s conversion to the Christ-movement, but also it reinforces the possibility that the narrative is presenting Simon as not having abandoned his interest in *μαγεία*.⁶⁸ In comparison, the first new Judean members of the Christ-movement, according to Acts 2:42, were “dedicated to *the apostles’ teaching*.”⁶⁹ Thus, using the behavior of the new Christ-followers in Acts 2:42 as an example of the proper behavior of *genuine* new Christ-followers, the reader can assume that the Samaritans are genuine Christ-followers because they also are devoted to the gospel message. However, Simon’s preoccupation with Philip’s miracle-working seems to be an aberration from what Acts 2:42 presents as the normative practice of devotion to the gospel testimony. Thus, although Simon is now a Christ-follower, the narrative’s deviantization of him continues subtly after Simon has joined the Christ-movement.

Although Acts 8:13 may seem at first to be a neat ending to a simple story about how Simon of Samaria joins the Christ-movement, a closer reading of the Acts 8:4–13 reveals an unresolved tension in the narrative. Acts 8:9–13 never explicitly indicates that Simon foregoes his career in *μαγεία*, in which he engaged prior to his becoming a Christ-follower.⁷⁰ Simply,

⁶⁷ Das, “Acts 8,” 110; Witherington, *Acts*, 288; contra Barrett, *Acts*, 1:409.

⁶⁸ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 126; cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 210.

⁶⁹ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 140.

⁷⁰ In this chapter, I use the word career in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free, 1973], 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory*:

Simon shows no signs of repentance in regards to him practicing μαγεία, although he joins the Christ-movement. The narrative reinforces this unresolved tension by subtly creating doubt concerning the authenticity or quality of Simon’s conversion to the Christ-movement.⁷¹

The Encounter between the Apostles and Simon (Acts 8:14–24)

The unresolved tension in Acts 8:4–13 provides for the continuation of the narrative episode. In Acts 8:14, the narrative turns briefly back to the Jerusalemite church, which responds to the news that Samaritans have received the word of God. It is important to note that v. 14 contains the fourth description of Philip’s message to the Samaritans. In the first description of Philip’s preaching, Acts 8:4 describes the message proclaimed by the dispersed Jerusalemite Christ-followers, including Philip, as “the word” (τὸν λόγον). Next, Acts 8:5 indicates that Philip preaches “the Christ” (τὸν Χριστόν) to the Samaritans. Later, v. 12 elaborates on Philip’s message about Christ by indicating that he “proclaimed good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (εὐαγγελιζομένω περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ

The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003], 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

⁷¹ Cf. Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 159. Busch considers it possible that Simon does not cease practicing “magic” (*Magie*) when he joins the Christ-movement, and as long as Simon submits to the apostles’ authority and does not publicize his “magical” activities, his μαγεία is not be prohibited. In other words, Busch understands Acts to be presenting private μαγεία as the only acceptable μαγεία in the Christ-movement. Although Busch recognizes the distinction between the proper concept of μάγος (Persian priest) and the popular concept of μάγος (sorcerer, charlatan), Busch’s analysis of “magic” in the NT does not adequately distinguish between μαγεία as Persian religion and μαγεία as deviance. These two concepts are not necessarily two sides of the same coin. The proper concept of μαγεία refers to an actual religious tradition, but the popular concept of μαγεία refers to a deviant, social construct. Thus, although Matt 2:1–15 portrays the eastern μάγοι favorably, they are not the same sort of magico-religious specialist as Simon. However, Busch’s canonical approach to “magic” in the NT merges the Gospel of Matthew’s favorable treatment of the eastern μάγοι and Acts’ deviantization of Simon as popular μάγος into a broader and more ambiguous NT attitude toward “magic,” which allows Christ-followers to perform private “magic.” However, Acts does not seem to share this generalized view of magic, and Acts is very much opposed to popular μάγοι and says nothing concerning proper μάγοι. In addition, Busch does not recognize secret popular μαγεία as secret deviance. Private μαγεία among Christ-followers could easily occur as any of the three forms of secret deviance, which I discussed in ch. 4. Acts in no way seems to treat Simon’s wonder-working as permissible within the Christ-movement, even if he performs his μαγεία in secret.

ὄνοματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Finally, in Acts 8:14, Philip’s message is the “word of God” (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ), thus clarifying “the word” in Acts 8:4.

The previous five references to “the word of God” in Acts 2–7 occur within two separate episodes. During the gathering of the Christ-followers after the first trial before the Judean leaders (Acts 4:1–31), the Christ-followers pray to the Lord, “[G]ive to your slaves the ability to speak *your word* with confidence” (Acts 4:29). The Lord immediately fulfills the prayer request when the Christ-followers “were filled with the Holy Spirit and were speaking the word of God with confidence” (Acts 4:31). Next, the episode concerning the selection of the Seven (Acts 6:1–7) mentions the “word of God” three times. In Acts 6:2, the Twelve characterize the subject of their preaching and teaching activity as “the word of God,” and similarly, their reference to their service of “the word of God” presumably refers to the preaching and teaching of the word of God. Lastly, the narrative summary in Acts 6:7 reports that “the word of God was increasing,” thus indicating that the selection of the Seven served its intended purpose, specifically providing the Twelve more time to preach and teach successfully the word of God. Thus, in these two episodes (Acts 4:1–31; 6:1–7), “the word of God” is the content of the Christ-followers’ prophetic preaching and teaching. For a reader familiar with the HB’s prophetic tradition, the use of the phrase “word of God” in Acts 2–7 would likely call to mind the HB’s reservation of the phrase “the word of God” primarily for referring to prophetic oracles.⁷² Thus, Acts 8:14 emphasizes that Philip is a typical Christ-following prophetic wonder-worker, whose message, like the Twelve’s, is nothing less than the prophetic word of God.

Acts 8:14 inserts the apostles Peter and John back into the narrative of Acts. The apostles go to Samaria because they heard a report about Samaritans joining the Christ-movement. Acts 8:15, however, clearly informs that the first thing that the two apostles do is to pray that the Holy

⁷² Paul Anderson, “Word, The,” *NIDB* 5:893–895; Terence E. Fretheim, “Word of God,” *ABD* 6:961–968.

Spirit may come upon the Samaritan Christ-followers. However, v. 15 is not specific as to whether the apostles pray for the Samaritans while they are traveling to Samaria or after they arrive there. If the reader understands that Peter and John pray for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit while they are traveling, v. 15 suggests that a primary purpose for the apostles' visit to Samaria is to see that the Christ-followers receive the Holy Spirit.⁷³ However, if the reader understands that they pray for the Samaritans only after they arrive in Samaria, when they discover that the Samaritans have not received the Holy Spirit, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Samaritans is not the original purpose for the trip to Samaria.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the arrival of Peter and John in Samaria effectively signals the disappearance of Philip from the narrative. This displacement of Philip reasserts the leadership structure that emerges within the presentation of the Jerusalemite church in Acts 2–7. Regardless of what the actual historical relationship between the Twelve and the Seven may have been, Acts places the Twelve at the top of the Christ-movement's hierarchy of leadership, so that they assert leadership over the Seven, their subordinates.⁷⁵ In Acts 8:14, the emergence of the two apostles, particularly Peter, as the new protagonists of the episode reflects this leadership structure and confirms the Twelve, whom Peter and John represent, as the highest human leaders in the Christ-movement.

The participation of Peter and John in the episode also creates social continuity between the Jerusalemite church and the Samaritan mission. Not only are the Twelve the ultimate leaders of the Christ-movement in Jerusalem; they are also the highest human authorities for the Christ-movement in Samaria. No matter how far the message of Christ may spread and no matter who

⁷³ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:410; contra Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 535.

⁷⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 181; Pervo, *Acts*, 213.

⁷⁵ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 65.

may carry the message, the Twelve, at least up to this point, are the ultimate human authorities over any Christ-followers.

The most surprising aspect of Acts 8:14–17 is not the disappearance of Philip from the narrative, but v. 16’s indication that the Holy Spirit has not yet fallen upon the new Samaritan Christ-followers. The pattern of initiation into the Christ-movement presented in Peter’s Pentecost sermon consists of repentance followed by baptism, which is followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).⁷⁶ A few verses after Peter completes his sermon, “those who accepted [Peter’s] word were baptized” (Acts 2:41). The Pentecost narrative leaves the reader to assume that in complete fulfillment of Peter’s words in Acts 2:38, the new Christ-followers soon after receive the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷ In Acts 8:12–13, the Samaritans’ entrance into the Christ movement seems to follow the pattern for initiation laid out in Acts 2:38. They trust in the message about Christ, and they are baptized. Just as in Acts 2:41 and 4:4, no explicit indication exists in Acts 8:12–13 that the Holy Spirit comes upon the Samaritans; however, the reader is likely to assume that the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit. Thus, the indication that the Holy Spirit has not come upon the Samaritan Christ-followers would likely be unexpected for the reader.

In Acts 8:14–17, the apostles appear to have an ability that Philip does not have,⁷⁸ since only the apostles are able to induce possession by the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people. Thus, Acts 8:14–17 continues the trend in Acts 2–7 to present the Twelve, especially Peter, as the most prototypical miracle-workers. Now in Acts 8:14–17, the apostles possess superior wonder-working authority to that of the Seven. Later in Acts 19:1–7, new Christ-

⁷⁶ Cf. Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 88.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 94, 99.

⁷⁸ Wall, “Acts,” 10:139; Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 535.

followers again receive the Holy Spirit only after Paul, whom Acts labels an “apostle,”⁷⁹ lays hands on the new Christ-followers.

Furthermore, Acts 8:14–17 and Acts 19:1–7 may indicate that, after the Pentecost event, the laying on hands by an apostle functions as the typical ritual in Acts for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon someone. However, in Acts 10:44, the Holy Spirit falls upon Cornelius and his household prior to baptism and without the laying on of hands. The apparent surprise of Peter’s companions at the spontaneous falling of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius (Acts 10:45) would likely suggest to the ancient reader that this is even more anomalous than the situations in Acts 8:14–17 and 19:1–7. Thus, it seems most likely that my ancient reader would understand that the normative way in which new Christ-followers receive the Holy Spirit is through the imposition of hands by apostles.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the seemingly anomalous situations in Acts 8:14–17; 10:44; 19:1–7 would also suggest to the reader that some flexibility exists in how the Holy Spirit is received and that the Holy Spirit on some occasions spontaneously falls upon new Christ-followers without the imposition of an apostle’s hands.⁸¹

From a more stylistically focused perspective, the delayed reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:14–17 also allows for the introduction of the apostles into the narrative, thereby creating a formal connection between the Jerusalemite church and the Samaritan mission. The connection between the Jerusalemite church and the Samaritan mission functions in four possible ways, which are not mutually exclusive: to affirm the legitimacy of Philip’s mission, to place the

⁷⁹ Acts 14:4, 14.

⁸⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 331.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 331–332; Witherington, *Acts*, 287–288.

Samaritans under the apostles' authority, to show the Twelve and the Seven are allies, and to create unity between the Samaritans and Judeans.⁸²

F. Scott Spencer, however, provides an alternative explanation for the introduction of Peter and John into Acts 8:4–25. According to Spencer, the Gospel of Luke and Acts on a few occasions introduce one character as a *forerunner* to another *culminator* character. The first instance of the forerunner-culminator pattern involves John the Baptist as the forerunner to Jesus.⁸³ In regards to Acts 8:4–25, Spencer explains, “In a similar fashion, Philip functions as a Baptist-styled forerunner to Peter’s Spirit-imparting mission in Acts 8–11 (as does Apollos in relation to Paul in Acts 18–19) and thereby displays another facet of his mutual rather than subordinate relationship to the apostle from Jerusalem.”⁸⁴ Spencer, thus, understands Philip and the apostles to be equal “co-laborers.”⁸⁵ However, I question whether the Gospel of Luke or Acts actually portrays the forerunners as equals to the culminators. For instance, Luke 3:16 presents John the Baptist indicating that Jesus is superior to him: “John responded by saying to all, ‘I baptize you in water, but the one who is stronger than me comes, of whom I am not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.’”⁸⁶ Thus, I question if the forerunner-culminator pattern in the Gospel of Luke and Acts reveals anything about whether the persons involved in a particular instance of the forerunner-culminator pattern are equals. Although Spencer may correctly identify a forerunner-culminator pattern in Acts 8:4–25, the apostles may still possess a higher rank in the Christ-movement than Philip does.

⁸² Barrett, *Acts*, 1:410, 412; Bock, *Acts*, 330; Bruce, *Acts*, 180, 182–183; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 65; Das, “Acts 8,” 131; Haenchen, *Acts*, 304, 306; Pervo, *Acts*, 212–213; Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 535; cf. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 188–244; Witherington, *Acts*, 287, 289.

⁸³ Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 229.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Another feature of the forerunner-culminator pattern that is readily obvious in Luke 3:16 is that the culminators (Jesus, Peter and John, and Paul), but not the forerunners (John the Baptist, Philip, and Apollos), are responsible for conveying the Holy Spirit on others (cf. Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4–5; 8:4–25; 19:1–7).

Furthermore, the forerunner-culminator pattern in Acts 8:4–25 may actually suggest to the reader that Peter and John’s visit to Samaria may be for the purposes of legitimizing Philip’s mission and the placing of the Samaritan Christ-followers under the apostles’ authority, in addition to uniting the Jerusalemite church and the Samaritan Christ-movement.

However, the apostles’ ability to bestow the Holy Spirit upon people offers a possible contradiction in the presentation of the character type of “miracle-worker.” In the previous chapter, I indicate that Acts 2–7 presents the Holy Spirit as being in control of the Christ-followers and not vice versa; however, the reader may interpret the apostles’ ability to bestow the Holy Spirit on other people (Acts 8:17–18) as the coercion or control of the Holy Spirit. The coercion or control of deities, spirits, or spiritual power is a common element of the negative stereotype of the popular μάγος. The contrasting of Philip the miracle-worker and Simon the μάγος in Acts 8:4–13 functions to keep the reader from identifying the miracle-workers as μάγοι. Furthermore, by having the apostles pray for the Samaritans “in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit,” v. 15 provides some impediment to reading the apostles’ bestowal of the Holy Spirit on other people as their controlling the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the possibility still exists for a skeptical reader to take the apostles’ ability to bestow the Holy Spirit as control of the Holy Spirit. Thus, a paradox exists in Acts 8:4–25 in which the apostles, who are not μάγοι, appear to control God’s Holy Spirit just as popular μάγοι supposedly attempt to control deities and spirits.

Returning to my brief discussion of the invocation of authoritative names in ch. 5, those historical persons who were susceptible to accusations of being μάγοι, such as the ritual actors of the *PGM*, typically did not see themselves as coercing deities and spirits, but as Graham H. Twelftree explains, those conducting the rituals in the *PGM* would have understood themselves

to be exercising their “right to use, at will, their chosen power-authorities.”⁸⁷ Similarly, Acts presents the apostles’ ability to bestow the Holy Spirit upon people as the exercising of the authority delegated to them by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8). Thus, Acts portrays the apostles in Samaria as not usurping the divine prerogative to control the Holy Spirit; instead, Jesus, who is God’s son and servant,⁸⁸ has delegated the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit to the apostles. If the apostles fail to exercise their ability to bestow the Holy Spirit, they will not have fulfilled the expectations that Jesus has laid upon them.

Once again, the subjectivity of characterizing someone as a μάγος is apparent. The apostles, who bestow the Holy Spirit on others, are presented as legitimate miracle-workers exercising divinely delegated authority to employ divine power; however, Simon, who is the purported “power of God which is called great,” is presented as a worker of deceptive, impious μαγεία. The presentation of the Christ-following missionaries as the only legitimate wonder-workers demonstrates a sectarian mentality of *us against them*, since Acts describes Simon’s wonder-working prior to his becoming a Christ-follower as μαγεία.⁸⁹ However, Simon, prior to joining the Christ-movement, does not seem to share this same sense of religious particularity, since he is quick to accept Philip as a true wielder of divine power and a true worker of divine miracles. In Acts 8:4–25, only wonder-workers within the Christ-movement are legitimate wielders of divine power; thus, Acts is liable to portray all wonder-workers outside the Christ-

⁸⁷ Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 47; see also Graham H. Twelftree, “Jesus the Exorcist and Ancient Magic,” in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 74.

⁸⁸ υἱός: Luke 1:32, 35; 4:41; 8:28; 10:22; 22:70; παῖς: Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30.

⁸⁹ For more information on sectarian exclusivity and particularity, see Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 91–93; Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study*, World University Library (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 26–29; Bryan R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 25–86.

movement as popular μάγοι. Since Simon's wonder-working begins prior to his joining the Christ-movement, Acts 8:4–25 casts Simon as a μάγος and not as a miracle-worker.

Two Ways of Interpreting the Conflict between Simon and the Apostles

Potential conflict between Simon and the Christ-following miracle-workers finally actualizes in Acts 8:18–24. Simon makes an offer to Peter and John, who find the offer completely unacceptable and impious. Acts 8:18–19 is clear about the details of Simon's offer. Simon is able to observe visually (ἰδὼν) that the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit; thus, their reception of the Holy Spirit manifests in observable behavior, which the reader would likely assume to be *glossolalia*.⁹⁰ In response to what Simon sees, he offers Peter and John money in exchange for the “authority” to bestow the Holy Spirit on people. Simon does not ask the two apostles to bestow the Holy Spirit upon him because as one of the many newly baptized Samaritans who receive the Holy Spirit through the apostles' laying hands on him,⁹¹ Simon is already one possessed by the Holy Spirit. However, being possessed by the Holy Spirit apparently does not give someone the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit upon someone else; thus, Simon asks for the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit upon other people.

Two basic ways exist for understanding the significance of Simon's offer—a sympathetic reading and a critical reading. According to the sympathetic reading, Simon is merely offering an expected fee to his teachers for them to share with him a ritual technique he does not possess.⁹² It is crucial here to remember that Simon is no longer an outsider in regards to the Christ-

⁹⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 332; Bruce, *Acts*, 181; Haenchen, *Acts*, 304; Pervo, *Acts*, 214; contra Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 406.

⁹¹ Bock, *Acts*, 332–333; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 20; Pervo, *Acts*, 215; Wall, “Acts,” 10:139; cf. Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 62; Haenchen, *Acts*, 304; contra Das, “Acts 8,” 111–112. Bock suggests that Simon may make his offer to the apostles either after he received the Holy Spirit or “when his turn comes to receive the Spirit” (Bock, *Acts*, 332).

⁹² Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 333; Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 62–63; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 21; Zangenberg, “Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ,” 537–538.

movement. Simon is a Christ-follower under the authority and tutelage of the apostles, just as the three thousand new Christ-followers on Pentecost are in Acts 2:42. Simon is only asking his teachers to give to him the “authority” to perform a ritual procedure that they themselves are already performing. Simon apparently assumes that since Peter and John have the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit on others, they also have the ability to grant this *authority* to others. Yet, the only one whom Acts portrays actually exercising this ability is Jesus (Acts 1:8), which suggests to the reader that only Jesus possesses the ability to grant to others the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit. Thus, Simon’s offer depicts him asking the apostles to exercise authority that only Jesus possesses.⁹³ Accordingly, the narrative portrays Peter rebuking Simon in Acts 8:20–23 because he has sought to purchase an authority that God reserves as a “gift” (τὴν δωρεάν) for only the apostles. Simon, thus, does not act according to his position in the structure of the Christ-movement that Acts has thus far established.⁹⁴

However, I suggest that a much more critical reading of Simon’s offer provides a better analysis. The critical reading considers several additional factors: (1) the harshness of Peter’s rebuke, (2) greed as part of the negative stereotype of popular μάγος, (3) Simon’s history with μαγεία, (4) the significance of balanced and general reciprocity in Greco-Roman society, and (5) the impact that fulfillment of Simon’s request presumably would have on his status within the Christ-movement.

The Harshness of Peter’s Rebuke

Peter tells Simon that his offer to buy the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit is a “wrong” (κακία; Acts 8:22) that will lead to Simon’s destruction (ἄπωλεία; Acts 8:20). In addition, Peter

⁹³ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:415.

⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 1:414; Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 59, 62. It is important to recognize that in Acts 8:20, Peter says that *the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit*, not the Holy Spirit itself, is a gift from God.

indicates that the source of Simon's offer is "the gall of bitterness and bonds of unrighteousness" within Simon (Acts 8:23). This seems to be much too harsh a rebuke against a novice Christ-follower, who has simply misunderstood his role in the Christ-movement. Of course, Acts 5:1–11 previously portrays Peter pronouncing the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira in response to their attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit; however, Ananias and Sapphira's offer involves an explicit attempt at deception. Yet Acts 8:4–25 does not indicate that Simon has made request that he knows to be inappropriate.

Greed in the Negative Stereotype of a Popular Μάγος

Even more detrimental to the sympathetic reading of Simon's request is that greed is a common element of the negative stereotype of *popular μάγος*.⁹⁵ Lucian, for instance, portrays Alexander of Abonoteichos as a deceiver who tricks the people of Abonoteichos in order to become wealthy.⁹⁶ Similarly, in Apuleius' *Apology*, those accusing Apuleius of being a *magus* claim that Apuleius seduced his wife by means of *magia* in order to obtain her wealth.⁹⁷ Even Philostratus points out that despite accusations that Apollonius of Tyana is a popular μάγος, he could not be so because he does not charge for his wonder-working.⁹⁸ Similar to Apollonius, the Christ-following miracle-workers in Acts do not accept fees or rewards for their miracles. When they do collect wealth, such as when Barnabas places proceeds from a land sale at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:37), the money is for the entire Christ-following community, not for the apostles.⁹⁹ In contrast, Simon operates in the fashion of a greedy popular μάγος, since he makes an offer that assumes that Peter and John will accept money in exchange for the authority to bestow the Holy

⁹⁵ Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 144; Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 70; Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 123–124; Pervo, *Acts*, 214; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 98; e.g., Lucian, *Alex.* 5, 49; Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 16; Lucian, *Peregr.* 13; Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.* 7.39; 8.7; Plato, *Laws* 10.909B.

⁹⁶ Lucian, *Alex.* 6, 8–9, 14, 18, 23–24, 32.

⁹⁷ Apuleius, *Apol.* 18–23, 71–73, 93, 101–103.

⁹⁸ Philostratus, *Life of Apoll.* 1.13, 21, 34, 38, 40; 2.7, 39, 40; 4.25, 45; 6.41; 8.7.3, 11; 8.17.

⁹⁹ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 21; Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 134–135.

Spirit. Simon's offer suggests to the reader that Simon himself is quite willing to accept payment in exchange for performing wonders, including the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon someone.¹⁰⁰

For Peter and John to accept the money Simon offers would effectively make them popular μάγοι, and they would be open to accusations of deception, charlatanism, self-aggrandizement, self-service, and the coercion of the Holy Spirit and divine power.¹⁰¹ Thus, Acts 8:20–23 has Peter casting a severe rebuke against Simon.

Simon's History with Μαγεία

The reader would likely imagine that Simon's wonder-working activity is common knowledge among the Samaritans and the Christ-following missionaries. It is also possible for the reader to imagine that if Simon's behavior became sufficiently normative Christ-follower behavior, he would eventually shed off his master status as a popular μάγος. As I explained in ch. 4, a deviant master status is a deviant status or identity that "takes precedence over all others a person possesses" to the extent that "all their other statuses are consumed by their master status."¹⁰² Nevertheless, it takes considerable time for a person to lose or change a deviant master status; consequently, Peter's rebuke reaffirms Simon's master status as a popular μάγος, thus identifying Simon as a deviant within the Christ-movement.

Balanced and General Reciprocity in the Greco-Roman Economy

Both classicists and biblical scholars have spent considerable time explaining how Greco-Roman society operated primarily through two types of economic reciprocity. Balanced reciprocity is that which is most familiar to modern Westerners. In balanced reciprocity, a buyer purchases a

¹⁰⁰ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:413; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 20–21; Daniel Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark / Continuum, 2003), 118; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 125.

¹⁰¹ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 123, 125–126; Pervo, *Acts*, 214.

¹⁰² Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 82.

good or service through the exchange of wealth, goods, or services of roughly equal value. At the completion of the transaction, neither party owes the other anything more.¹⁰³ Generalized reciprocity primarily involves someone providing a good or service that is not immediately reciprocated and sometimes reciprocated with a series of less valuable goods or services. Often the recipient in generalized exchange reciprocates with intangibles, such as acts of public honor. Furthermore, generalized reciprocity establishes an on-going relationship between the exchange partners.

The most common form of general reciprocity in Greco-Roman society is the transactions among clients and patrons.¹⁰⁴ In his landmark work on patronage in the early Roman Empire, Richard P. Saller lists “three vital elements which distinguish a patronage relationship”:

First, it involves the *reciprocal* exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange—a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman provide a detailed list of features of patron-client systems, which, although appearing in a book about first-century Palestine, supplies a useful working understanding of patronage throughout the early Roman Empire:

¹⁰³ Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, BZNV 130 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 54–59; K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 113; Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 35–37.

¹⁰⁴ Terry Johnson and Christopher Dandeker, “Patronage: Relation and System,” In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 1 (London: Routledge, 1989), 225.

¹⁰⁵ Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1.

1. “Particularistic (exclusive) and diffuse (covering a wide range of issues).”
2. “Involves the exchange of a whole range of social interactions . . . : power, influence, inducement, and commitment.”
3. “Entails a ‘package deal.’”
4. “A strong element of unconditionality and long-range social credit; that is, benefits and obligations are not usually exchanged simultaneously.”
5. “A strong element of interpersonal obligation.”
6. “They are informal and often opposed to official laws of the country.”
7. “Voluntar[y]”
8. “Patron/client relations are vertical . . . and dyadic.”
9. “A strong element of inequality and difference between patrons and clients.”
10. “A client might easily have more than one patron. . . .”
11. “On the same sliding scale with ‘friendship.’”¹⁰⁶

In regards to Greco-Roman patronage, a few of these characteristics require some comment. First, many of these characteristics are overlapping, for example, item four and item five are closely connected. The “long-range social credit” in item four facilitates and strengthens the “interpersonal obligation” in item five. In addition, the “interpersonal obligation” of patron-client relations in item five is closely related to the “unconditionality” in item four. Second, Greco-Roman patronage was typically not subversive to Roman law (item six); instead, patronage in the early Roman Empire, however, was expected and encouraged in and by the imperial

¹⁰⁶ Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine of Jesus*, 72; cf. John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, JSNTSup 75 (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1992), 30–32.

government.¹⁰⁷ Third, the voluntary aspect of Greco-Roman patronage (item 7) was relative. Freedpersons were not free to choose their patrons, since by law, their former master became their patron.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, although patronage was ideally voluntary for all other clients, the voluntary aspect of patronage was limited by a heavy emphasis on loyalty (*fides*) in Greco-Roman society and by Greco-Roman patronage's connection to the Greco-Roman system of honor and shame. Lastly, item ten suggests that patron-client relations in the early Roman Empire were part of a dynamic continuum of all sorts of relationships, including friendship and kinship. Any attempt to create inflexible, impermeable boundaries around the various types of social relations and roles fails to recognize the dynamic nature of patron-client relations in the early Roman Empire.

In Greco-Roman society, a person would give a gift (δωρεά) with the expectation of something in return. The ability to reciprocate the gift with another gift of equal or greater value was the basis of exchange among social equals; however, failure to repay a gift with something of equal or greater value results in the gift becoming a “benefaction,” something given by a patron to a client.¹⁰⁹ Generalized reciprocity was the typical form of exchange among people of unequal social status. Balanced reciprocity occurred primarily among social equals and strangers.¹¹⁰ The interactions between Simon and the apostles involve not only an on-going relationship but also a relationship between parties of unequal status.

Within the Christ-movement, since Peter and John are hierarchical superiors to Simon, they are of unequal status. Simon's offer, however, involves balanced reciprocity.¹¹¹ My ancient

¹⁰⁷ Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 55-56; cf. Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 153.

¹⁰⁸ Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 228.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 58; cf. Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 126, 205.

¹¹⁰ Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 57-58.

¹¹¹ Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 60.

reader, who would be instinctively familiar with Greco-Roman systems of economic reciprocity, would most likely understand that Simon's acquisition of the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit would effectively signify that Simon has the same spiritual authority as the apostles; thus, Simon would no longer need to be under the tutelage or authority of the apostles. The effect of Simon's offer to the apostles is that Simon would become a magico-religious equal to Peter and John, and he would be able to resume his own independent wonder-working career or even to gain a leadership role in the Christ-movement.¹¹² Thus, the narrative's contrasting of Philip and Simon continues into the third section of the episode because Acts 8:4–8 depicts Philip operating appropriately within his hierarchical position in the Christ-movement; however, Simon's offer to Peter and John presents Simon striving to obtain an authority reserved only for the apostles. In consideration of the fact that Peter and John's position and authority as apostles is delegated to them by Jesus himself, Peter appropriately refers to the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit as "the gift from God" (τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ; Acts 8:20).

As Zeba A. Crook demonstrates, Greek nouns based on the root *δωρ*, such as *δωρέα*, frequently factor into Josephus' and Philo's understanding of the Israelite God as a divine patron for the Judeans.¹¹³ The perspective that lies behind Josephus and Philo's treatment of God as divine patron is that since it is impossible for any human to repay fully any gift from God, gifts from God automatically qualify as benefactions from the divine patron to the client people. Similarly, from the perspective that the narrative attributes to Peter, Simon is effectively trying to engage in balanced reciprocity by purchasing what God gives as a benefaction to only certain clients, namely the apostles. However, through the character Peter, the narrative indicates that

¹¹² Bruce, *Acts*, 183; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics: An Introduction," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 2 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 15; Wall, "Acts," 10:139; Witherington, *Acts*, 287; cf. Derrett, "Simon Magus," 55.

¹¹³ Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 58, 82–87, 98, 142.

the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit is not a good for purchase, but God gives it as a gift to those whom God chooses, namely the apostles. Thus, Simon's request is not only impossible but also impious.¹¹⁴

The Impact of the Offer on Simon's Status

For a brief moment, the reader may wonder whether the apostles will accept or reject Simon's offer. Simon's possession of authority superior to Philip's and equal to the apostles would allow him to rejuvenate his wonder-working career as a premier wonder-worker in Samaria.¹¹⁵

However, Simon could not be a legitimate equal to the apostles, the Christ-movement's highest leaders personally selected by Jesus; thus, Simon would still be a popular μάγος. Ultimately, the narrative provides the reader little time to speculate on these possibilities, since in the next three verses, Peter's rebuke immediately indicates that the apostles are rejecting Simon's offer as wrong (κακία; Acts 8:20–22). Nevertheless, in light of all the implications concerning Simon's offer, Peter's claim that Simon is headed for destruction is an appropriate reaction toward Simon, whom Peter treats as a deviant within the Samaritan Christ-movement.

Simon's Reaction to Peter's Rebuke (Acts 8:24)

Peter's response to Simon's offer condemns Simon and claims that he has no part in the gospel message (Acts 8:20–21). Furthermore, Peter's response effectively re-invokes Simon's status as a popular μάγος. Nevertheless, Peter offers Simon the opportunity to repent in Acts 8:22:

“Therefore, repent from this wrong of yours and ask the Lord if perhaps the intent of your heart will be forgiven you. . . .” Peter's call to repentance gives Simon the possibility of remaining a normal member of the Samaritan Christ-movement. However, the inferential particle ὅρα, which

¹¹⁴ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 126.

¹¹⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 20–21.

in combination with the conditional particle εἰ, adds contingency or tentativeness to the conditional clause at the end of v.22.¹¹⁶ Even if Simon repents, Simon's fate is still ultimately in God's hands.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, since the narrative ends without indicating whether Simon repents, the reader is left to consider the contingent results of Simon's decision to repent or not to repent.

Anthropologist Douglas Raybeck explains that peasant communities typically attempt to reintegrate someone demonstrating abnormal behavior before excluding the abnormal individual from the group.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, sociologist James D. Orcutt's reanalysis of small group research on deviance explains that typically small groups will engage first in *inclusive reactions* to deviance, especially if the deviance is not an immediate threat to core values of the group or society. Inclusive reactions aim at persuading the deviant to conform to the social norms of the group or society. Thus, inclusive reactions to deviance typically do not result in the exclusion of the deviant. However, *exclusive reactions* to deviance "operate to reject the rule-breaker from the group and revoke his [or her] privileges and status as an ordinary member."¹¹⁹ Groups and societies typically employ exclusive reactions to deviance either when the group considers the deviant behavior to be "a stable pattern, not subject to change" or when the deviant behavior is a threat to core values of the group.¹²⁰ Similar to Orcutt's study, Raybeck explains that the decision to deviantize and exclude a person involves an implicit decision that retaining the abnormal member will pose a serious threat to group cohesiveness; thus, a group or society will

¹¹⁶ BDAG, s.v. "ἄρα."

¹¹⁷ Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 335; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 66.

¹¹⁸ Douglas Raybeck, "Hard versus Soft Deviance: Anthropology and Labeling Theory," in *Deviance: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Morris Freilich, Douglas Raybeck, and Joel Savishinsky (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991), 62–65.

¹¹⁹ James D. Orcutt, "Societal Reaction and the Response to Deviation in Small Groups," *Social Forces* 52 (1973), 260.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

typically not deviantize and exclude a person until keeping that person is a greater danger to the group or society than excluding the person.¹²¹

Regardless of whether Simon repents, Peter's rebuke treats Simon in much the same way an in-group witch is treated as a "dangerous deviant" in Mary Douglas' patterns of witchcraft, which I discussed in ch. 2. In this pattern, the witch (or, in the case of Acts 8:4–25, the μάγος) is a deviant within the group, and the identification and control of the deviant defines or strengthens social norms and increases social cohesion in the group.¹²² Peter's rebuke, although it re-invokes Simon's master status as popular μάγος, provides Simon a chance to renounce explicitly his deviant behavior. Thus, Peter's rebuke, despite its harshness, is ultimately an inclusive reaction to deviance that contributes to the development of the Christ-follower identity in regard to wonder-working.

Peter's rebuke also contains potential exclusive reactions to deviance that will occur if Simon fails to repent. First, Peter's rebuke indicates that Simon's failure to repent will result in actual physical and social exclusion from the Christ-movement. A second potential exclusive reaction to Simon's deviant offer is the attribution of *character deviance* to Simon. Orcutt explains that exclusive reactions to deviance are often addressed to behavior the society or group considers to be "character deviance," which is deviant behavior resulting from an abnormality inherent within the person himself.¹²³ Orcutt's formulation of the exact relationship between exclusive reactions and character deviance is that character deviance evokes exclusive reactions; however, I suggest that in many cases exclusive reactions to deviance give rise to societal assumptions of character deviance as the cause of the deviant behavior, since the attribution of

¹²¹ Raybeck, "Hard vs. Soft Deviance," 51–54.

¹²² Mary Douglas, "Thirty Years after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*," introduction to *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas, ASAM 9 (London: Tavistock, 1970), xxvii.

¹²³ Orcutt, "Societal Reaction," 264–265.

character deviance seems to be nothing more than the attribution of stereotypical auxiliary deviant statuses to one whom the group has already ascribed a deviant master status. In other words, attributions of character deviance may be a part, not a result, of the deviantization of a person.

Through Peter's rebuke, the narrative initiates the attribution of character deviance to Simon when Peter claims that "Simon's heart is not right before God" (Acts 8:21) and "the gall of bitterness and bonds of unrighteousness" are in Simon (Acts 8:23). Thus, the narrative depicts the source of Simon's deviant behavior as his own internal being. If Simon repents, he would presumably become a normal member of the Samaritan Christ-following community, and he would eventually shed completely his deviant master status of popular μάγος. If Simon were not to repent, his exclusion, which is already set into motion by Peter's rebuke, would continue, and his master status as a popular μάγος would be solidified as character deviance, which derives from a crooked heart full of "the gall of bitterness and bonds of unrighteousness" (Acts 8:21, 23).

Through Peter's rebuke, Acts effectively clarifies the symbolic boundaries regarding wonder-workers, and this clarification develops more clearly the Christ-follower identity in regards to wonder-working.¹²⁴ As I already noted, the apostles' acceptance of Simon's offer would make Simon equal to the apostles; thus, Peter's rebuke is a defense of the apostles' status as the supreme human authorities in the Christ-movement. Through the confrontation between Simon and Peter, the narrative designates who will exercise leadership within the Samaritan Christ-movement. Thus, in some ways, Simon also functions similar to Douglas' pattern of a "witch as an internal enemy with outside liaisons."¹²⁵ Since Simon's career as a popular μάγος originates prior to his joining the Christ-movement, it is possible for Simon to function as an

¹²⁴ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 15.

¹²⁵ Douglas, "Thirty Years," xxvii.

internal enemy with outside liaisons, since his μαγεία ties him to the world outside the Christ-movement. The functions of accusations made against such a witch (or, in the case of Acts 8:4–25, the μάγος) include the “promot[ion] of factional rivalry, split[ting] of community, and redefin[ition] of hierarchy.”¹²⁶ Peter’s rebuke functions to define for Simon and the reader the hierarchy of leaders in Samaria, thus placing anyone who does not accept this leadership structure, such as Simon, outside the symbolic moral boundaries of the Christ-movement. In particular, Peter’s rebuke asserts that God permits only the apostles to bestow the Holy Spirit on others, thus setting the apostles up as the supreme human leaders and wonder-workers within the Samaritan Christ-movement.

Simon’s response to Peter is ambiguous in two related ways. First, the reader could take Simon’s request in v. 19 for the apostles to intercede for him as sincere or mocking. Second, as the final piece of the conflict, Simon’s response does not indicate whether Simon actually repents. If the reader understands Simon’s request to be sincere, he is then truly repentant. This reading of Simon’s response complements well the sympathetic reading of Simon’s offer to purchase the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ According to the sympathetic reading of the offer, Simon makes an honest mistake in assuming that he could legitimately buy the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit from the apostles. If he were to realize his mistake, he would likely repent and ask the apostles to pray for his salvation (Acts 8:24).¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the narrative presents Simon requesting that the apostles pray for him, despite Peter’s instructions that Simon pray for himself (Acts 8:22). Even if Peter and John pray for Simon, this does not mean that Simon will actually repent. Thus, the most troubling part of Simon’s request, if the reader takes it as sincere, is that the narrative provides no indication that Simon actually repents and prays for himself.

¹²⁶ Douglas, “Thirty Years,” xxvii.

¹²⁷ Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 407.

¹²⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, 305.

If the reader regards Simon's response as mocking and dismissive, Simon's request that Peter and John pray for him takes on a completely different significance. Simon's request for prayer becomes defiance. A mocking and dismissive reading of Simon's response automatically assumes that the narrative depicts Simon being unrepentant and parting ways with the apostles and the other Christ-followers.¹²⁹

Both the sincere and dismissive readings of Simon's response involve a great deal of speculation because Acts simply provides Simon's ambiguous response and moves to narrating the conclusion of the Samaritan mission (Acts 8:25). The ambiguity itself functions to cast negative light on Simon. Subsequent traditions about Simon of Samaria elaborate and extend Acts' negative depiction of Simon to the point that Simon is portrayed as having clearly parted ways with the apostles and the section of the Christ-movement they represent.¹³⁰

From a narrative-focused perspective, the open ending of the conflict increases the inclusion of the reader within Simon's crisis.¹³¹ Thus, not only does Simon face the decision of whether to abandon μαγεία, but the narrative ultimately places the decision to repent before the reader. In Klauck's words, the narrative "makes an appeal to the reader."

Although Klauck is correct that Acts' development of a Christ-following identity in regard to wonder-working addresses "systemic risks" that face historical miracle-working leaders of the Christ-movement, problematic is Klauck's claim that the open-endedness of the conflict between Simon and the apostles appeals to the reader to avoid lapsing into "the remnants of

¹²⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 335–336.

¹³⁰ If the negative judgments of Simon by Christ-followers in second and third centuries are any indication of Christ-follower opinions of Simon in the first century, it may be that the first-century Christ-follower tradition held that Simon parted ways with the apostles. Cf. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 4.51.14; 6.20 [6.15 ANF]; 7.37 [7.25 ANF]; 10.12 [10.8 ANF]; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.23; 2.preface, 9; 3.preface, 5–7; Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 26.2–3; 56.1–4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 15.1–2; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 120.6; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.57.39–40; 5.62.1–14; 6.11.14–30; Tertullian, *Idol.* 9.6.

¹³¹ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 66; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 23; Pervo, *Acts*, 216.

popular pagan belief in the Christian communities.”¹³² First, if Acts is portraying Simon as a culturally indigenous Samaritan (and I think this is the case), Simon’s dealings with μαγεία cannot easily be characterized as “pagan belief.” Second, Klauck’s reference to Simon’s dealings with μαγεία as “pagan belief” suggests that μαγεία is essentially a non-Judean and non-Samaritan practice. However, elite Greco-Romans writers typically consider Judeans to be adept at popular μαγεία.¹³³ In light of the elite Greco-Roman conception of μαγεία as a typically non-Greek practice,¹³⁴ the ancient Gentile reader would have been more inclined to consider μαγεία a practice typical of numerous non-Greek societies, including Judeans and possibly Samaritans. Thus, in Greco-Roman culture, μαγεία was not inherently “pagan,” to use Klauck’s term. Finally, Klauck’s characterization of μαγεία within the Christ-movement as “remnants of popular pagan belief” ignores the reality that both μαγεία and legitimate Christ-follower miracle-working are ideological constructs. The former is a ubiquitous social construct of deviant ritual practice, and the latter is the writer Luke’s own ideological construct, which arises out of his experiences with his own Christ-following community’s socially constructed concept of legitimate Christ-follower practice. Since popular μαγεία is a social-constructed concept of deviant magico-religious practice, it is not necessary for Acts to warn its readers of the dangers of popular μαγεία in general. From Klauck’s historical-critical perspective, according to which a historical conflict possibly existed between Simon and other Christ-followers (particularly Peter), Acts 8:4–25, however, may be a warning against the influence of Simon and his practices, to which the narrative applies the deviant label μαγεία. Thus, Acts’ polemic is not a polemic against

¹³² Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 23; cf. Robert F. Stoops, Jr., “Simon (13),” *ABD* 6:30. In regards to Acts 8:4–25, Stoops claims, “The charges of magic are part of the author’s polemic against competing cults (cf. Acts 13:6–12; 19:13–20).”

¹³³ Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 58; Luck, “Witches and Sorcerers,” 94; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 30.2.11.

¹³⁴ Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 29, 52, 56; Luck, “Witches and Sorcerers,” 95; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 39–47, 69.

μαγεία in general, although it quite possibly is a polemic against the historical Simon and other magico-religious specialists, especially prominent members of rival Christ-following groups.

From a narrative-focused perspective, the narrative's portrayal of Simon and his μαγεία results in a distinction between legitimate Christ-follower miracle-working and illegitimate wonder-workers. Thus, this narrative episode contributes to Acts' development of the identity of legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers by informing the reader of proper and improper behavior among miracle-workers. For a miracle-worker to demonstrate any of the negative qualities displayed by Simon indicates that this particular wonder-worker is acting more like a μάγος than a miracle-worker. Nevertheless, the main concern in Acts 8:4–25 appears to be over the identity of miracle-workers in the Christ-movement, not any sort of syncretism between the Christ-movement and popular Greek or Roman religion. The deviantization of these allegedly illegitimate practices as μαγεία ultimately functions to illustrate to the reader the nature of legitimate wonder-working in the Christ-movement.

To argue only that Acts 8:4–25 is the writer Luke's way of teaching Christ-following readers to refrain from using μαγεία and from employing μάγοι ignores the fact that μαγεία is itself a social construction and assumes that an objective entity known as μαγεία actually exists. Any of Acts' readers who practice what the author Luke might have considered μαγεία would quite likely not have considered their actions μαγεία. In other words, μαγεία is a pejorative label, and rarely would one consider their own actions μαγεία, unless either they are consciously behaving counter-culturally or they come to accept someone else's characterization of their actions as μαγεία. If Acts 8:4–25 were to function as a warning to its readers of the unrighteousness of μαγεία,¹³⁵ the narrative would need to spend more time detailing Simon's

¹³⁵ Cf. Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 74.

acts of μαγεία; instead, Acts 8:4–25 draws upon numerous stereotypical elements of the popular μύγος to portray Simon as a religious deviant, specifically a popular μύγος. Acts' reliance on the Greco-Roman stereotype of μύγος demonstrates that the definition and role of μαγεία are not at stake in Acts 8:4–25; instead, at stake is the other half of the competition in this episode, specifically the nature and activity of Christ-following miracle-workers.

Acts 8:4–25 employs a contrast between miracle-workers and a stereotypical popular μύγος, and a primary function of this contrast is to create a clear distinction between legitimate miracle-working and illegitimate μαγεία.¹³⁶ Toward the end of the episode, Simon must decide whether to accept the social identity of miracle-workers as embodied in Philip, Peter, and John. The open-endedness of the conflict between Simon and the apostles places this same decision before the reader. Of course, Acts' portrayal of Simon as a popular μύγος would likely tip the scales in favor of the reader accepting the identity of legitimate miracle-workers as developed in Acts 8:4–25.

The Return to Jerusalem (Acts 8:25)

In summary fashion, Acts 8:25 states, “Then those who bore solemn witness to the word of the Lord and spoke the word of the Lord returned to Jerusalem.” Apparently encouraged by their success in the city of Samaria, the three Christ-following missionaries preach the good news in the Samaritan villages that they pass through on their way to Jerusalem. Reimer suggests that both Philip's missionary travels through Palestine in Acts 8:4–13 and the two apostles' missionary work in the region of Samaria demonstrate a new characteristic of the Christ-following miracle-worker, specifically itinerancy. In other words, Christ-following miracle-workers, when outside of Jerusalem, tend not to settle permanently in one place. Reimer does

¹³⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 336–337.

note that the miracle-workers' itinerancy occurs in stages and that they are not constantly traveling. No indication exists in Acts 8:4–25 that Simon ever engages in itinerancy;¹³⁷ however, the narrative does not leave Philip and the apostles in the city of Samaria. Acts 8:25 places them on a missionary tour of Samaria as they travel back to Jerusalem. In Acts 8:26–27, Philip leaves Samaria and travels to the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. Then, in Acts 8:40, he travels to Azotus, which becomes the starting point for a missionary journey through the cities between Azotus and Caesarea Maritima.

Regardless of whether Simon repents, the missions to Samaria and the rest of Palestine proceed successfully. The Christ-following missionaries continue delivering their message of salvation, and Simon does not impede the success of the Christ-followers' mission to take the good news to Samaria.¹³⁸ Thus, the end of the episode suggests that the mission that Jesus announces in Acts 1:8 will proceed regardless of the actions of any μάγοι that Christ-following missionaries may encounter. Furthermore, the success of the Samaritan mission functions to prove that only Christ is the human manifestation of divine power and that only wonder-workers possessed and empowered by the Holy Spirit are legitimate miracle-workers. This aspect of the development of the miracle-worker identity occurs by deviantizing a rival wonder-working character as a negatively stereotypical, popular μάγος.¹³⁹

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Peter's deviantization of Simon as a μάγος in the narrative world of Acts is not exactly the same as the whole episode's

¹³⁷ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 72, 70–79; cf. *Did.* 12, in which legitimate Christ-following prophets are either to be itinerants who stay a few days or residents who earn their living from a trade.

¹³⁸ Contra Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 74. According to Garrett, the defeat of Simon, who is empowered by the devil, is necessary so that “the missionaries can preach the gospel, unhindered by the devil, throughout the regions of Samaria (8:25).”

¹³⁹ Cf. Neiryneck, “Miracle Stories in Acts,” 171. Although Neiryneck is right that the miracle-workers' success over Simon's μαγεία “enhance[s] the reputation of the Christian miracle-worker,” the miracle-workers success goes beyond this by actually contributing to Acts' development of the social identity of legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers.

deviantization of Simon as a popular μάγος, although the two are related. Acts portrays Peter deviantizing Simon in response to Simon's offer, but the entire episode in Acts 8:4–25 also deviantizes Simon from beginning to end. Within the narrative world of Acts, the audience of Peter's deviantization of Simon is the Samaritan Christ-followers, including Simon. The audience of the narrative's deviantization of Simon is the reader of Acts. Thus, the results of the narrative's deviantization of Simon go beyond Peter's placement of Simon's behavior outside the boundaries of normal Christ-following behavior and conveying to the Samaritans the legitimate character of Christ-following wonder-workers and wonder-working. The narrative through the actual historical ancient reader engages the real world in which the Christ-movement is one of many magico-religious groups liable to accusations of μαγεία, especially since the Christ-movement contains a vibrant tradition of wonder-working. The narrative's contrasting of the Christ-following miracle-workers with Simon the μάγος is ultimately concerned with characterizing Christ-follower wonder-working as legitimate miracle-working and not with describing μαγεία.

Acts 8:4–25 functions as an adaptation to possible historical, deviantizing accusations that Christ-following miracle-workers are μάγοι and miracle-working traditions in the Christ-movement are stories about μαγεία. The adaptation to deviantization in the Acts 8:4–25 seems specifically to be evasion, which according to Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo involves, “The person in response reject[ing] the [deviant] label, which is manipulated to deflect negative impact through a counterplay based perhaps on differing view of reality, involving society, his/her deeds, victim, loyalties, responsibility, etc.”¹⁴⁰ In the case of Acts 8:4–25, the counterplay is a contrasting of Christ-following miracle-workers with a stereotypical popular μάγος named

¹⁴⁰ Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, “Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label,” *Social Problems* 22 (1974), 110.

Simon. This contrast attempts to show the reader that the miracle-workers cannot be μάγοι because they do not demonstrate the stereotypical qualities of a popular μάγος, which appear in the character Simon. In other words, the Christ-following missionaries in Acts 8:4–25 cannot be μάγοι because they are not like Simon.

Acts 8:4–25 therefore, engages in referential classification. The narrative provides an example of a stereotypical, thus prototypical, popular μάγος. It then sets up a contrast between the μάγος Simon prior to his conversion and the Christ-following missionaries in order to show how the missionaries are different from Simon. The implicit conclusion is that Christ-following miracle-workers, whom Philip and the two apostles represent, should not be in the category of μάγος because they do not share any negative characteristics with Simon. The task before the author Luke, as the categorizer of wonder-workers in Acts 8:4–25, seems not to be defining the category of μάγος, which is a relatively stable category in Greco-Roman culture. The difficult task is developing the Christ-following missionaries in a way that they do not appear to fit the category of μάγος; otherwise, the attempt at evasion will backfire and function as the confirmation of a deviant label through the supposed deviant’s own rejections of the deviant label.¹⁴¹

II. Developing Further the Miracle-Worker

The contrast between Simon and the Christ-following missionaries in Acts 8:4–25 depends upon the development of the character type of “miracle-worker” in Acts 2–7. The reader, for instance, is able to understand how Philip functions as a wonder-worker because he is a member of the Seven, for whom Stephen has already served as a miracle-working representative (Acts 6:8). Similarly, the reader is already familiar with Peter and John’s roles as miracle-workers because

¹⁴¹ Cf. Rogers and Buffalo, “Fighting Back,” 107.

of the miracles performed by Peter and the other apostles in Acts 2:43; 3:1–10; 5:1–12. However, as a foil to Philip, Simon represents the opposite of what miracle-workers are and functions as a means for the further development of the character type of Christ-following miracle-worker. Thus, from this contrast between Simon and Philip, I am able to identify some additional characteristics of the miracle-worker that I will add to the initial character sketch from ch. 5.

The contrasting of Simon and Philip in Acts 8:4–25 implies that Christ-follower miracle-working is not μαγεία; thus, Christ-following miracle-workers are not μάγοι. Consequently, the negative stereotypical characteristics of the popular μάγος that Simon demonstrates are not, or should not be, characteristic of Christ-following miracle-workers. Thus, miracle-workers are *not supposed to be self-aggrandizing*, unlike Simon who claims that his wonders proves that he is someone great (Acts 8:9).¹⁴² Christ-following miracle-workers' ability to perform wonders occurs by means of *authority and power that Jesus delegated* to the Christ-followers, not through their own power. The Christ-followers' miracles demonstrate that God and Jesus, not the miracle-worker, are great. Christ-followers should *neither claim nor accept divine honors*, unlike Simon whom the Samaritans proclaim as “the power of God that is called great” (Acts 8:10). Accordingly, Barnabas and Paul later refuse to allow the people of Lystra to honor them as Zeus and Hermes (Acts 14:8–18).¹⁴³ The miracle-workers, unlike Simon, are *not to be greedy and obtain money through wonder-working*.¹⁴⁴ Miracle-workers *understand their hierarchical position* in the Christ-movement and operate appropriately. For example, Philip, unlike Simon, does not seek the authority reserved for the apostles; instead, he is content to operate as the forerunner to the apostles in the Samaritan mission. Finally, although Simon impiously

¹⁴² Pervo, *Acts*, 216; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 102.

¹⁴³ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 117–118; cf. Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in Acts,” 105–106.

¹⁴⁴ Pervo, *Acts*, 216.

considered himself to be in control and able to employ divine power however he wished, Christ-following miracle-workers are able to work miracles only because they are *under the control of the Holy Spirit*, who is the source of the divine power that they employ.¹⁴⁵

In addition, Acts 8:4–25 reinforces the trend in Acts 2–7 that only leaders in the Christ-movement function as miracle-workers, and this narrative episode adds an additional element in regards to the relationship between miracle-working and leadership in the Christ-movement. So far, the apostles are the only people who bestow the Holy Spirit upon other people;¹⁴⁶ thus, they function in Acts 8:4–25 to reinforce the line of legitimate authority. However, the Holy Spirit is also able to fall spontaneously upon people as God sees fit. Thus, God sends the Holy Spirit upon the Christ-followers at Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit falls upon Cornelius and the members of his household while Peter is preaching and before he has a chance to lay his hands upon them. Furthermore, in Acts 8:15, the indication that Peter and John “prayed concerning [the Samaritan Christ-followers] in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit” suggests that the authority of the apostles to bestow the Holy Spirit has some limitations, and God ultimately directs the apostles in regards to deciding upon whom they should bestow the Holy Spirit.

In addition, miracle-workers, such as Philip and Peter, engage in periodic itinerancy, unlike Simon who operates only within the city of Samaria. Thus, miracle-workers *tend* to engage in itinerant missions, unlike the μάγοι whom they meet on their missions. Itinerant miracle-workers would seem to be more concerned with spreading a message than with building up a following of devoted supporters. Thus, itinerancy seems to function as a counter-measure to the development of cults of personality focused on the miracle-worker.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics,” 15.

¹⁴⁶ Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 56; Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 146.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Did.* 12.

If I strip away from Simon all the negative stereotypical qualities of the popular μάγος, the major difference that exists between Simon and the Christ-following miracle-workers is a *theological difference*. The Christ-following miracle-workers have a relationship with divine power that is very different from Simon's relationship with divine power. According to the Samaritans' description of Simon, he is the human manifestation of divine power; thus, the Samaritans understand Simon to be in control of the divine power to the degree that he is unique among those around him. Simon is in no need of possession by a divine spirit in order to acquire a powerful social voice and increase his status within the city where he resides. Simon is able to manipulate divine power at will. The Christ-following miracle-workers, however, receive their power and authority only through divine possession; thus, they are God's slaves (δούλοι; Acts 2:18), just as their Lord Jesus is God's servant (παῖς; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). The Christ-following miracle-workers only gain a social voice and increased status through their association with the Lord.

To be sure, Acts 8:4–25 does not provide the reader any reason to doubt that Simon is able to work wonders,¹⁴⁸ and Simon apparently claims to work these wonders by means of divine power. If Simon, prior to his becoming a Christ-follower, claims association with the traditional Samaritan God, Simon is similar to the Christ-following miracle-workers in that he claims to work wonders through the power of the God of the Hebrews. Nevertheless, Acts' portrayal of Simon as a μάγος seems incompatible with Simon's ability to perform miracles through the power of the Hebrew God. Thus, the reader might expect that the ultimate disagreement that the author of Acts has with the character Simon is that contrary to the Samaritans' proclamation, Simon performs wonders by a power other than that of the Hebrew God.¹⁴⁹ However, Acts

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 110.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 328.

provides us no indication of the true source of Simon’s power. Thus, despite Susan R. Garrett’s best efforts to argue that Simon works wonders by Satan’s power,¹⁵⁰ nothing in the episode suggests such a conclusion.

The most that can be said concerning Simon’s exact relationship with divine power is that Acts 8:4–25 operates under the assumption that the Samaritans’ proclamation of Simon as “the power of God that is called great” is completely unacceptable because Acts 1–2 presents Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as true mediators of divine power to humans. Therefore, Acts 8:4–25 presents Simon illegitimately accessing divine power, if he is even accessing God’s power and not some other power. As a result, Simon’s claim to divine power provides us another additional element to the character sketch of the Christ-following miracle-worker: *legitimate* miracle-workers are able to perform miracles only by the authority granted to them by Jesus Christ, to employ only divine power given to them through the Holy Spirit, and to work miracles as a part of their prophetic witness to salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, subsequent

Table 6.1 Additional characteristics of miracle-workers in Acts 8:4–25

1. Not μάγοι
2. Miracles are not μαγεία
3. Not greedy
4. Do not accept payment for miracles
5. Holy Spirit controls the miracle-worker, not vice versa
6. Only an apostle can bestow the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands
7. Periodically engage in itinerancy
8. Are the only legitimate miracle-workers

¹⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 336; Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 67.

episodes in Acts are likely to present any other wonder-workers that claim any other relationship to divine power as popular μάγοι.

III. Plotting Characters from Acts 8:4–25 onto the Model (Figure 6.1)

I will close ch. 6 in the same way as ch. 5, by plotting characters onto my model for characterizing wonder-workers in Acts. Four wonder-workers appear in Acts 8:4–25: Philip, Simon, Peter, and John (see Figure 6.1). The reader's image of the character Philip depends on the assumption that Philip operates much in the same way as Stephen. One significant difference does exist between Philip and Stephen. Philip, unlike Stephen, does not face opposition for his miracle-working from either Judean or Samaritan leaders. Of course, he flees Jerusalem during the persecution following Stephen's death, but this opposition focuses on Christ-followers in general and not directly at Christ-following miracle-workers.¹⁵¹ Therefore, I plot Philip slightly to the right of where Stephen is in Figure 5.1.

Due to the dynamic nature of Simon's character, it is necessary to distinguish between Simon's character before Philip's arrival, after his baptism, and after Peter's rebuke. For convenience sake, I refer to Simon prior to Philip's arrival as *pre-Christ-following Simon*, who according to Acts 8:9 is a μάγος. Nevertheless, the Samaritans' proclamation suggests that they do not consider Simon to be a popular μάγος. Furthermore, it is important to remember that Simon is immediately attracted to Philip and the Christ-movement. Thus, I plot the pre-Christ-following Simon on the right half of the model, but not extremely right. The next phase in Simon's development is *Christ-following Simon*, and a line graphs the movement from pre-Christ-following Simon to Christ-following Simon. The second phase in Simon's development involves some doubt regarding whether Simon truly leaves behind μαγεία. Nevertheless,

¹⁵¹ Cf. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 44.

baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit indicate Simon's formal entrance into the Christ-movement. Simon's eventual attempt to purchase the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit betrays that he still has ambitions to be a wonder-worker, but since he is not a leader in the Christ-movement, he has little chance of being a miracle-worker in the Christ-movement. Accordingly, I plot Christ-following Simon on the left half of the model and fairly close to the center line dividing miracle-workers and μάγοι. The final stage of Simon's development is hypothetical and dependent upon whether Simon repents. Thus, I represent the final stage of Simon's development with two circles of broken lines, and thin broken lines trace the progression from Christ-following Simon to these two tentative developments of Simon. I plot *repentant Simon* further to the left of Christ-following Simon, although technically he should disappear from the model because he is no longer a wonder-worker. Then, I plot *unrepentant Simon* further to the right of pre-Christ-following Simon because an unrepentant Simon's deception would be intentional; thus, Simon would be a more prototypical μάγος.

The final two characters that I plot on the model in this chapter are Peter and John. In the previous chapter, I plotted John as a part of the Twelve, and in this chapter, I plot John by himself at the same position occupied by the Twelve in Figure 5.1. The only new information that Acts 8:4–25 provides concerning the two apostles is their ability to bestow the Holy Spirit on other people. This new feature of the apostles leads me to place Philip even further to the right of John in the model. Finally, Peter remains the miracle-working exemplar.

In the next chapter, I will analyze the second μαγεία-miracle conflict episode, in which Paul faces a Judean false prophet and popular μάγος (Acts 13:4–12). The narrative depicts Paul performing his first wonder, specifically the temporary blinding of Elymas, and through this

wonder, Acts presents Paul as a legitimate miracle-worker modeled after the miracle-working exemplar Peter.

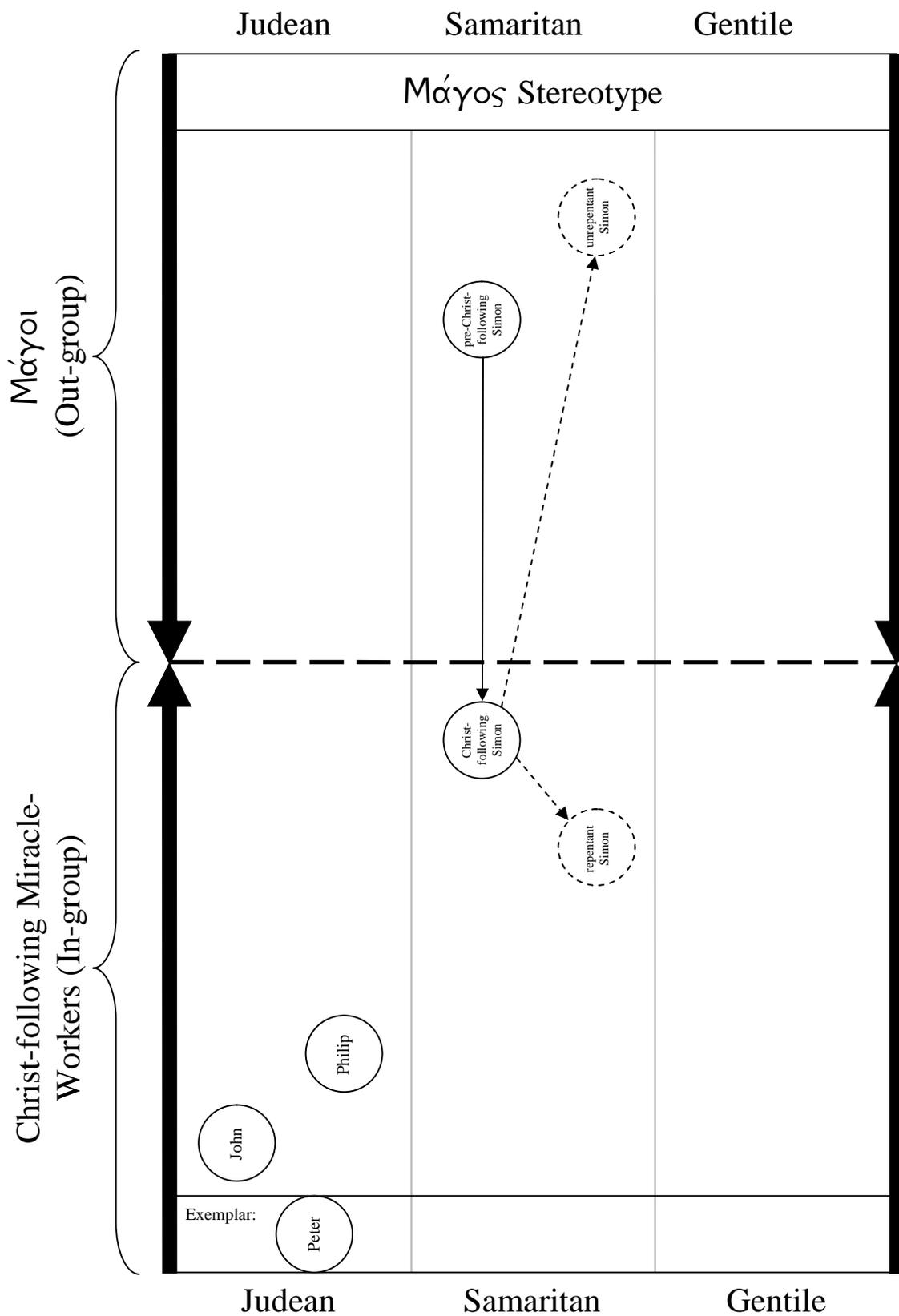


Figure 6.1 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 8:4–25.

CHAPTER 7
PAUL DEFEATS A JUDEAN ΜΑΓΟΣ ON CYPRUS
(ACTS 13:4–12)

The second μαγεία-miracle conflict in Acts occurs in Acts 13:4–12 between Saul (whom Acts 13:9 later calls “Paul”) and a Judean μάγος bearing two names (Barjesus and Elymas).¹ In my analysis of Acts 13:4–12, I will argue that Acts once again utilizes a comparison between a μάγος and Christ-followers to develop a social identity of Christ-following miracle-workers in an apparent attempt to neutralize deviantizing accusations of μαγεία against the Christ-following miracle-working tradition. This chapter will consist primarily of an analysis of Acts 13:4–12 from a social-scientific-critical perspective that will not only pay attention to the comparison of Elymas and the Christ-following missionaries but will also compare the treatment of the μάγος Elymas in this episode with the treatment of the μάγος Simon in Acts 8:4–25. In particular, I will argue that Elymas functions as a foil to Paul through Acts’ portrayal of Elymas as a rival Judean wonder-worker whom Acts portrays as a deceptive false prophet in order to characterize Paul as a miracle-worker and genuine prophet. Although the overall function of Acts 8:4–25 and Acts 13:4–12 are similar, the social dynamic between Elymas and Paul is much different than that between Simon and Philip, thus affecting the precise development of the

¹ Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BCENT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 58; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 499–500; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 1992), 222; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 49; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 443. I agree with Klauck that the reader should not make too much of the similarities between the names Barjesus (Son of Jesus) and Jesus of Nazareth. Not only was Barjesus a relatively common name, which a reader familiar with Aramaic would likely have known, but also any reader unfamiliar with Aramaic would likely not make the connection between the names Jesus and Barjesus. Furthermore, it does not seem to serve any thematic function in the episode. Thus, Bock is correct in describing the similarity between the names Barjesus and Jesus simply as a “note of irony.”

character type and social identity of the Christ-following miracle-worker. In particular, whereas Acts 8:4–25 presents the missionaries treating Simon as an ethnic outsider and a deviant Christ-follower, Acts 13:4–12 portrays Paul treating Elymas as an ethnic insider and an undisputed enemy of the Christ-movement. In addition, I will argue that Acts 9:1–13:12 involves an extended transition in which Paul replaces Peter as the primary protagonist of Acts. In this transition, similarities between Acts' presentation of Peter and Paul result in Paul being portrayed as a prototypical miracle-working prophet, who is similar to Peter, the exemplar for miracle-working prophetic witnesses.² Following my analysis of Acts 13:4–12, I will discuss how the episode contributes to the overall development of the miracle-worker character type, and I will end the chapter by plotting the characters from Acts 13:4–12 onto my model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts.

As with previous scholarship on Acts 8:4–25, studies of Acts 13:4–12 are often concerned with historical issues, specifically attempting to discover the historical identity of the proconsul Sergius Paulus in Acts 13:7.³ Much scholarship also exists concerning the changing of Saul's name to Paul in Acts 13:9.⁴ Discussions focusing specifically on the conflict between Elymas the μάγος and Paul in Acts 13:4–12 are primarily brief analyses embedded within larger discussions of μαγεία in the NT or Acts as a whole.⁵ One of the more detailed analyses of Acts

² Although prototypes and exemplars are related concepts in Roschian prototype theory, the distinction between the two resides in the exemplar primarily functioning as the most prototypical representative of a category. Therefore, although Paul is developing into a prototypical miracle-worker, Peter is the most prototypical miracle-worker so far in Acts.

³ E.g. Douglas A. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation to Sergius Paul[us] (Acts 13:6–12), and the Implications for Pauline Chronology," *JTS*, n.s., 56 (2005), 1–29; Bernhard Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie: Paulus als Wundertäter nach der Apostelgeschichte," in *Biographie und Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 187 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 273–278.

⁴ E.g. G. A. Harrer, "Saul Who Also Is Called Paul," *HTR* 33 (1940), 19–33; Sean M. McDonough, "Small Change: Saul to Paul, Again," *JBL* 125 (2006), 390–391.

⁵ E.g., Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 109–111, 143, 146, 158–159; Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 223–224; G. W. H. Lampe, "Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (London: Mowbray, 1965), 175–177;

13:4–12 occurs within Florent Heintz’s study of Acts 8:4–25.⁶ Many other studies of this narrative episode, such as Peter Busch’s comments on the episode, focus on the historical Elymas and his possible historical conflict with Paul and Barnabas.⁷ Four studies, however, contain detailed analyses of this episode that go beyond historical concerns: Hans-Josef Klauck’s *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, Arthur Darby Nock’s “Paul and the Magus,” Susan R. Garrett’s *The Demise of the Devil*, and Bernhard Heininger’s “Im Dunstkreis der Magie.”

According to Klauck, one function of Acts 13:4–12 is to demonstrate that the Christ-movement is attractive to high ranking members of Greco-Roman society, whom Sergius Paulus represents.⁸ Yet, Klauck does not go beyond this observation and explain that portraying the Christ-movement as attractive to high-ranking members of Greco-Roman society contributes to the neutralization of the likely historical deviantization of the Christ-movement, specifically accusations that Christ-following miracle-workers are popular μάγοι.

To Klauck’s credit, his analysis of Acts 13:4–12 *focuses* on how Paul’s conflict with Elymas develops the character Paul. In particular, Klauck argues that the similarities between Elymas and Paul cause Elymas to function as a representation of Paul’s former life as a persecutor of Judean Christ-followers, so that Paul’s defeat of Elymas is Paul’s final symbolic rejection of his former identity as persecutor of the Christ-movement.⁹ According to Klauck, two significant similarities between Paul and Elymas contribute to Acts’ portrayal of Elymas as the

Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book, 16; Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 48–49, 77, 148–149, 180; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics: An Introduction,” in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 2 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 15–16; F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations*, JSNTSup 67 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 96.

⁶ Florent Heintz, *Simon “le magicien”: Actes 8, 5-25 et l’accusation de magie contre les prophètes thaumaturges dans l’antiquité*, CahRB 39 (Paris: Gabalda, 1997), 59–60, 102, 128–131, 134.

⁷ E.g., Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 109–111, 143, 146, 158–159.

⁸ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 54.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 55; see also Bock, *Acts*, 446.

representation of Paul's former self. First, just as Elymas the false prophet seeks to lead Sergius Paulus away from Jesus Christ by opposing the Christ-following missionaries, Paul once sought to destroy the Christ-movement and to deter people from joining the Christ-movement through his persecution of the Christ-followers. Second, both Elymas and Paul experience three days of blindness. Klauck adopts this interpretation of Acts 13:4–12 from Luke Timothy Johnson, who ultimately rejects interpreting Acts 13:4–12 as Paul's final disavowal of his former identity because "[i]t is certainly not Luke's practice elsewhere to suggest that the psychological or spiritual progression of his characters was of great interest."¹⁰ Nevertheless, Klauck still supports viewing Paul's defeat of Elymas as Acts' depiction of Paul's disavowal of his former self.

I contend that on closer inspection the parallels between Paul and Elymas are not as close as Klauck argues. Although Acts presents Paul as a persecutor of Christ-followers prior to his experience on the road to Damascus, Elymas is a different kind of deceiver than Paul is because Acts never characterizes Paul, unlike Elymas, as a false prophet or a popular, charlatanic μάγος. Although Elymas as a popular μάγος functions as a deviant both within Judean society and within Greco-Roman society, Paul the persecutor is neither a deviant Judean nor a deviant member of Greco-Roman society; instead, he functions as a rule-enforcer for the established Judean socio-cultural order in Palestine. A better interpretation of the parallels between Paul and Elymas is that they facilitate a contrasting of the two characters. In Act's worldview, Paul preaches the true message of God, and Elymas proclaims false prophecies, which ultimately earn Elymas the same punishment of blindness that Paul the persecutor receives for hindering the witnesses of Jesus Christ.¹¹

¹⁰ Johnson, *Acts*, 227; cf. Susan R. Garrett, "Light on a Dark Subject and Vice Versa: Magic and Magicians in the New Testament," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 159.

¹¹ Heining, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 277; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 227.

Finally, Klauck asserts that just as in Acts 8:4–25, a primary function of Acts 13:4–25 is to combat syncretism in the Christ-movement, particularly the syncretistic blending of μαγεία and the Christ-movement.¹² However, as I argued in the previous chapter, no need exists for Acts to describe and warn its readers of popular μαγεία and popular μύγοι because these are established deviant concepts in the first place;¹³ instead, from a narrative critical perspective, the analytical focus should be upon how Acts 13:4–12 uses the concepts of popular μαγεία and popular μύγοι to develop the character type and social identity of miracle-workers.¹⁴

The majority of Nock’s “Paul and the Magus” focuses on the historical development of Greco-Roman μαγεία as a context for understanding Acts 13:4–25. As I discussed in ch. 3, Nock recognizes that Greco-Roman μαγεία developed out of the Persian fire cult, although he misunderstands exactly how this occurred.¹⁵ Additionally, Nock also recognizes that modern concepts of *magic* and the ancient concept of μαγεία are different, but related.¹⁶ The final section of Nock’s essay is an analysis of the episode as the story of the Christ-movement’s victory over μαγεία. Nock argues that the episode has three overall “purposes.” According to Nock, the episode (1) “represented the Roman authorities as very sympathetic at the outset of Paul’s active ministry in the Gentile world,” (2) “gave to Paul a *Gottesurteil* comparable with that declared by Peter on Ananias and Sapphira,” and (3) “represented Christianity in very sharp

¹² Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 54; see also Daniel Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark / Continuum, 2003), 120–124; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 397.

¹³ Cf. Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 241–242.

¹⁴ Contra Witherington, *Acts*, 397–398.

¹⁵ Arthur Darby Nock, “Paul and the Magus,” in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1:308–324.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:313–317.

contrast with *magia*.”¹⁷ Nock considers the third “purpose” the most important one.¹⁸ Concerning this third purpose, Nock argues, “The claim of Christians to work miracles coupled with the novelty of the movement, caused them to be classed with *magi*.”¹⁹ Although I prefer to speak of “functions” of Acts 13:4–12 than of “purposes,” Nock’s brief analysis of Acts 13:4–12 is very insightful. In particular, I agree with Nock that Acts 13:4–12 functions as a refutation of the characterization of the Christ-movement as popular *μαγεία*. Nevertheless, Nock does not indicate that in differentiating Christ-following miracle-workers from *μάγοι*, Acts is simultaneously developing the social identity of miracle-workers. In addition, the brevity of Nock’s analysis of Acts 13:4–12 necessitates a more detailed analysis of the passage, which I will provide in this chapter using my social-scientific-critical approach to *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes.

Chapter 4 of Garrett’s *Demise of the Devil* is a literary and theological analysis of Acts 13:4–12. Despite the brevity of the chapter (nine pages), her analysis of the episode is the keystone of her overall understanding of *μαγεία* in Luke-Acts. Garrett argues that together the Gospel of Luke and Acts presents Satan as the one who empowers *μαγεία*. Acts portrays the defeat of Satan in regard to *μαγεία* as occurring in two ways: (1) the refutation of accusations of *μαγεία* against Jesus and the Christ-followers in Luke-Acts and (2) the Christ-followers’ besting of *μάγοι* in Acts.²⁰ However, Acts 13:10, in which Paul labels Elymas a “Son of the Devil,” contains the only explicit link between Satan and *μαγεία*. A critical strength of Garrett’s analysis of Acts 13:4–12 is its narrative focus, which is not concerned with discovering the

¹⁷ Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:188; see also Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 402–404.

¹⁸ Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:188.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:330.

²⁰ Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 46–57, 66–67, 84, 104; see also Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 153–159; Pervo, *Acts*, 327.

historical Elymas or the historical Sergius Paulus. From a theoretical perspective, Garrett also correctly treats μαγεία as a socially constructed concept and μύγος as a deviance label.²¹ Although Garrett understands that μύγος and μαγεία are socially constructed deviance labels and that “culture” is a reader’s “context or framework of interpretation or discourse between author and her or his reader,”²² she explicitly uses very little social-scientific theory on magic, deviance, or social constructionism. Even more surprising to me is that aside from the implicit use of the labeling perspective on social deviance to identify how accusations of μαγεία are indicative of competitions for authority, Garrett spends very little time analyzing the socio-cultural aspects of Acts 13:4–12. Thus, analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of the episode not only plays a minor role in Garrett’s overall analysis of the episode, but also the attention Garrett does pay to socio-cultural aspects of the episode primarily aids the development of her theological analysis, namely the exposition of *the defeat of Satan* theme.

My analysis of Acts 13:4–12 will be like Garrett’s in that it is part of a larger analysis of μαγεία and miracle in Acts and that it treats μαγεία and μύγος as socially constructed deviance labels. Nevertheless, my analysis will differ from Garrett’s in several ways. First, I will use a social-scientific-critical perspective that explicitly relies upon the sociological approach to magic and the symbolic interactionist approach to deviance to analyze the competition between Elymas and the Christ-following missionaries Paul and Barnabas. Furthermore, this analysis will engage in a larger analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of the episode and will treat these socio-cultural aspects as central to understanding the narrative. Finally, I will move beyond Garrett’s “defeat of Satan” theme and will focus, instead, on further explicating Nock’s third “purpose” of the episode, that is, Acts’ differentiation of the Christ-movement and popular μαγεία.

²¹ Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 2–9.

²² *Ibid.*, 6.

Heininger's essay "Im Dunstkreis der Magie" is a study of the three *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes involving Paul in Acts 13:4–12; 16:16–19; 19:11–20. Heininger employs primarily a historical-critical approach to Acts 13:4–12; however, it is unclear whether he is attempting to understand the episode from a historical or literary perspective.²³ By this, I mean his overall analysis of the episode seems most concerned with Paul and Elymas as literary characters, but at times, Heininger seems concerned with describing historical persons (Paul and Elymas) and the historical situation that gave rise to the narrative. Nevertheless, Heininger's main hypothesis in regard to Acts 13:4–12 is that the narrative portrays Paul as a true wonder-working prophet over against the false wonder-working prophet Elymas by presenting Paul as a more powerful wonder-worker and prophet than Elymas the popular *μάγος* and false prophet.²⁴ Ultimately, I agree with Heininger's main thesis regarding Acts 13:4–12, specifically that the narrative pits Paul against the contrasting character Elymas in a way that presents Paul as a true miracle-working prophet. Nevertheless, my social-scientific-critical approach arrives at such a conclusion through a more reader-oriented approach than through Heininger's historical-critical approach.

I. *Μαγεία*-Miracle Conflict between Judeans among Gentiles (Acts 13:4–12)

Acts 13:4–12 is considerably shorter than Acts 8:4–25, and its plot is considerably simpler than Acts 8:4–25. The narrative divides into three parts: vv. 4–5 (*introduction* of the general setting and protagonists), vv. 6–11 (*conflict* between the Christ-followers and Elymas), and v. 12 (the proconsul's *faith*). However, before I can present my analysis of Acts 13:4–12, I must set the episode in the context of Acts 8:26–13:3, in order to see how the miracle-worker character type develops between the first and second *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes.

²³ Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 273–278.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 278.

Miracle-Workers between the First and Second
Μαγεία-Miracle Conflicts (Acts 8:26–13:3)

For the most part, the miracle-working behavior that Acts ascribes to Christ-followers between the first and second μαγεία-miracle conflicts reinforces the development of the character type of miracle-worker in Acts 1:1–8:25. Several aspects of Acts' narration of Philip's mission in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:26–40) are pertinent to Acts' depiction of Christ-following miracle-workers. First, Acts 8:29 depicts Philip as audibly hearing the Holy Spirit speaking to Philip in order to direct him up to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch, thus reinforcing Acts' portrayal of the Holy Spirit guiding the spirit-possessed Christ-followers. The most extraordinary event in the second half of Acts 8, however, is the Holy Spirit's teleportation of Philip from the Gaza road to Azotus (Acts 8:39–40). Thematically, the Holy Spirit's teleportation of Philip functions much the same way as the Holy Spirit's direct speech to Philip, that is, to emphasize the Holy Spirit's direction of the Christ-follower missionaries to the extent that their missions are the Holy Spirit's mission.²⁵ Anthropologically, Philip now appears to function not only as one possessed by the Holy Spirit, but he also resembles a shaman. In Acts 8:7, Philip is a healer and an exorcist, who heals by means of divine power. In Acts 8:5, Philip functions as a prophetic intermediary between God and humans, when he preaches the “word of God” about Christ and the Kingdom of God (Acts 8:5, 12, 14). In Acts 8:39–40, the Holy Spirit's teleportation of Philip strongly resembles the soul journeys of a shaman. Although the modern reader may question the comparability of Philip's physical teleportation and a shaman's psychic journey, it is important to remember that to the shaman and those who share his symbolic universe, a psychic journey is no less real than a physical journey. In addition, the close relationship demonstrated by Philip and the Holy Spirit is very similar to the relationships that shamans build with their spirit

²⁵ Johnson, *Acts*, 157.

familiars.²⁶ Therefore, Acts 8:26–40 seems to develop the character type of miracle-worker so that a miracle-worker is not merely one who prophesies and works wonders through possession by the Holy Spirit; instead, the miracle-worker looks more like a spirit-possessed shamanistic specialist, who works wonders and prophesies by means of close relationships that the shaman has cultivated with his or her spirit familiars.

Although Acts 8:56 first introduces Saul, whom Acts later calls “Paul” (Acts 13:9), the narration of Paul’s first involvement with an extraordinary event does not occur until 9:3–9, where Acts ascribes to Paul an audible and optical vision of Jesus Christ, which blinds him. In Acts 9:3–9, Ananias of Damascus has a vision, in which an angel instructs him to perform a miraculous healing of Paul’s blindness (Acts 9:10–18). Furthermore, Acts 9:10–18 presents the first miracle performed by someone other than a recognized leader in the Christ-movement. Unlike the previous miracle-workers in Acts, who are either members of the Twelve or of the Seven,²⁷ the narrative does not present Ananias as any sort of recognized leader among the Christ-followers in Damascus. Instead, he is presented as a pious and obedient “disciple” (Acts 9:10), a term that Acts uses for Christ-followers in general.²⁸ However, the narrative does not indicate that Ananias engaged in any sort of miracle-working career,²⁹ unlike Peter and Philip,

²⁶ Cf. Mircea Eliade, “Shamanism (An Overview),” *ER* 13:202–208; Piers Vitebsky, “From Cosmology to Environmentalism: Shamanism as Local Knowledge in a Global Setting,” in *Shamanism: A Reader*, ed. Graham Harvey (London: Routledge, 2003), 276–279; Michael Winkelman, “Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Shamans,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, ed. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:61–70; Michael James Winkelman, “Shamans and Other ‘Magico-Religious’ Healers: A Cross-Cultural Study of Their Origins, Nature, and Social Transformations,” *Ethos* 18 (1990), 308–352.

²⁷ Acts 2:43; 3:1–10; 5:12–16; 6:8; 8:6–7, 13, 17, 39.

²⁸ Acts 6:1–7; 9:1, 19, 26, 36–38; 11:26, 29; 13:52; 14:20–22, 28; 15:10; 16:1; 18:23, 27; 19:1, 9, 30; 20:1, 20; 21:4, 16.

²⁹ In this chapter, I use the word career in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free, 1973], 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin

whom Acts portrays as frequently engaging in miracle-working.³⁰ Thus, Acts 9:10–18 demonstrates that not all miracles are performed by prophetic characters, but Acts reserves miracle-working careers for leaders in the Christ-movement.

Acts 9:32–43 narrates two additional healings performed by Peter. Peter's role as human intermediary of divine power is most obvious in the first healing narrative, since his ascription of the miracle to Jesus emphasizes that Peter is the medium through whom *Jesus* heals Aeneas (Acts 9:34). Even more extraordinary than the healing of Aeneas is Peter's resuscitation of the deceased Tabitha, who is also named Dorcas (Acts 9:36–43). A reader familiar with 1–2 Kings is likely to note the resemblance between Peter's resuscitation of Tabitha and the two resuscitations of the deceased by Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:32–37 (3 Kgdms 17:17–24; 4 Kgdms 4:32–37 LXX).³¹ Furthermore, Peter's resuscitation of Tabitha also resembles Jesus' two resuscitations of the dead in Luke 7:11–17; 8:40–56. Thus, Acts 9:36–43 not only reinforces the image of Peter as a prophetic healer, but also in terms of Roschian natural categorization (see ch. 4), this episode contributes to the portrayal of Peter as the *exemplar* of Christ-following miracle-workers.

Acts 10–11 contains depictions of two significant prophets in Acts. First, Peter's rooftop visionary trance is presented in Acts 10:1–11:18 as the means by which God informs Peter that the Gentiles are to be included in the Christ-movement. Later in Acts 11:27–28, Agabus prophetically speaks on behalf of the Holy Spirit, an event that I earlier argued resembles the divinatory oracles of spirit mediums in possession trance (see ch. 5). Significant also is that Agabus is the first Christ-following prophetic character to whom Acts does not ascribe any

M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003], 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

³⁰ Acts 2:43; 3:1–10; 5:12–16; 8:6–7, 13, 17, 39; 9:32–42.

³¹ Haenchen, *Acts*, 339–340.

miracle-working. Thus, Acts 11:27–28 suggests that not all Christ-following prophets must also be miracle-workers, just as Acts 9:10–18 suggests that not all Christ-follower miracles must be performed by prophetic preachers. In Acts 12:7–11, an angel rescues Peter from Herod’s prison. At this point in Acts, Peter’s role in Acts starts to diminish. He will appear only once again in Acts, specifically in Acts 15:6–11, where he defends the Gentile mission of Paul, who emerges as the new hero of Acts in ch. 13.

Lastly, in Acts 13:1–4, the Antiochene church, at the direction of the Holy Spirit, sends out Barnabas and Paul on a missionary journey that begins on Cyprus, which Acts 4:36 provides as Barnabas’ birthplace. The juxtaposition of the list of prophets and teachers in Acts 13:1 and the Holy Spirit’s instructions in Acts 13:2 suggests that the Holy Spirit delivers the instructions in v. 2 by means of one of the prophets listed in v. 1. The Holy Spirit’s instructions in v. 2 serve to emphasize that Barnabas and Paul’s missionary journey is initiated by God through the Holy Spirit, not through the Antiochene church’s own human initiative. Nevertheless, it is important to note that up to this point Paul has not engaged in any miracle-working. Thus, Paul is not a miracle-worker at the beginning of Acts 13.

Introduction of General Setting and Protagonists (Acts 13:4–5)

At the start of Barnabas and Paul’s missionary journey, the two missionaries set sail from the port city of Seleucia, which is just west of Antioch. Their first stop is the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4), where they apparently make port at the city of Salamis on the eastern coast of the island. In Acts 13:5, the narrative indicates that the missionaries first “proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Judeans.” This brief note is significant because it establishes two things for the reader. First, the preaching of “the word of God” functions much the same way as it does in Acts 8:14. By describing the missionaries’ message as “the word of God,” Acts has cast

Barnabas and Paul's message as a *prophetic* message. Secondly, following a pattern that will continue throughout Paul's missionary activity, Acts 13:5 portrays the missionaries as going to the Judean synagogue first upon their arrival on Cyprus; thus, Acts sets the narrative within a Judean context. Not only are Barnabas and Paul Christ-following missionaries, but also they are Judeans, which is an aspect of Paul's character that will factor significantly later in the narrative. In addition, Barnabas and Paul's status as Judeans also makes them possible candidates for becoming miracle-workers, since all Christ-following miracle-workers up to this point in Acts have been Judeans. The final note in v. 5 is that John, who is nicknamed Mark, accompanies the two missionaries as their assistant.

Both similarities and differences between Acts 13:4–12 and Acts 8:4–25 exist. The two episodes both involve three Christ-followers engaged in missionary activity in a location outside Judea. Furthermore, in Acts 8:4–25, two of the missionaries (Peter and John) occupy a higher rank in the Christ-movement than the third missionary (Philip). Similarly, in Acts 13:4–12, one of the Christ-followers (John Mark) is a subordinate to the other two (Barnabas and Paul). Although, Acts 8:4–25 opens with the miracle-working activity of the subordinate Philip and then moves to the apostles Peter and John, Acts 13:4–12 begins with the two higher ranking characters and only mentions John Mark's role as an assistant to Barnabas and Paul. Finally, Acts 13:4–12 contains no member of the Twelve or the Seven, unlike Acts 8:4–25, which focuses on two members of the Twelve and one member of the Seven. Thus, the missionary activity on which Barnabas and Paul embark in Acts 13 corresponds with a decreased role for the leaders of the Jerusalemite church within the narrative. Accordingly, Barnabas and Paul's missionary base of operations is Antioch, although both missionaries previously lived in

Jerusalem.³² Furthermore, no member of the recognized leadership of the Jerusalemite church appears in the narrative, unlike in Acts 8:4–25, where the apostles Peter and John appear halfway through the narrative to finish what Philip starts. Nevertheless, the list of recognized prophets and teachers in the Antioch church constitutes a list of leaders similar in function (but not in rank) to the Twelve, whom Acts 2–5 portrays as primarily prophets and teachers.³³ Thus, since Barnabas and Paul are named among the prophets and teachers in Antioch, they function as recognized leaders in the Antiochene church. However, Barnabas himself appears to be still functioning as a commissioned representative of the Jerusalemite church, who sent him to Antioch in Acts 11:22. Thus, although the narrative action has moved away from Jerusalem and to Antioch, Acts still portrays the Jerusalemite church exerting considerable influence over the missionaries outside Judea, including Barnabas and Paul.

Conflict between Christ-followers and Elymas (Acts 13:6–11)

Acts 13:6 provides three characteristics of the antagonist Barjesus. He is a μάγος, a false prophet, and a Judean. A little later, v. 8 provides a second name for Barjesus, specifically Elymas. Three things suggest to the reader that Elymas is a popular, charlatanic μάγος and not a proper μάγος of the Persian fire cult.³⁴ First, since Acts 8:4–25 presents the first μάγος in Acts (Simon of Samaria) as a popular μάγος, the reader is likely to suspect that the second μάγος in Acts (Elymas) is also a popular μάγος.³⁵ Second, some evidence exists that Cyprus was associated with popular, non-Persian μαγεία in the first century CE. According to Pliny the

³² Cf. Acts 4:36–37; 9:27; 11:22; 12:25; 13:1–4.

³³ Acts 2:43; 6:3–4.

³⁴ Cf. Michael Becker, “Μάγοι—Astrologers, Ecstatics, Deceitful Prophets: New Testament Understanding in Jewish and Pagan Context,” in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London, T & T Clark, 2007), 106; Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:324–325.

³⁵ Cf. Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 274.

Elder, the form of μαγεία common among Judeans was distinct from Persian μαγεία and derived partially from Moses, and Pliny adds that even another form of μαγεία had appeared “more recently” (*tanto recentior*) on Cyprus.³⁶ Pliny’s mention of a form of μαγεία among the Judeans that is different from Persian μαγεία also draws upon the Greco-Roman stereotypical association of Judeans with popular μαγεία. The reputations for being adept at popular μαγεία that Cyprus and the Judeans apparently had in the first century CE would likely have caused many ancient readers to assume that Elymas is a popular μάγος.³⁷ Third, the characterization of Elymas as a false prophet is a deviantizing characterization of Elymas that inclines the reader to view Elymas as a religious deviant; therefore, the reader is more likely to see Elymas as a popular μάγος than as a proper μάγος.³⁸ Lastly, for readers familiar with the HB, that a Judean is practicing μαγεία, regardless of whether it is popular μαγεία or the Persian fire cult, would suggest to the reader that Elymas is a deviant Judean.³⁹

For a reader familiar with the HB, the juxtaposition of μαγεία and false prophecy in Acts 13:6 may recall the juxtaposition of the regulations against Israelites who practice foreign divination⁴⁰ and the regulations on prophets in Deut 18:9–22.⁴¹ In particular, the LXX translates

³⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 30.2.11.

³⁷ Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 223–224; Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:328–329.

³⁸ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 264; Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 274; Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 59; Witherington, *Acts*, 396.

³⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 264; Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 157.

⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 18:9–14 lists eight different types of diviners: (1) a person who passes a child through fire (), (2) diviner (), (3) soothsayer (), (4) augur (), (5) magician (), (6) spell-caster (), (7) spirit medium (), and (8) necromancer (). For additional information on the magico-religious specialists listed in Deut 18:9–14, see Ann Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*, *Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 3* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 31–35, 65–70, 78–81, 123–124, 167–181.

⁴¹ Cf. George J. Brooke, “Deuteronomy 18.9–14 in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd E. Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 66–84; Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 110–111; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 48; Thomas C. Römer, “Competing Magicians in Exodus 7–9: Interpreting Magic in the Priestly Theology,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd E. Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 12–22; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 162–163; see also Jer 29:9–32.

(magician) in Deut 18:10 as φάρμακος, which is an ambiguous word in Hellenistic usage. φάρμακος in Hellenistic usage signifies primarily a person skilled in the making and employment of drugs, potions, and poisons.⁴² Hence, φάρμακος is also a morally ambiguous word in that it can signify both a person skilled in the production of beneficial drugs and a person skilled in the production of harmful poisons. In this respect, φάρμακος is similar to μάγος in that it has both positive meaning (Persian priest) and a negative meaning (charlatan). φάρμακος and μάγος also share a cognitive association, since Greeks and Romans typically considered φαρμακεία (production and use of drugs, potions, and poisons) to be a form of popular μαγεία; thus, a φάρμακος is frequently considered a type of popular μάγος.⁴³ Hence, φάρμακος often translates into English as “sorcerer.”⁴⁴ Thus, in the LXX, Deut 18:9–14 includes the μαγεία-working φάρμακος among the practitioners of illegitimate foreign ritual.

Deuteronomy 18:15–22 contains instructions for the identification and punishment of false prophets. Verse 20, in particular, stipulates two kinds of false prophets: a person who prophesies in the name of a deity other than the Hebrew God or a person who speaks in the Hebrew God’s name a message that God has not commanded. The punishment for a false prophet, according to v. 20, is death.⁴⁵ The juxtaposing of regulations concerning foreign divination and prophecy in Deut 18:9–22 emphasizes that Deuteronomy presents Israelite prophecy in the name of the Hebrew God to be the only legitimate form of divination. I use the

⁴² BDAG, s.v. “φάρμακος”; cf. LSJ, s.v. “φάρμακος.”

⁴³ Jan N. Bremmer, “The Birth of the Term ‘Magic,’” in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 5, 10–11; Fritz Graf, “Excluding the Charming: The Development of the Greek Concept of Magic,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 30; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, Revealing Antiquity 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 28; Georg Luck, “Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 100.

⁴⁴ BDAG, s.v. “φάρμακος.”

⁴⁵ Cf. Exod 22:17. In the MT, Exod 22:17 prescribes death as punishment for a (woman sorcerer); however, the LXX translates the feminine with the masculine noun φάρμακος (sorcerer).

word “divination” as it occurs in modern anthropological usage. Anthropologist Michael James Winkelman, for example, defines “divination” as “the acquisition of information,” particularly “information from a divine source.”⁴⁶ Thus, Winkelman describes divination as “alternate modes of knowing.”⁴⁷ Under the modern anthropological understanding of divination, the practice of divination includes both *material divination*, which involves the observation of material objects, and *mediumistic divination*, which involves the transmission of messages from a spirit or deity through a human intermediary. Prophecy, which is the acquiring and proclamation of knowledgeable messages from a deity typically qualifies as a form of mediumistic divination.⁴⁸ Therefore, the juxtaposition of the regulations of divination and prophecy in Deut 18:9–22 are ultimately an ideological designation of legitimate and illegitimate divination. Hence, Deut 18:9–22 is part of a Deuteronomistic moral campaign to designate who the true spokespersons for God are, and as such, this passage represents a conflict over socio-political, magico-religious power and authority.

Deuteronomy 18:9–22 provides a significant literary context for interpreting Acts 13:9–12. By characterizing Elymas as a Judean popular μάγος and false prophet, the description of Elymas in Acts 13:6 effectively casts him as an illegitimate diviner and a deviant Judean.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Acts 13:6 implicitly initiates a comparison between Elymas and the two Christ-following missionaries (Barnabas and Paul), whom Acts presents as legitimate prophetic preachers. Three similarities exist between Elymas and the two missionaries. First, the most obvious similarity is that they are all Judeans. Second, they are apparently all prophetic

⁴⁶ Michael Winkelman, “Divination,” in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:78.

⁴⁷ Michael Winkelman, preface to *Divination and Healing*, eds. Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), vii.

⁴⁸ Cf. Jeffers, *Magic and Divination*, 25–28, 35–40, 81–95.

⁴⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 264.

characters. As members of the recognized group of prophets and teachers in Antioch (Acts 13:1), Barnabas and Paul are associated with prophetic activity. Furthermore, three prior instances in Acts characterize Paul as a prophetic character. Acts 9:15 presents God as telling Ananias that Paul “is to me a choice vessel in order that he might carry my name before nations, kings, and the sons and daughters of Israel.” In Acts 9:20, Paul preaches about Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus. Lastly, Acts 9:28 presents Paul as “speaking boldly in the Lord’s name.” Therefore, Acts 9 presents Paul as a legitimate prophet, according to the regulations in Deut 18:9–22. Paul does not practice foreign divination. He speaks in the name of the Lord, and he speaks a message endorsed by God. The third similarity between the missionaries and Elymas is that they are both interested in winning the devotion of the local proconsul Sergius Paulus at the provincial capital Paphos,⁵⁰ and this is what spurns the conflict between them.

Despite the similarities between Elymas and the missionaries, the differences are important. The first difference between them is that Acts characterizes Elymas as a wonder-worker (specifically a *μάγος*) and Acts up to this point does not present either Barnabas or Paul as wonder-workers. Similar to the portrayal of Simon’s *μαγεία* in Acts 8:4–25, Acts 13:4–12 provides no details about Elymas’ *μαγεία*. The narrative does not even mention that Elymas performs acts of *μαγεία*; nevertheless, the labeling of Elymas as a *μάγος* is sufficient for the reader to assume that Elymas performs some sort of wonders. The second difference between Elymas and Paul is that the narrative describes Elymas as a *false* prophet and Acts presents Barnabas and Paul as true prophets and teachers.⁵¹ The third difference is extremely obvious and, yet, extremely important. Elymas is hostile to the missionaries’ message about Jesus Christ.

⁵⁰ David W. J. Gill, “Paul’s Travels through Cyprus (Acts 13:4–12),” in *TynBul* 46 (1995), 224–225.

⁵¹ Johnson, *Acts*, 226.

The characterization of Elymas as a popular μάγος in Acts 13:4–12 is much simpler and more direct than the characterization of Simon as a popular μάγος in Acts 8:4–25. Although Acts 8:4–25 initially casts Simon as practicing μαγεία in Acts 8:9, the narrative leaves the reader in doubt as to whether Simon is a proper or popular μάγος. It is the cumulative description of Simon in Acts 8:9–25 that indicates to the reader that Simon is a popular μάγος. However, the labeling of Elymas as a “false prophet” in Acts 13:6 immediately clears any doubt for the reader that Acts is casting Elymas as a popular μάγος. Furthermore, in Acts 8:4–25, Simon demonstrates numerous stereotypical qualities of a popular μάγος, including self-aggrandizement, self-service, greed, and deceptiveness. In Acts 13:4–12, Elymas only demonstrates one stereotypical quality of a popular μάγος, specifically deceptiveness. Nevertheless, the brevity and directness of Acts’ portrayal of Elymas as a popular μάγος actually creates a stronger identification of Elymas as a popular μάγος than does Acts’ identification of Simon as a popular μάγος.

Another difference between Elymas and Simon is their different attitudes toward Christ-following missionaries. Simon, whom Philip supplants as the premier wonder-worker in the city of Samaria, devotes himself to Philip and becomes a Christ-follower (Acts 8:4–13). Elymas opposes the missionaries from Antioch because the missionaries are competing against Elymas for the attention of Sergius Paulus. The ancient reader would likely perceive of Elymas as a magico-religious advisor, particularly a diviner, in the court or retinue of the proconsul.⁵² Accordingly, Elymas acts in order to maintain his status as the premier Judean prophet in the

⁵² C. K. Barrett, “Light on the Holy Spirit from Simon Magus (Acts 8, 4–25),” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Gembloux, Belgium: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 289; Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 111; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 48, 51; Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:325–326; Witherington, *Acts*, 396, 399.

court of the proconsul, and the reader would know that the missionaries pose a serious threat to Elymas, since Philip previously supplants Simon as the premier wonder-worker in Samaria.⁵³

Elymas and Simon are also of different ethnicities. The conflict between Simon and the missionaries in Acts 8:4–25 is between people of different (yet related) ethnicities, Simon is a Samaritan and the missionaries are Judeans. In Acts 13:4–12, Elymas and the missionaries are all Judeans. Furthermore, in Acts 8:4–25, Simon and the missionaries strive for the devotion of Simon’s own ethnic group, the culturally indigenous Samaritans. However, Elymas and the missionaries compete for the devotion of the Roman Sergius Paulus who is of a different ethnicity than either Elymas or the missionaries. Thus, the conflict between Elymas and the missionaries is an intra-Judean competition for the attention of a politically powerful Gentile, namely the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

The final difference between Acts’ presentations of Simon and Elymas involves Acts’ characterization of the respective missionaries in each of the two episodes. Simon encounters three Christ-following miracle-workers, but Elymas encounters two missionaries, to whom Acts so far has not attributed any wonder-working. Thus, the biggest difference between the conflicts in Acts 8:4–25 and Acts 13:4–12 is that whereas Acts 8:4–25 portrays a meeting of *competing wonder-workers*, Acts 13:4–12 presents a competition between *competing Judean prophets*. All of these differences between Acts 8:4–25 and Acts 13:4–12 leads me to interpret the conflict in Acts 13:4–12 as a competition between rival Judean prophets concerning who will speak for the

⁵³ Contra Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 276. Heininger argues that “no hostile, let alone magical, action comes from the side of Barjesus” (kommt es von Seiten des Barjesus zu keiner feindseligen, geschweige denn magischen Aktion) and Paul first “causes trouble” (Schaden stiftet) in the episode; however, Acts 13:8 clearly indicates that Paul’s cursing of Elymas (Acts 13:9–11) comes in response to Elymas’ opposition toward the two Christ-following missionaries. Although Paul is the first in the narrative to engage in hostile wonder-working, Elymas is still the first person to engage in hostilities in general.

Judean God before the most powerful political authority on Cyprus, who is also the most powerful Gentile on Cyprus.⁵⁴

In order to understand more fully the social dynamic that an ancient reader would see as the context for the conflict between Elymas and the missionaries, it is necessary to reflect back on the role of patron-client relations in the early Roman Empire. In the previous chapter, I discussed how patron-client relations functioned in the Greco-Roman world. According to Richard P. Saller, the supreme patron in the early Roman Empire was the emperor himself.⁵⁵ The Roman emperor's role as the supreme patron in the Roman Empire is fully compatible with Gerhard E. Lenski's model of social stratification in advanced agrarian societies, which I presented in ch. 5. In Lenski's model, the ruler stands at the pinnacle of an advanced agrarian society (see Figure 5.1).⁵⁶ Those people who functioned as clients to him included high ranking members of the elite, high ranking military officials, various retainers, skilled personal attendants, and freed imperial slaves.⁵⁷ In turn, most members of the emperor's clientele had their own clients, for whom one *beneficium* was indirect access to the imperial court.⁵⁸ Similarly, most clients of the emperor's clients had their own clients, and one of the many benefits that a patron provided his or her clients was indirect access to his or her own patrons. A person who functions as an intermediary between a patron and a client is a broker, and brokerage in the

⁵⁴ Garrett, "Light on Dark Subject," 154.

⁵⁵ Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 41.

⁵⁶ Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, McGraw-Hill Series in Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 284; Gerhard Lenski and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 203.

⁵⁷ Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 41, 59–64.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 63–67.

Greco-Roman patron-client system resulted in a social network of patron-client relations with the emperor at its center.⁵⁹

An ancient reader would have envisioned proconsul Sergius Paulus as having direct access to the emperor. Thus, an ancient reader would also likely recognize Sergius Paulus as a powerful patron and broker not only on Cyprus but also within Greco-Roman society in general; thus, Sergius Paulus would have numerous clients of varying rank, including lower ranking Roman elites, local Cypriot elites, high ranking military officials under his command, retainers, personal attendants, and his own freedpersons. Acts 13:7 seems to present Elymas as a retainer within Sergius Paulus' court, in which Elymas would function as some sort of magico-religious counselor that provides divinatory knowledge to the proconsul.⁶⁰ In the scheme of Greco-Roman patron-client relations, Elymas is a client of a powerful patron, and as such, Elymas would have access to numerous social and economic benefits, particularly socio-political influence, through his relationship with Sergius Paulus. Thus, it is not surprising that Elymas reacts with hostility when his patron invites Barnabas and Paul to speak to him about Jesus Christ (Acts 13:8). Elymas acts jealously toward Barnabas and Paul. In ch. 5, I discussed the difference between jealousy and envy, according to which jealousy is a person's desire to possess or to maintain possession of something that rightfully belongs to him or her.⁶¹ Barnabas and Paul pose a threat

⁵⁹ Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, BZNW 130 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 72–74; K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 73–74; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 149–152; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 69–78.

⁶⁰ Barrett, "Light on the Holy Spirit," 289; Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 111; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 48, 51; Nock, "Paul and Magus," 1:325–326; Witherington, *Acts*, 396, 399.

⁶¹ Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 109, 126–129.

to Elymas' relationship with Sergius Paulus. Elymas jealously opposes the two missionaries, lest they usurp his position in Sergius Paulus' court.⁶²

Theologically, Acts 13:8 describes Elymas' opposition to the missionaries as an attempt to mislead Sergius Paulus from faith, which is presumably faith in Jesus Christ. The term in Acts 13:8 that translates as "mislead" is the aorist active infinitive of διαστρέφω. BDAG explains that as a transitive verb with a human direct object, διαστρέφω communicates the idea "to cause or to be uncertain about a belief or to believe in something different."⁶³ Elymas lives up to Acts' description of him as a false prophet, since he works to lead Sergius Paulus away from trusting in the message of Jesus Christ that the two missionaries deliver.⁶⁴

In Acts 13:7, the characterization of Sergius Paulus not only represents the Roman authorities as sympathetic to Paul's ministry, which is Nock's first "purpose" of Acts 13:4–12, but it also functions to make the proconsul a worthy patron. In my analysis of the episode, I argued that a skeptical reader might question Acts' characterization of Simon as a popular μάγος, since the Samaritans proclaim him as "the power of God that is called great" (Acts 8:10). Similarly, the willingness of the high-status Sergius Paulus to give heed to the advice of Elymas might cause a skeptical reader to question the validity of either Acts' description of the proconsul as intelligent or, more significantly, Acts' distinction between Elymas the popular μάγος and the two Christ-following missionaries.⁶⁵ Elymas and the missionaries are vying for the same goal, specifically the attention of Sergius Paulus. Since Elymas deceives Sergius Paulus, the missionaries' usurpation of Elymas' role in the proconsul's court may lead a skeptical ancient

⁶² C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 1:616; Robert W. Wall, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:190; Witherington, *Acts*, 401.

⁶³ BDAG, s.v. "διαστρέφω."

⁶⁴ Bock, *Acts*, 444.

⁶⁵ Cf. Garrett, "Light on Dark Subject," 143.

reader to question whether Barnabas and Paul themselves are not deceivers. The characterization of Sergius Paulus as “intelligent” counters doubts concerning the moral integrity of the two missionaries. Thus, the description of Sergius Paulus as “intelligent” serves to inform the reader that the proconsul is not personally responsible for being the victim of Elymas’ deception. Of course, the credulity of the reader is tested as a paradox once again emerges in another of the μαγεία-miracle discourses. The reader may ask if Sergius Paulus is so intelligent, why is Elymas able to deceive him; furthermore, this paradox opens up the possibility for the reader that Barnabas and Paul are themselves deceptive false prophets.⁶⁶ The rebuttal to this line of questioning seems to be that Barnabas and Paul preach a true message from God, namely the good news about Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, this paradox in the narrative confirms that Acts’ implied reader is a sympathetic Christ-follower.

The overall effect of the differences between the portrayals of the encounters between μάγοι and missionaries in Acts 8:4–25 and 13:4–12 is that Acts 13:4–12 is a less complex narrative than Acts 8:4–25. Thus, whereas Simon’s character was dynamic through the course of Acts 8:4–25, Elymas is a very static character. Acts presents him as a deceptive, popular μάγος, who remains so throughout the narrative. However, one character does undergo considerable change in Acts 13:4–12, namely Paul.

Acts 13:9 is an extremely significant point in the overall presentation of Paul in the book of Acts. Three important alterations in Acts’ presentation of Paul occur in this verse. The most obvious difference is the changing of the character’s name from *Saul* to *Paul*. The narrative provides no explanation for the name change. Nevertheless, the change from the name *Saul* to the name *Paul* involves one of Acts’ many attributions of a second name to a character:

⁶⁶ Pervo, *Acts*, 324–325.

- Joseph, who is called Barsabbas and who was nicknamed Justus (Acts 1:23)
- Joseph, who was nicknamed by the apostles ‘Barnabas,’ which is translated ‘Son of Encouragement’ (Acts 3:36)
- Simon, who is nicknamed Peter (Acts 10:5, 18, 32; 11:13)
- John, who is nicknamed/called Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37)
- Simeon, who is called Niger (Acts 13:1)
- Judas, who is called Barsabbas (Acts 15:22)

In addition, Acts also provides translations for two characters’ names, and these translations function much the same way as a nickname (Acts 9:36; 13:8).⁶⁷ “a certain disciple named Tabitha, which translated is Dorcas” (Acts 9:36) and “Elymas the magician . . . , since for thus his name is translated” (Acts 13:8).⁶⁸ Furthermore, after Acts introduces a nickname for a character, the nickname becomes the primary name by which the narrative refers to the character.

The line “Saul, who is also Paul” seems to follow Acts’ pattern of providing nicknames for characters, although it does not employ Acts’ typical formulas of “X, who is called Y,” “X, who is nicknamed Y,” or “X, which translates as Y.” Interesting also is that Acts provides nicknames for four of the five characters mentioned in Acts 13:4–12: Joseph, who is Barnabas (Acts 3:36); Paul, who is Saul (Acts 13:9); John, who is Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37), and Barjesus, who is Elymas (Acts 13:8). What is unique about the nickname Paul is that although Acts normally introduces a nickname immediately after introducing a character’s proper name, Acts waits until six chapters after introducing Saul before introducing his nickname Paul (Acts 7:58; 13:9).

⁶⁷ Although Acts 3:36 provides the translation “Son of Encouragement” for the nickname *Barnabas*, the translation itself does not function as a nickname.

⁶⁸ For difficulties surrounding the translation of the name Elymas, see L. Yaure, “Elymas–Nehelamite–Pethor,” *JBL* 79 (1960), 297–314.

From a narrative-focused perspective, two leading options exist on how Paul's name change functions. The first option suggests that Acts' changing of Saul's name to Paul is a means of honoring Sergius Paulus; thus, the new name would be a means for Paul to give public honor to his new patron. Nevertheless, two things make this first option unlikely. Acts never indicates this as the reason for the name change, and the narrative attributes the name Paul to Saul before he defeats Elymas and wins the favor of Sergius Paulus.⁶⁹ The second option, which is the more plausible option, understands the name *Paul* to be a Latin nickname for Saul that Acts will use while Paul works primarily among Gentiles, who presumably would identify better with someone bearing a Latin name than with someone using a Hebrew name.⁷⁰

The second change in Paul's character is that he becomes the primary protagonist for the rest of the book of Acts. From Acts 1:12–12:24, Peter serves as the primary Christ-following protagonist. Four sections within this first half of Acts, however, focus on other Christ-following protagonists: Acts 6:8–8:3 (Stephen); 8:4–13 (Philip); 8:26–40 (Philip); 9:1–31 (Saul). Prior to Acts 12:25, these four accounts function as interludes in a larger narrative dominated by the character Peter. Thus, the reader may be inclined initially to consider Acts 13:4–12 as another interlude in the narrative focusing on Peter. Nevertheless, as the plot of Acts progresses, it becomes obvious that from Acts 12:25 forward, Paul is the new protagonist of Acts. Thus, Acts 8:1–12:24 serves as an extended transition from Peter to Paul. Acts 8:1–3 introduces Saul as a persecutor of Christ-followers. Acts 8:4–13 focuses on Philip's missionary activity in the city of Samaria. Peter returns to the spotlight in Acts 8:14–25, but only to disappear again prior to the

⁶⁹ Witherington, *Acts*, 401.

⁷⁰ Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 141–142; Bock, *Acts*, 445; Alanna Nobbs, "Cyprus," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, eds. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 288; Witherington, *Acts*, 401. Baker, in particular, argues that Acts hides the identity of Paul from readers who may be antagonistic toward Paul by using the name *Saul* until adequate empathy with the character has been cultivated with hostile readers.

account of Philip's mission to rural Judea (Acts 8:26–40). Acts 9:1–31 gives a detailed account of Paul's transformation from persecutor of Christ-followers to persecuted Christ-following preacher. Acts 9:32–42 brings Peter back and reinforces his role as exemplary miracle-worker, and Acts 10:1–11:18 focuses on the Cornelius' introduction into the Christ-movement through Peter. The introduction of Gentiles into the Christ-movement in Acts 10:1–11:18 gives way to a second account of the Christ-follower dispersion following Stephen's death, but this time the dispersion is into regions outside Palestine, that is, Gentile regions (Acts 11:19–21). In addition this summary in Acts 11:19–21 introduces the Antiochene church and reorients the readers focus back onto Barnabas and Paul in Acts 11:22–29. Yet, this focus on Paul is brief because Acts 12:1 abruptly turns back to Jerusalem to introduce the account of Peter's escape from jail in Acts 12:1–24. In Acts 12:25, the focus of Acts returns upon Paul and never goes back upon Peter.

Following Paul's entrance into the Christ-movement (Acts 9:1–19), the switching between Peter and Paul in Acts 9:19–12:25 facilitates the transition from Peter to Paul as the main protagonist of Acts by continually presenting Paul as a Christ-following preacher similar to Peter. First, Acts 9:20–22 presents Paul as someone who preaches about Jesus Christ, which is similar to the content of Peter's preaching (Acts 2:14–39; 3:12–20; 10:34–43).⁷¹ Second, Acts 9:22 characterizes Paul as one who is empowered (ἐνεδυναμούτο), thus indicating that Paul participates in the Christ-followers' empowerment through possession by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1–47). Acts also portrays Peter participating in the empowerment of the Christ-following witnesses by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1–39; 4:7–12, 33). Third, just as Peter first preaches Jesus Christ to Judeans and then later to the Gentiles (Acts 2:14–39; 3:12–20; 10:34–43), Paul also preaches first to the Judeans (Acts 9:20–22; 13:5), and he does not take the message of Jesus

⁷¹ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 144.

Christ to Gentiles until Acts 13:7–12.⁷² Fourth, Peter and Paul both face opposition from Judeans outside the Christ-movement (Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–40; 12:1–19). In addition, both Peter and Paul escape from Judean opponents outside the Christ-movement who wish to kill them (Acts 9:23–25, 29–30; 12:1–19). Fifth, both Peter and Paul know Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 9:27). Sixth, both Peter and Paul invoke Jesus’ name in their prophetic activity (Acts 2:21, 38; 3:6, 16; 4:10–12; 9:28; 10:43, 48). Seventh, Peter and Paul are recognized and successful teachers among the Christ-followers (Acts 2:42; 5:21; 5:42; 11:26). Eighth, both Peter and Paul are trusted with financial matters of a church. Peter is among the apostles who on behalf of the Jerusalemite church accept proceeds from land sales (Acts 4:34–37). In addition, Peter refuses to sell to Simon of Samaria the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit upon others (Acts 8:18–25). The Antiochene church entrusts Barnabas and Paul with the delivery of monetary relief to Jerusalem during a famine (Acts 11:29). Nevertheless, one major component of Peter’s character is missing from Acts’ depiction of Paul at this point. Peter is a miracle-worker,⁷³ and Paul is not. This changes with Paul’s cursing of Elymas in Acts 13:9–11.

Several aspects of the narration of Paul’s curse against Elymas in Acts 13:9–11 resemble elements of the portrayal of Peter in Acts 1–12. Of course, an obvious similarity between Peter and Paul in Acts 13:9–11 is that they both have two names, since Luke 5:3–8 introduces Peter as Simon. In addition, Paul’s initial response to Elymas is similar to Peter’s initial response to the lame man at the temple in Acts 3:1–10. Just as Acts presents Peter as first staring (ἀτενίσσας) at the lame man before healing him (Acts 3:4), Acts indicates that Paul stares (ἀτενίσσας) at Elymas before cursing him (Acts 13:9).

⁷² Cf. Acts 13:46.

⁷³ Acts 2:43; 3:1–10; 5:1–10, 14–16; 8:17; 9:32–43.

More significant than these minor similarities is that Paul's response to Elymas' hostility comes while Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit, just as Peter also speaks prophetically while filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1–39; 4:8–13. As I indicated in ch. 5, the reference to Peter being full of the Holy Spirit while speaking before the Judean leaders in Acts 4:8–13 is a means of explaining how Peter, who is illiterate (ἀγράμματος) and uneducated (ἰδιώτης), is able to speak so confidently with rhetorical skill. Similarly, the reference to Paul being filled with the Holy Spirit indicates that Acts is presenting Paul as possessed by the Holy Spirit and serves as a means to explain how Paul can speak with enough prophetic authority to curse Elymas.⁷⁴ Thus, both Peter and Paul, while filled with the Holy Spirit, speak prophetically to an opponent (Acts 4:8–13; 13:9–11). Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul is able to assume the authority to curse Elymas because as one possessed by the Holy Spirit, Paul is speaking for God. By contrast, Paul's curse characterizes Elymas as a "son of the devil" (v. 10). Thus, while Acts portrays Paul as being in the close relationship of spirit possession with the Holy Spirit, Acts characterizes Elymas as being in figurative kinship with the devil.

The only occurrence of the phrase "son of the devil" (υἱός του διαβόλου) in the entire NT is in Acts 13:10. Aside from references to literal kinship,⁷⁵ the phrase "son of . . ." in both the Gospel of Luke and Acts frequently indicates figurative kinship, which involves describing non-familial relationships using familial terms. An example of figurative kinship is the translation "Son of Encouragement" for the nickname "Barnabas" in Acts 4:36. A variation on figurative kinship is fictive kinship, which describes a non-familial relationship between persons through familial terms. For example, in Acts 23:6, Paul refers to himself as "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees," which is likely a figurative description of Paul's relationship with the Pharisees,

⁷⁴ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 270; Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 276–277.

⁷⁵ E.g., Luke 3:23–38; 4:22; 5:10; Acts 13:21–22; 16:1; 23:16.

particularly with his Pharisaic teachers, as a parent-child relationship.⁷⁶ Paul's labeling of Elymas as "son of the devil" (Acts 13:10) ascribes *fictive kinship* between Elymas and the Devil in order to describe Elymas *figuratively* as doing the same things that the devil does.

The character "the devil" is referenced by three names in the Gospel of Luke and Acts: the devil (διάβολος),⁷⁷ Satan (Σατανᾶς),⁷⁸ and Beelzebul (Βεελζεβούλ).⁷⁹ The Gospel of Luke treats *the devil* as one who deceives, particularly through temptation (Luke 4:1–13; 8:12), and in Acts, *the devil* is a source of illness (Acts 10:38). Similarly, *Satan* also appears in the Gospel of Luke and Acts as a deceiver, particularly as a source of temptation and apostasy (Luke 22:3, 31; Acts 5:3; 26:18), and in Luke 13:16, *Satan* is a source of physical disability. As *Beelzebul* in Luke 11:14–23, Satan is the "ruler of δαιμόνια" (ἄρχων τῶν δαιμονίων),⁸⁰ whom some of Jesus' critics identify as the source of Jesus' exorcistic authority.⁸¹ Just as the devil in the Gospel of Luke and Acts is a deceiver who leads people away from the truth and righteousness of God, Elymas is "one full of all deceit and all pretense," "enemy of all righteousness," and someone who "does . . . not cease making crooked the straight ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:10). Since Acts characterizes Elymas engaging in diabolic activity, Acts through Paul's curse presents Elymas as being in a fictive parent-child relationship with the devil. Acts 13:10 characterization of Elymas in a parent-child relationship *with the devil* stands in contrast to Acts depiction of the Christ-

⁷⁶ Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 691. The separation between the three types of kinship (literal, figurative, fictive) can be ambiguous at times. For instance, since Luke 1:35 presents Jesus' conception as the product of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus' mother Mary, it is possible to interpret the references to Jesus being the "son of God" (Luke 1:32; 3:22; 10:22; 22:70; Acts 9:20) as either literal or fictive kinship.

⁷⁷ BDAG, s.v. "διάβολος"; Werner Foerster, "διαβάλλω, διάβολος," *TDNT* 2:79–81.

⁷⁸ BDAG, s.v. "σατάν"; Werner Foerster, "σατανᾶς," *TDNT* 7:158–160.

⁷⁹ BDAG, s.v. "βεελζεβούλ"; Werner Foerster, "βεελζεβούλ," *TDNT* 1:605–606.

⁸⁰ Cf. Matt 12:22–30; Mark 3:22–27.

⁸¹ Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 157 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 131–132, 140; cf. Graham H. Twelftree, "Jesus the Exorcist and Ancient Magic," in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and Its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 81–83. However, Luke 11:18–23 does not link Jesus, Satan, or Beelzebul with μαγεία (contra Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 11, 98, 161; Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 43–46; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* [New York: Harper & Row, 1978], 43–44).

followers as being in a master-slave relationship *with God* whose Holy Spirit possesses the Christ-followers (Acts 2:1–40).

Thus, Garrett in her essay “Light on a Dark Subject and Vice Versa” claims, “The confrontation between Bar-Jesus and Paul is also a confrontation between the Holy Spirit and Satan.”⁸² Theologically speaking, Garrett’s observation is accurate. Furthermore, Garrett’s observation does *not* indicate that Elymas is possessed by Satan, just as Paul is possessed by the Holy Spirit. Thus, although the narrative labels Elymas a “false prophet” (a type of divinatory specialist), the narrative does not portray him as possessed by the devil.

As Nock’s second “purpose” of Acts 13:4–12 indicates, Paul’s cursing of Elymas is very similar to Peter’s cursing of Ananias and Sapphira. In regard to the similarities between Paul’s cursing of Elymas and Peter’s cursing of Ananias and Sapphira, the targets of the curses are people accused of deception.⁸³ Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit and lying to God, and he accuses Sapphira of testing the Lord (Acts 5:3–4, 9). As a false prophet, Elymas deceives people by presenting that which is not true as the word of God. Similar to the way in which Peter questions whether Satan has filled Ananias’ heart (Acts 5:3), Paul claims that Elymas is a son of the devil (Acts 13:10). Both Peter and Paul assume that they have the authority as prophets to issue curses against deceivers.⁸⁴ Lastly, both Peter’s curses in Acts 5:1–10 and Paul’s curse in Acts 13:4–12 are immediately efficacious. As soon as Peter finishes speaking to both Ananias and Sapphira, each one falls dead (Acts 5:5, 10). Similarly, as soon as Paul announces that Elymas will be temporarily blinded, Elymas became blind (Acts 13:11). The immediate efficacy of Paul’s curse against Elymas, however, is different from Peter’s rebuke of

⁸² Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 154.

⁸³ Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:330.

⁸⁴ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 141.

Simon, which does not result in Simon's immediate destruction and seems to be about eschatological destruction.

A dictional similarity also exists in Peter's rebuking of Simon and Paul's cursing of Elymas, specifically that both use the word εὐθεῖα (straight). In Acts 8:21, Peter claims that Simon's "heart is not straight (εὐθεῖα) before God," and in Acts 13:10, Paul rhetorically asks if Elymas ever stops attempting to make "crooked the straight (εὐθείας) ways of the Lord." Thus, Peter accuses Simon of being "corrupt," and Paul indicates that Elymas is a corruptor and the opposite of a true prophet.⁸⁵

Peter's rebuking of Simon and Paul's cursing of Elymas provide a means of hope for Simon and Elymas. Peter's rebuke threatens Simon with destruction (ἀπώλεια) that might be averted if Simon repents (Acts 8:20–23). Paul curses Elymas with three days of temporary blindness, which is the very same thing that Paul experiences prior to his entrance into the Christ-movement (Acts 9:1–9); thus, the reader may entertain the possibility that Elymas will also have an opportunity to repent after his sight returns.⁸⁶

For a reader familiar with Deut 18:15–22, it yet may be surprising that Paul does not follow Deut 18:20, which prescribes death for false prophets, especially since Peter prophetically announces the immediate deaths of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–10. Nevertheless, Peter's threat of Simon's destruction, Paul's temporary blindness, and Elymas' temporary blindness all extend to the cursed person the opportunity to repent. Peter makes an explicit appeal to Simon to repent (Acts 8:22). In Paul's vision, Jesus instructs Paul to go to Damascus, and it is there that Paul joins the Christ-movement after the Christ-follower Ananias restores Paul's sight. Paul

⁸⁵ For a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke, the description of Elymas in Acts 13:10 stands in direct contrast to the description of John the Baptist in the quotation of Isa 40:3–5 in Luke 3:4–6. Whereas the true prophet John the Baptist leads people to "the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6), Elymas the false prophet attempts to mislead (δι᾿οστρέφω) Sergius Paulus away from salvation through Jesus Christ (Acts 13:8).

⁸⁶ Witherington, *Acts*, 402.

himself repents and stops misleading others, while staying on the lane bearing the symbolically significant name of “Straight” (Εὐθείαν; Acts 9:11); therefore, it is possible that Elymas also will begin to walk upon, rather than corrupt, God’s straight pathways. Although Paul’s curse offers no explicit call to repentance, the reader can assume that Elymas’ encounter with Paul will provide Elymas an opportunity to repent after Elymas’ sight returns. The opportunity for repentance is reinforced by Acts 13:11 description of the blind Elymas seeking people to led him about by the hand (περιάγων ἐζήτει χειραγωγούς) because this line is strikingly similar to the way the blind Paul is led by the hand into Damascus (χειραγωγοῦντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἰσηγάγον εἰς Δαμασκόν; Acts 9:8). According to Shelly Matthews, “In Acts, however (as in much subsequent Christian literature concerning Jewish depravity), the language of repentance is meshed with the language of conversion, such that repentance is not understood as a turning back toward what has been established but a turning toward the new—toward Jesus as Christ and as fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.”⁸⁷ Thus, repentance for the deviant Judean Elymas from Acts’ perspective would involve Elymas’ entrance into the Christ-movement. Since Paul’s need for guides ended three days later when Ananias restored Paul’s sight and facilitated his initiation into the Christ-movement (Acts 9:17–19), the possibility is provided to the reader that at the end of Elymas’ three days of blindness, he also will have the opportunity to become a Christ-follower.⁸⁸ However, Acts does not indicate what happens to Elymas after he regains his sight because the narrative is more concerned with Paul and his success in winning over the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

⁸⁷ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online edition, 33.

⁸⁸ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 53.

Nevertheless, both Peter's cursing of Ananias and Paul's cursing of Elymas have something in common with Peter's rebuking of Simon of Samaria.⁸⁹ In all three episodes, the prophetic discourse of the particular Christ-following character functions as the narrative climax of each respective episode. Thus, the prophetic direct discourse in each episode is the most critical element of each narrative, and the prophetic direct discourse is the demonstration of the authority and power of each Christ-following prophet.

A final similarity between Peter and Paul that occurs in Acts 13:9–11 is that Paul finally becomes a miracle-worker like Peter. Acts 13:9–11 portrays Paul as being able to issue a miraculous prophetic announcement of judgment against Elymas similar to Peter's prophetic announcements of judgment against Ananias and Sapphira.⁹⁰ Like Peter who claims that God is the source of his miracles (Acts 3:12–16), Paul's reference to the "hand of the Lord" being upon Elymas effectively indicates that the source of Paul's miracle-working power is the Lord Jesus (Acts 13:11).⁹¹ Thus, in Acts 13:11, Paul is presented as not being self-aggrandizing, since he attributes his wonder-working ability to the power of God given by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Although Nock suggests that one of the "purposes" of Acts 13:4–12 is to give Paul an experience similar to Peter's cursing of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–10, I suggest that Acts 13:4–12 portrays Paul as a miracle-worker similar to the miracle-worker exemplar Peter not only

⁸⁹ Although Peter also curses Sapphira with prophetic direct discourse, this second cursing in the episode is anti-climatic and the reader is not likely to find Sapphira's death very surprising, since her husband dies in a similar way only five verses earlier.

⁹⁰ Nock, "Paul and Magus," 1:327–328; cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 269–270, 323.

⁹¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 503; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 124, republished with English translations of Hebrew and Greek text as *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSup 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 112–113.

in Acts 5:1–10 but also in Acts 3:1–10; 5:11–16; Acts 8:14–24.⁹² By the end of Acts 13:4–12, Acts’ modeling of Paul in the form of Peter is well developed; thus, Acts is able to leave behind its original protagonist Peter and exclusively concentrates on its new protagonist Paul.⁹³ Since up through Acts 13:12, Paul is modeled after Peter the exemplar of miracle-workers in Acts, future characterization of Paul as a miracle-worker in Acts holds the possibility of presenting Paul as a prototypical Christ-following miracle-worker. Furthermore, since Paul’s missionary activity from Acts 13 forward focuses on not only the Judeans but also the Gentiles, Paul functions as the culminator of the Gentile mission, which God initiates through Peter in Acts 10.⁹⁴ As the culminator of the mission to the Gentiles, Paul will surpass Peter the forerunner of the Gentile mission, thus providing the likelihood that Paul will become a miracle-working exemplar that is at least equal to, if not superior to, Peter.

Despite the similarities between Acts’ portrayals of Peter and Paul, a major difference between Peter’s encounter with Simon and Paul’s encounter with Elymas is that while the encounter between the Judean Peter and the Samaritan Simon is an inter-ethnic conflict (although the Samaritans and Judeans considered their cultural groups to be related to some degree), the Judeans Paul and Elymas engage in an intra-ethnic conflict. This difference affects the way Acts presents Paul deviantizing Elymas as a popular μάγος.

In order to understand the deviance process within Paul’s curse, it is important to emphasize that Paul’s identity by Acts 13 is that of a *Judean* Christ-follower. Coleman A. Baker

⁹² Nock, “Paul and Magus,” 1:330; see also Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 276; F. Neiryneck, “The Miracle Stories in the Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Gembloux, Belgium: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 205; Wall, “Acts,” 10:188.

⁹³ S. Jonathan Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas in the Book of Acts,” *BSac* 167 (2010), 331–332. As Acts’ new protagonist, Paul becomes the primary spokesperson during the rest of the missionary journey with Barnabas. Furthermore, from Acts 13:43 forward, Acts always mentions Paul first and Barnabas second; however, prior to this, Barnabas is always mentioned before Paul, as seen in Acts 13:2.

⁹⁴ See ch. 6 for my discussion of Spencer’s *forerunner-culiminator* pattern (cf. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, 220–240).

argues that one of the functions of Acts is to establish *Christ-follower* as a superordinate identity within which are the subordinate categories of *Judean Christ-follower* and *Gentile Christ-follower*.⁹⁵ Therefore, although Acts portrays Paul as a Christ-follower, he is still a Judean. As a result, Paul treats Elymas as one who shares a common in-group identity with him, namely they are both Judeans.⁹⁶ In Acts 8:14–24, Peter treats Simon as an in-group member, specifically as a fellow Christ-follower. Nevertheless, the social dynamic between Paul and Elymas is not the same as the dynamic between Peter and Simon, although the two missionaries treat their respective opponents as in-group members. The key difference is that Acts portrays Peter and Paul treating *Christ-follower* as the more salient and more important social identity than the social identity of *Judean*. Even when Acts does present Paul drawing attention specifically to his identity of Judean, it is for the sake of promoting the Christ-movement and its message of salvation through Christ. For example, in Acts 22:3, Paul begins his speech to the riotous crowd in Jerusalem: “I myself am a Judean man, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, raised in this city, educated accurately in the inherited Law at the feet of Gamaliel, being a zealot of God just as all of you are today.” However, in the next verse, he quickly moves to describing his previous relationship with the Christ-movement, specifically that he was a persecutor of Christ-following Judeans (Acts 22:4–5). However, four verses into the speech, he describes in detail his dramatic entrance into the Christ-movement (Acts 22:6–16). Finally, when he begins the defense of his mission to the Gentiles, the crowd interrupts him and does not let him finish his speech (Acts 22:21–24).

Since Elymas functions as an external enemy to the superordinate social group of the Christ-followers, Acts portrays Paul as having no hesitation at branding Elymas as a deviant. However, since Elymas is not a Christ-follower, Paul cannot treat him as a deviant Christ-

⁹⁵ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 199–202.

⁹⁶ Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 154.

follower. Thus, Acts' explicit labeling of Elymas as a Judean allows Paul to treat Elymas as a deviant Judean. In addition, the narrative initiates the deviantization of Elymas by introducing him as both a μάγος and false prophet (Acts 13:6). This initial characterization of Elymas as "a μάγος, false prophet, and Judean" provides a context for Paul's curse (Acts 13:6). In particular, Acts presents Paul characterizing Elymas as "full of all deceit and all pretense" and as one who "make[s] crooked the straight ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:10), and Paul's characterization, of course, is fully in accord with Elymas' status as a false prophet, which is someone that presents falsehood as a true message from God. As a result, Acts 13:4–12 ultimately portrays Elymas as doubly deviant. He is a popular μάγος, which is a deviant status within the broader Greco-Roman society, and he is a Judean false prophet, which is a deviant status within Judean society.⁹⁷ As a deviant both in Greco-Roman and Judean cultural contexts,⁹⁸ Elymas not only opposes true Judean prophets, namely Barnabas and Paul, but he also tries to mislead a Gentile (Sergius Paulus) away from the true prophetic word of God, which is the missionaries' proclamation about Jesus Christ.

In my discussion of Acts 8:4–25, I purposefully avoided calling Simon a false prophet. Although Simon deceives the Samaritans with his μαγεΐα and proclamation of himself as "someone great" (Acts 8:9), Acts never explicitly or implicitly calls him a false prophet. However, not only does Acts 13:6 explicitly label Elymas a "false prophet," but also it explicitly identifies him as a Judean. Although Peter's rebuke is a call to repentance, Paul never makes an explicit call for repentance to Elymas, and in my opinion, this is because the narrative casts Elymas as a Judean. Previously in Acts, Christ-following preachers tell Judeans outside the Christ-movement that their status as God's covenant people and their familiarity with the

⁹⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, 264; Garrett, "Light on Dark Subject," 157.

⁹⁸ Cf. Garrett, "Light on Dark Subject," 157.

Israelite and Judean prophetic traditions should have caused them to accept Jesus as Christ and not oppose the Christ-followers.⁹⁹ From this perspective, the Judean Elymas should have known better than to mislead others from the true ways of the Lord. As a fellow Judean, Paul seems to hold Elymas up to a higher standard than the one to which Peter holds Simon, a novice Christ-following Samaritan. Nevertheless, Paul does not explicitly deny Elymas the opportunity to repent, and as I have already argued, the similarity between the narrations of Paul and Elymas' temporary blindness suggests that Elymas would have opportunity to repent after regaining his sight (cf. Acts 9:8–19; 13: 9–11).

The narration of Elymas' three days of blindness does not include the same appeal to the reader as the open-endedness of Acts 8:4–25 does; thus, the reader is less inclined to identify with Elymas than he or she is inclined to identify with Simon. This is to be expected, since Acts' implied audience is Christ-followers. Thus, although Acts portrays Paul as treating Elymas as having the common identity of Judean, Acts 13:4–12 as a whole is arranged in a way that inclines the reader to see Elymas as an outsider. Even if a particular Christ-following reader is also a Judean, Paul's severe treatment of Elymas would then lead the Judean reader also to view Elymas as a deviant Judean, specifically as a false prophet. Although Elymas is an outsider in regard to the Christ-movement, his status as a Judean allows the narrative to portray Paul, whose own superordinate identity is "Christ-follower" and whose extremely salient subordinate identity is "Judean," uttering sharp criticism against his fellow Judean Elymas.¹⁰⁰

In Paul's cursing of Elymas (Acts 13:9–11), the description of Elymas as "one full of all deceit and all pretense" is indicative not only of a stereotypical popular μάγος but also of a false prophet. According to Deut 18:20, a false prophet is someone who misleads the people by

⁹⁹ Acts 2:22–39; 3:12–26; 7:2–60.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Garrett, "Light on Dark Subject," 154.

“speak[ing] in the name of other Gods” or “speak[ing] in [the LORD’s name] a word that [the LORD] has not commanded a prophet to speak.” In addition, Paul’s claim that Elymas “never cease[s] making crooked the straight paths of God” appears to be more critical of Elymas’ role as false prophet than his role of μάγος. Similarly, the curse of blindness is quite fitting for a false prophet in consideration of the association with blindness and prophecy, particularly false prophecy, in Greek culture.¹⁰¹ As a type of diviner, the prophet should be able to *see* the truth, but a false prophet presents as truth that which is deformed, inaccurate, and deceptive.¹⁰² Thus, Paul’s rebuke seems more concerned with Elymas’ status as a false prophet than with his status as a μάγος.¹⁰³

However, Garrett takes the epithet “son of the devil” in Acts 13:10 as an indication that Acts portrays the devil or Satan as the source of μαγεία.¹⁰⁴ Up to this point in my study, I have entertained the plausibility of Garrett’s argument that Acts links Elymas’ μαγεία with the devil, although I do not find sufficient evidence that Acts associates μαγεία in general with the devil. However, I ultimately contend that the epithet “son of the devil” has little, if anything, to do with Elymas’ status as μάγος, since I understand Paul’s curse being more concerned with Elymas’ status as false prophet than with his status as μάγος. Nevertheless, Garrett is correct to observe that the ultimate conflict in Acts 13:4–12 is between the Holy Spirit and the devil;¹⁰⁵ furthermore, this observation is compatible with my claim that Paul calls Elymas a “son of the devil” because he is a Judean false prophet and not because he is a μάγος.¹⁰⁶ If Simon were a

¹⁰¹ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 131–132.

¹⁰² Cf. Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 53. Klauck speculates, “Bar-Jesus understood himself as a leader of the blind (Rom 2:19), one who was able to lead Gentiles along the right path. He was, however, nothing more than a blind man leading the blind, and now he is physically blinded, so that he can no longer see the sun, though only for a certain time.”

¹⁰³ Heintz, *Simon le magicien*, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 84; Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 153–159.

¹⁰⁵ Garrett, “Light on Dark Subject,” 154.

¹⁰⁶ Contra Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 83–84.

true prophet, he would receive his oracles from God's Holy Spirit;¹⁰⁷ however, since he is a false prophet, his oracles presumably do not come from the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul associates Elymas with the devil.

The epithet "son of the devil" functions as a rhetorical label as much as it functions as a theological statement. As a Judean, Elymas is technically a son of Israel; thus, to call him a son of the devil is a powerful deviantizing insult that indicates that Elymas is not acting appropriately as a Judean. In addition as a prophet (albeit a false prophet), Elymas operates as a spokesperson for God, but by calling him a *false* prophet, Acts 13:6 portrays him as an opponent to God. Thus, the epithet "son of the devil" is quite appropriate because Elymas' status as false prophet should make him an extremely deviant Judean. By calling him a son of the devil, Paul has effectively revoked Elymas' status as a son of Israel and re-categorized him as a religio-ethnic outsider of the worst kind, specifically an enemy of God (cf. Deut 18:15–22). Thus, the epithet "son of the devil" does not indicate to the reader that Satan is the source of μαγεία either in this episode or anywhere else in either Luke's Gospel or Acts. Any empowerment that Elymas receives from the devil is related to his role as a false prophet, rather than to his role as a μάγος.

Acts 13:4–12 presents the only Judean prophetic character outside the Christ-movement in all of Acts as a false prophet. All other prophetic Judeans in Acts are Christ-followers. The Christ-followers' monopoly on true prophecy in Acts, along with Elymas' status as false prophet, suggests to the reader that only Christ-following prophetic characters are true prophets.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the particularity of the Christ-movement in Acts appears again. Just as only Christ-following wonder-workers are the only legitimate miracle-workers in Acts and all others are popular μάγοι

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Sam 10:5–13; 2 Chr 15:1–7; 20:14–17; 24:20; 48:16–22; 59:21; Ezek 2:1–7; 3:25–27; 11:1–12, 22–25; 13:1–7; Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET); Mic 3:8; Zech 7:12; Acts 1:8, 16–17; 2:4, 17–18, 33; 4:8–12, 25–26, 31; 11:28; 13:1–2, 9; 16:17; 18:25; 19:6; 21:4, 10–11; 28:25–28.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, *Acts*, 226.

(see Acts 8:4–25), Christ-following prophets are the only legitimate prophets. Acts presents all other prophets, whom Elymas represents, as false prophets.

Furthermore, Paul’s victory over Elymas is not only a victory over a Judean false prophet, but also it is a victory over a Judean popular μάγος. The victory over the doubly deviant Elymas functions to distance Paul and the Christ-movement from both false prophecy and popular μαγεία, thus reinforcing Acts’ neutralization of any potential accusations of popular μαγεία and divinatory charlatanism targeted against Christ-following miracle-workers.

Sergius Paulus’ Faith as Paul’s Victory over Elymas (Acts 13:12)

Acts 13:4–12 ends not only with Paul blinding Elymas but also with Sergius Paulus trusting in Paul’s “teaching about the Lord,” that is, the message about Jesus Christ. As I have mentioned, the combination of Elymas’ blindness and Sergius Paulus’ faith in Paul’s teaching indicates that Paul is a true prophet of God.¹⁰⁹ Conversely, through Elymas, the narrative creates a subtle link between Judean prophets outside the Christ-movement and popular μαγεία. Since Elymas is the only Judean prophet outside the Christ-movement in Acts, Elymas functions as the representative of Judean prophets outside of and contemporary with the Christ-movement in Acts. The characterization of Elymas as “a μάγος, a false prophet, and a Judean” suggests to the reader that all Judean prophecy outside of and contemporary with the Christ-movement may have links with popular μαγεία, thus leaving only the Christ-following prophets as true prophets of God. Thus, in the symbolic universe of Acts 13:4–12, the symbolic boundary between true and false prophets separates Christ-following prophetic characters as the true prophets from all Judean prophetic characters, who are false prophets. Although the HB, especially Deut 18:15–22, effectively limits true prophets to monotheistic Jahwist prophets, the book of Acts up to this

¹⁰⁹ Johnson, *Acts*, 226.

point has so far limited true prophets after Jesus' ascension to only Judean Christ-followers.¹¹⁰

Acts 13:4–12 more explicitly demonstrates the limitation of the category of *true prophet* within the symbolic universe of Acts to *Christ-following Judean prophets*.

Sergius Paulus' reaction to these events is much like the Samaritans' positive reaction to Philip's preaching and miracle-working in Acts 8:4–13. The participial phrase ἐκπλησσομένους ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου (being astonished by the teaching of the Lord) in Acts 8:12 translates best as a causal clause explaining why Sergius Paulus' believes (ἐπίστευσεν). Although Sergius Paulus “trusts” or “believes” (ἐπίστευσεν), the narrative does not indicate that Sergius Paulus participates in either of the two initiation rituals of the Christ-movement, specifically baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, Acts primarily reserves the verb πιστεύω (to trust) to indicate that a human subject is or becomes a Christ-follower, regardless of whether Acts specifically indicates that the person has received baptism or the Holy Spirit. Of the 35 other occurrences of πιστεύω in Acts, thirty of these occurrences refer to the state of being or the act becoming a Christ-follower.¹¹² In addition, sixteen of these thirty uses of πιστεύω in Acts have neither explicit direct objects nor prepositional phrases of reference indicating “in” what the subject has faith. For example, Acts 2:44 refers to the Jerusalemite Christ-followers immediately after Pentecost as “all those having faith” (πάντες οἱ πιστεύοντες). Therefore, πιστεύω without any direct object or a prepositional phrase of reference indicates that the human subject is or becomes a Christ-follower. Thus, although Acts

¹¹⁰ Although Acts 11:27–28 does not explicitly identify Agabus as a Judean, the presentation of Agabus and his prophetic colleagues coming from Jerusalem strongly suggests that they are Judeans.

¹¹¹ Cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 265.

¹¹² The five remaining occurrences of πιστεύω in Acts involve a person's faith unto healing (3:16), disbelief in Paul's conversion (9:26), disbelief in God's saving work (13:41), belief that the Christ-followers will be saved (15:11), belief in the Law and prophets (24:14), and belief in the prophets (26:27).

13:12 does not explicitly indicate that Sergius Paulus receives baptism and the Holy Spirit,¹¹³ the verb ἐπίστευσεν (he trusted, believed) in Acts 13:12 indicates that Sergius Paulus becomes a Christ-follower.¹¹⁴

As Darrell L. Bock demonstrates, a comparison between Sergius Paulus and Elymas is instructive.¹¹⁵ They represent two opposing responses outside the Christ-movement to the Christ-following missionaries' prophetic testimony. The Gentile character (Sergius Paulus) "sees" (ἰδών) what transpires between Paul and Elymas and trusts in the message of Christ; however the Judean character (Elymas), a member of the covenant people of the Hebrew God, completely rejects the missionaries and their message and cannot see for three days as a result. Elymas, in particular, represents Acts' portrayal of relations between the Christ-followers and Judeans outside the Christ-movement as often volatile and adversarial starting from Acts 6:8 forward.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 265.

¹¹⁴ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 141; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:616; Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*, SNTSMS 57 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 210; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 503–504; Haenchen, *Acts*, 400. Hesitation toward interpreting Sergius Paulus' "trust" (ἐπίστευσεν) as an indication that he becomes a Christ-follower appears to stem more from historical concerns, specifically both skepticism regarding the plausibility of a Roman proconsul becoming a Christ-follower and the lack of historical evidence for Sergius Paulus having been a Christ-follower (cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 265).

¹¹⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 447.

¹¹⁶ For a reader familiar with Exodus, the portrayal of the μάγος and false prophet Elymas actively opposing the true prophet of God before a Gentile ruler bears striking similarity to the competition involving Moses and Aaron against the Egyptian magico-religious specialists in Exod 7:1–9:12 (Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 110; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 47; cf. Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle," 120–121; Römer, "Competing Magicians," 19–22; 1 Kgs 18; Dan 14 LXX.). In the larger narrative of Moses' and Aaron's prophetic activity before Pharaoh's court (Exod 5:1–12:51), Moses and Aaron repeatedly make demands of Pharaoh, whose refusals are met with promised plagues. In response, Pharaoh summons his own wonder-working specialists. In the MT, Pharaoh's wonder-workers are *ḥōšim* (sages) and *ḥōšim* (magicians), all of whom the narrative lumps under the broader label of *ḥōšim* (Egyptian magicians; Exod 7:11). For more information on the *ḥōšim*, *ḥōšim*, and *ḥōšim* in the HB, see Jeffers, *Magic and Divination*, 39, 40–49, 65–70. The LXX completely removes the reference to the *ḥōšim* in Exod 7:11 and indicates that Pharaoh summons τοὺς σοφιστὰς Αἰγύπτου καὶ τοὺς φαρμάκους (the Egyptian sages and sorcerers). However, the LXX translates subsequent occurrences of *ḥōšim* as ἐπαοιδῶν (enchanters, spell-casters), who were considered workers of popular μαγεία (BDAG, s.v. "ἐπαοιδός"; Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008], 61, 137–138, 140, 145; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 28–29, 216–217; LSJ, s.v. "ἐπαοιδός" and "ἐπωδός"). The labeling of the *ḥōšim* in Exod 7:1–9:12 as φάρμακοι and ἐπαοιδῶν, combined with Egypt's reputation during the Greco-Roman period as a center of μαγεία, would suggest to the Greco-Roman reader that the Egyptian wonder-workers in Exod 7:1–9:12 are μάγοι (cf. Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 169–170; Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 13; Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers," 106–107).

Elymas' defeat and Sergius Paulus' faith function as an auspicious beginning to Barnabas and Paul's missionary journey. Furthermore, Acts 13:4–12 also functions as an auspicious first encounter between Paul and the Roman Empire. Prior to this episode, Peter encounters Cornelius a Roman centurion, who serves as the first Gentile member of the Christ-movement (Acts 10:1–11:18). Similarly, Paul's first encounter with a Roman official in Acts yields a favorable result, specifically the proconsul Sergius Paulus' acceptance of Paul's message. Thus, my analysis of Acts 13:4–12 reinforces Nock's identification of one function of Acts 13:4–12 as "represent[ing] the Roman authorities as very sympathetic at the outset of Paul's active ministry in the Gentile world."¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the opposing responses to the Christ-movement that Acts ascribes to Elymas and Sergius Paulus reflect a trend throughout Acts' portrayal of Paul's ministry, specifically that Paul finds a much more favorable response from Roman political officials than he finds from Judeans, whom Acts frequently portrays as pursuing Paul and subjecting him to violence.¹¹⁸

Following Sergius Paulus' favorable response to the missionaries' message, Acts 13:13 sends Paul and Barnabas off to Perga of Pamphylia in Asia Minor for the rest of their missionary journey, which concentrates on central Asia Minor. Thus, Acts 13:13 distinguishes further the two Christ-following missionaries from the false-prophet and popular μάγος Elymas. Unlike Elymas, Paul and Barnabas do not establish themselves as resident prophets in the court of

In Exod 7:1–8:7, Pharaoh's enchanters are able to duplicate the wonders performed by Moses and Aaron. However, in Exod 8:12–15 (8:16–19 ET), the Egyptian enchanters are unable to reproduce the plague of gnats, and they admit that the plague comes from God. Later in Exod 9:11, the defeat of the Egyptian enchanters is complete when they are unable to enter Pharaoh's court because of the boils they contract during the plague of boils announced by Moses and Aaron in Exod 9:8–10; subsequently, the Egyptian enchanters do not appear again. In similar fashion, Barnabas and Paul stand within the court of a foreign ruler, and they directly compete with Elymas the μάγος. Just as in Exod 7:1–9:12, where the defeat of the Egyptian enchanters through the miraculous infliction of a physical impairment upon them functions as proof that Moses and Aaron are true prophets of God, the defeat of Elymas through the curse of blindness serves as proof that Barnabas and Paul are God's true prophets.

¹¹⁷ Nock, "Paul and Magus," 1:330; see also Schüssler Fiorenza, "Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics," 15–16.

¹¹⁸ Acts 9:23–25; 13:44–52; 14:1–7, 19–20; 17:4–15; 18:12–17; 20:1–3, 18–19; 21:27–22:23; 23:12–15; 24:1–23; 25:1–11, 14–21, 24; 26:2–8, 21; 28:17–20.

Sergius Paulus, despite winning the attention of Sergius Paulus; instead, they follow the pattern of itinerancy already established by Peter, John, and Philip in Acts 8:4–25.¹¹⁹ Thus, just as a successful missionary journey through part of rural Samaria immediately follows the Christ-following missionaries' encounter with the popular μάγος Simon, a successful missionary journey into central Asia Minor follows Paul and Barnabas' conflict with Elymas. Thus, two popular μάγοι have now been unable to impede the progress of the Christ-followers mission to be Jesus' "witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

II. Development of the Miracle-Worker Character Type in Acts 13:4–12

As Acts develops the theme of *witness*, particularly in Acts 2, it becomes apparent that Acts casts Christ-follower witnesses as prophets. Much of the characterization of the Christ-following miracle-workers in Acts 8:26–13:3 reinforces the portrayal of the miracle-workers as prophetic witnesses in Acts 1:1–8:25. However, the narration of an angel's verbal instructions to Philip (Acts 8:26), the Holy Spirit's direct speech to Philip (Acts 8:29), and the Holy Spirit's teleportation of Philip to Azotus (Acts 8:39–40) resemble shamanic experiences with spirit familiars and soul journeys. Thus, the miracle-workers, while they are not true shamans, may exhibit shamanistic qualities.¹²⁰

The false-prophet Elymas in Acts 13:4–12 functions as a means for Acts to develop further the characterization of Christ-following preachers and missionaries as "prophets" (Table 7.1). Just as Simon of Samaria in Acts 8:4–25 functions as a foil by which the character type of Christ-following miracle-worker further develops, Elymas in Acts 13:4–12 provides an

¹¹⁹ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 77.

¹²⁰ Cf. Eliade, "Shamanism (Overview)," 13:202–208; Vitebsky, "From Cosmology to Environmentalism," 276–279; Winkelman, "Cross-Cultural Perspectives," 1:61–70; Winkelman, "Shamans and Healers," 308–352.

illustrative contrast to the prophetic missionaries Barnabas and Paul.¹²¹ In addition, the position of the episode itself within the broader context of Acts provides further insight into the development of the character type and social identity of the miracle-worker.¹²²

Paul's cursing of Elymas in Acts 13:9–11, which parallels Peter's cursing of Ananias and Sapphira, is one example of a larger series of parallels between Peter and Paul, which serve to portray Paul as a prophetic witness to Christ in the same pattern as Peter. Similar to the way Peter is empowered to preach at Pentecost (Acts 2), Acts 9:20–22 portrays Paul as an "empowered" (ἐνεδυναμοῦτο) preacher in Damascus, and the presentation of Paul's early ministry in Jerusalem and Antioch suggests that Paul also is a prophetic preacher (Acts 9:20–22; 11:26). In Acts 13:4–12, Paul's curse against Elymas, like Peter's cursing of Ananias and Sapphira, is a prophetic announcement of judgment that solidifies the characterization of Paul as both a prophetic character and a miracle-worker.¹²³

Nevertheless, these two instances should not lead the reader to assume that all Christ-following prophetic characters are miracle-workers and vice versa. First, Paul already begins his preaching activity in Acts 9:20–22 before he performs his first miracle in Acts 13:4–12; thus he functions for a considerable amount of time as a prophetic witness to Christ without also being a miracle-worker. Second, Acts 11:27–29 presents the Christ-follower Agabus as a prophet, but nothing in Acts suggests that Agabus is also a miracle-worker. Third, although Ananias of Damascus has a revelatory vision and heals Paul's blindness (Acts 9:10–19), Acts does not portray Ananias engaging in a prophetic career. Thus, although most of the Christ-following miracle-workers are prophetic preachers, it is possible in Acts for a miracle-worker not to be a

¹²¹ Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 153.

¹²² Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 54–55.

¹²³ Aune, *Prophecy*, 269–270, 323.

prophetic preacher. Nevertheless, the prototypical miracle-worker in Acts is a prophetic character, and conversely, the prototypical prophetic Christ-follower is also a miracle-worker.

In terms of Roschian referential categorization (see ch. 4), “miracle-worker” seems to function primarily as a subordinate category within the category of “prophetic witness.” The most outstanding prophetic characters in Acts have also been miracle-workers; thus, miracle-working prophetic characters function as prototypical prophetic witnesses up to this point in Acts. Thus, the primary social identity of Christ-following miracle-workers is *prophetic witness to Christ*.

As the only Judean prophet outside and contemporary to the Christ-movement in the book of Acts, Elymas functions as the representative of prophets outside the Christ-movement. However, Elymas’ status as a *false prophet* suggests to the reader that if other prophetic characters outside the Christ-movement were to appear in Acts, only Christ-following prophetic characters are likely to be presented as true prophets.¹²⁴ In addition, the description of Elymas as a Judean also emphasizes that not all *Judean* prophets are true prophets; instead, it is a prophet’s proclamation of Jesus Christ that appears to qualify a prophetic character as a true prophet in Acts. Thus, Acts 13:4–12 serves to increase the particularity of the Christ-movement in Acts. The only true prophets so far in Acts are Christ-following prophetic characters. Furthermore, the characterization of Elymas as a popular *μάγος* creates a connection in Acts between Judean wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement and popular *μαγεία*.

The interaction between the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus and the Christ-following missionaries is much different from the interaction between Elymas and the missionaries. Despite Jesus’ execution by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Luke 23) and the volatile relations between the Christ-movement and Judean religio-political leaders in Acts 1–12, the

¹²⁴ Cf. Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 16.

portrayal of the first interaction between a Christ-follower and a Roman political leader is quite amicable. Acts 13:4–12 would incline the ancient reader to expect that future interactions between Christ-followers and Roman officials will be peaceful. Thus, Acts 13:4–12 suggests to the reader the possibility that Roman leaders in the remainder of Acts, unlike the Judean leaders in Acts 2–12, will be relatively congenial to the Christ-followers.

Table 7.1 Additional characteristics of miracle-workers in Acts 13:4–12

1. Miracle-workers can have shamanistic experiences.
2. *Miracle-worker* is the prototypical subordinate category of *prophetic witness*.
3. The primary social identity of the prototypical miracle-worker is prophetic witness to Christ.
4. Nearly all miracle-workers are prophetic witnesses to Christ, but not all prophetic witnesses in the Christ-movement are miracle-workers.
5. As prophetic witnesses to Christ, miracle-workers are true prophets, while prophetic characters who do not witness to Christ are false prophets.
6. Miracle-workers are likely to have amicable relations with Roman political leaders.

Lastly, I need to make a few observations concerning Paul's socio-economic status. The presentation of Paul in Acts 9:1–2 as one sanctioned by the Judean high priest to seek out Christ-followers for prosecution suggests that Paul, prior to his becoming a Christ-follower, functions at least as a retainer for the Judean religio-political leaders in Jerusalem, who themselves are local-level elites and should be situated at the middle-level of the governing class on Lenski's model of social stratification in advanced agrarian societies. As a subordinate of the local Jerusalem elite, the ancient reader would ascribe Paul the same socio-economic status as low-ranking

member of the governing class or, more likely, as a high-ranking retainer within Judea. Thus, his ability to speak before the proconsul Sergius Paulus is completely acceptable for the reader because it fits the characterization of Paul as at least part of the retainer class.

III. Plotting the Characters from Acts 13:4–12 onto the Model (Figure 7.1)

Acts 13:4–12 contains five characters, but only two of them are wonder-workers. Acts does not present Barnabas, John Mark, and Sergius Paulus as wonder-workers. The labeling of Elymas as a *μᾶγος* in Acts 13:6, 8 informs the reader that Elymas is a wonder-worker of some sort. Paul performs his first miracle when he curses Elymas with blindness in Acts 13:4–12. Therefore, I place Elymas and Paul onto my model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 13:4–12. Furthermore, I plot two other characters onto the model. I retain Peter as the exemplar for miracle-workers. Onto the model, I also plot Ananias of Damascus, who miraculously heals Paul's blindness in Acts 9:10–19 (see Figure 7.1).

Despite the explicit characterization of Elymas as a popular *μᾶγος*, plotting him onto the model is actually more difficult than plotting Simon of Samaria. Acts 8:4–25 gives more detail to Simon's wonder-working career, particularly his self-aggrandizing and self-centered behavior. The commonality between the two *μᾶγοι* Elymas and Simon is that they are both deceivers. Acts casts Elymas as a false prophet, who is “full of all deceit and all pretense” and does “not cease making crooked the straight ways of the Lord” (Acts 13:10). The characterization of Elymas as a deceiver in Acts 13:4–12 is more explicit than the characterization of Simon as a deceiver in Acts 8:4–25. Nevertheless, by proclaiming himself as someone great, Simon leads the Samaritans to proclaim him as “the power of God that is great.” Simon's self-description and the Samaritans' proclamation about Simon stand opposed to what Acts presents as the true prophetic message from God, specifically the preaching of Christ.

Beyond the characterization of Elymas as a deceiver, no other stereotypical behavior of a popular μάγος appears in Acts 13:4–12. The reader on his or her own must supply additional stereotypical qualities. Although Acts provides more details concerning Simon, I plot Elymas further right on the scale than I plotted pre-Christ-following Simon in Figure 6.1 because Elymas from the outset seems opposed to the Christ-movement, unlike Simon who joins the Christ-movement without hesitation.

For several reasons, I plot Paul slightly to the right of where I plotted Philip in the previous chapter (Figure 6.1). Through the parallels between Peter and Paul, Acts patterns Paul's prophetic career after Peter's. However, two factors keep me from plotting Paul as a miracle-working exemplar. First, since Peter is the pattern by which Acts presents Paul, the character Peter serves as the exemplar by which Acts narrates Paul's prophetic career. In other words, Paul cannot be an exemplar of miracle-working along with Peter because Acts uses Peter as the exemplar for Paul's career as a prophetic witness, including his miraculous cursing of Elymas in Acts 13:4–12.¹²⁵ Second, although Acts 13:4–12 narrates Paul's initial miracle, Acts has yet to establish a regular miracle-working career for Paul. By contrast, numerous passages in Acts 2–12 establish that Peter works miracles on a regular basis (Acts 3:1–10; 5:1–16; 9:32–43). Similarly, I plot Paul just to the right of where I plotted the apostles in the previous chapter (Figure 6.1), since Acts 2:43; 5:12 portray the apostles regularly performing numerous signs (σημεῖα) and wonders (τέρατα). I also place Paul slightly to the right of where I plotted Stephen and Philip in the previous chapter (Figure 6.1) because Acts 6:8; 8:6, 39 also establishes that Stephen and Philip perform miracles on a regular basis. As the remainder of Acts continues to portray Paul as a miracle-worker, I will place him further to the left in the model.

¹²⁵ Cf. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 146.

Like the other miracle-working characters in Acts 2–12, Paul is a recognized leader in the Antiochene church, since not only does he appear on the list of prophets and teachers in Antioch (Acts 13:1) but also the Antioch church commissions him as a missionary (Acts 13:2–3). Consequently, I do not place Paul much further to the left of the previous miracle-workers in Acts, who also are recognized leaders in the Christ-movement. Furthermore, I note that Paul continues the trend established in Acts 2–12 that miracle-workers are Judean men.

Finally, Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9:10–19) is not a prototypical miracle-worker because he only performs one miracle, which he does hesitantly at the direction of “the Lord” during a revelatory vision. Thus, Acts 9:10–19 does not give the impression that Ananias has a miracle-working *career*. In addition, although Ananias’ revelatory vision does qualify as a prophetic experience, the narrative neither labels him a “prophet” nor presents him engaging in a prophetic career. Aside from Ananias’ one miracle of healing and his one prophetic vision, Acts does not ascribe to him any other characteristics distinctive of a Christ-following miracle-worker. Therefore, I place Ananias on the Christ-following half of the model and much further to the left of where I place the other miracle-worker in Acts 2:1–13:12; however, since nothing in Acts 9:10–19 suggests that Ananias has any associations with μαγεία, I do not place him close to the center line of the model, unlike Christ-following Simon and repentant Simon in the previous chapter (see Figure 6.1).

After Acts 9, Ananias of Damascus does not appear again, although Paul does refer to him in Acts 22:11, while recounting to the Jerusalemites how he came to be a Christ-follower. Nevertheless, by the time Acts places Paul in another μαγεία-miracle conflict (Acts 16:16–18), Acts has not only transformed Paul into the primary protagonist for the second half of Acts, but Acts has also presented Paul performing a second miracle, which indicates to the reader that

Paul's miracle working is not a one time event. The second μαγεία-miracle conflict episode (Acts 16:16–18), which contains Paul's third miracle, signifies Paul's development into a prototypical miracle-worker.

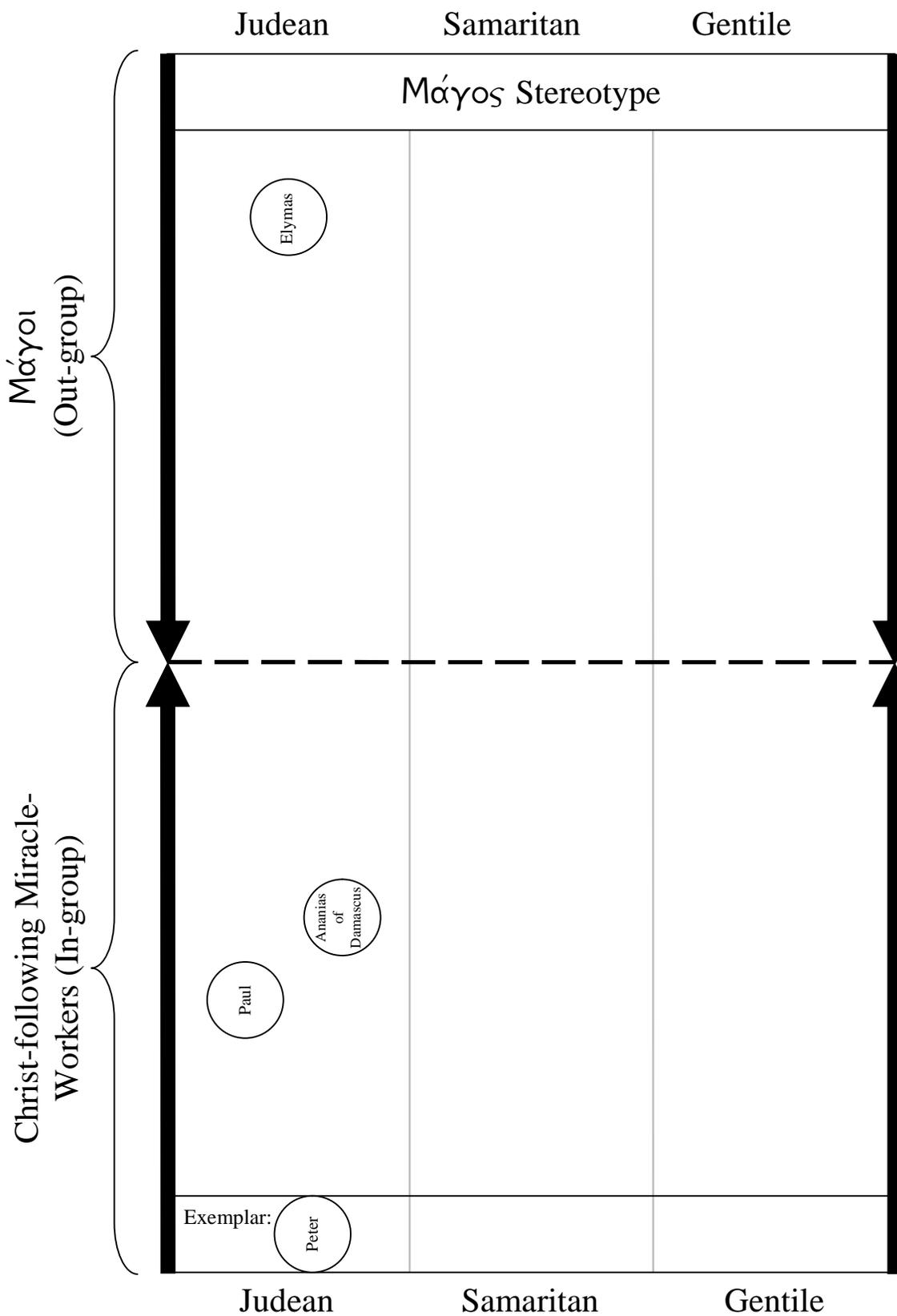


Figure 7.1 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 13:4–12.

CHAPTER 8
PAUL CONFRONTS A MEDIUMISTIC DIVINER
(ACTS 16:16–18)

During Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:40–18:22), Paul comes into conflict with another popular magico-religious specialist, specifically a slave with a divinatory spirit (Acts 16:16–18). Paul encounters the diviner in Philippi, shortly after arriving in Macedonia from Asia Minor. Although the antagonists in the first two μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes are popular μάγοι (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12), Acts 16:16–18 does not describe the diviner as either a practitioner of μαγεία or a μάγος. Nevertheless, it is still possible to discuss Acts 16:16–18 in the context of the conflicts in Acts between miracle-workers and popular μάγοι for three reasons.

First, a close association existed in Greco-Roman culture between μαγεία and popular divination, that is, divinatory practice outside well-established divinatory cults, such as the oracle at Delphi and the Roman college of *haruspices*.¹ Second, the basic pattern of Acts 16:16–18 is similar to, although more compressed than, the first two μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes in Acts 8:4–25 and Acts 13:4–12. Third, as my analysis of Acts 16:16–18 will demonstrate, this episode functions thematically much the same way as the first two μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes. In particular, the narrative uses Paul’s triumph over a popular magico-religious

¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BCENT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 535; Bernhard Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie: Paulus als Wundertäter nach der Apostelgeschichte,” in *Biographie and Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 187 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 278–281. Heininger, in particular, claims that Judean culture during the Greco-Roman period associated divination by spirit mediums (ἐγγαστήριμοι) with γοητεία, or charlatanistic popular μαγεία.

specialist outside the Christ-movement in order to contribute to Acts' overall development of the character type and social identity of Christ-following miracle-workers.

Recent studies of Acts 16:16–18 have approached this text in three ways. First, numerous scholars build upon Paul R. Trebilco's analysis of the divining slave's oracle in Acts 16:17 and claim that Acts 16:16–18 combats the syncretistic blending of the Christ-movement and Greco-Roman religion. For instance, Hans-Josef Klauck relies upon Trebilco's "Paul and Silas – 'Servants of the Most High God'" to argue that the slave's oracle is ambiguous and deceptive because it is open to syncretistic interpretation; thus, Paul exorcises the divinatory spirit in order to combat a "syncretistic misunderstanding" among the Philippians.² As a result, Klauck identifies a primary function of the episode as the affirmation and clarification of the boundary between the Christ-movement and the religious cults of the Greeks and Romans.³ Relatively similar to Klauck, Bernhard Heininger argues that Paul exorcises the Pythian spirit in order to combat syncretism, in which the Philippians mistakenly think that Paul and Silas are preaching "a new Macedonian-Thracian divinity" (*einer neuen makedonisch-thrakischen Gottheit*).⁴

In basic agreement with Klauck and Heininger, I will argue later in this chapter that within the narrative world of Acts, Paul's exorcism is primarily an attempt to prevent the Philippians from developing a syncretistic understanding of the Christ-movement. Furthermore, despite my disagreement with Klauck's understanding of spirit possession, I agree with Klauck that a major function of this narrative is to establish symbolic group boundaries around the

² Paul R. Trebilco, "Paul and Silas—'Servants of the Most High God (Acts 16:16–18),'", *JSNT* 36 (1989), 60–65; see also C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 2:786; Bock, *Acts*, 536–537; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 69–70; Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 224–226.

³ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 68–70.

⁴ Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 282–283.

Christ-movement, specifically by distinguishing Christ-following prophetic characters, as represented by Paul and Silas, from popular, polytheistic Greek divination.

Todd Klutz's socio-stylistic analysis of Acts 16:16–18 is a second major approach to this text. Klutz provides insight into the thematic function of Acts 16:16–18. In addition to Klutz agreeing with Klauck that Acts 16:16–18 combats syncretism and draws symbolic boundaries between the Christ-movement and popular Greek magico-religious practice,⁵ Klutz also analyzes how Paul's exorcism of the Pythian spirit functions largely as an affirmation of the legitimacy of Paul's missionary activity, in which Paul is a prophetic speaker, a teacher, and a miracle-worker.⁶ Klutz's analysis of Acts 16:16–18 will contribute to my study of Acts' development of the social identity of miracle-workers by providing insights into how Acts 16:16–18 contributes to Acts' development of Paul into a prototypical miracle-worker.

A third major approach to Acts 16:16–18 are feminist readings of the text, such as the analyses provided by Ivoni Richter Reimer, F. Scott Spencer, and Shelly Matthews. In a historically-focused feminist reading of Acts 16:16–18, Richter Reimer investigates how the divining slave's skill (τέχνη) of mediumistic divination would likely increase her economic value above that of a unskilled slave and would likely result in better treatment and better quality of life for the slave.⁷ However, Paul's exorcism of her possessing spirit would dramatically reduce her economic value and likely also reduce her quality of life, since her masters would likely force her to engage in hard manual labor following the exorcism. Thus, Richter Reimer cautions against interpreting the exorcism of the Pythian spirit from the slave as a form of

⁵ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 211, 230; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:786.

⁶ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 230.

⁷ For further discussion of possessed persons' assumption of foreign personalities and an increased social voice, see Janice Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), 421–422; M. J. Field, "Spirit Possession in Ghana," in *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, eds. John Beattie and John Middleton (New York: Africana, 1969), 12; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 78; Isabelle Nabokov, "Expel the Lover, Recover the Wife: Symbolic Analysis of a South Indian Exorcism," *JRAI*, n.s., 3 (1997), 297–299.

“liberation” because the exorcism not only silences the only female prophetic character to whom Acts attributed direct prophetic speech (Acts 16:17) but also changes her into an unskilled slave.⁸

Similar to Richter Reimer, Spencer explores how the silencing of the divinatory slave through exorcism frustrates expectations for both male and female prophets introduced in the adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18. Although Acts 16:16–18 presents a slave who proclaims Paul and Silas as metaphorical “slaves of the highest God, who announce to you a way of salvation” (Acts 16:17; cf. Acts 2:18), the narrative ultimately presents her as an illegitimate prophet. Moreover, through the character of Paul, the narrative silences the only vocal female prophet in the entire book.⁹ Thus, Spencer concludes that although Acts 2:17–18 cues the reader to expect both male and female prophets, Acts provides them no opportunity to speak; instead, Acts silences the only female and enslaved prophet in the entire book.¹⁰

Also similar to Richter Reimer, Matthews argues that the slave’s divinatory skill is attributable to the god Apollo;¹¹ thus, “[T]he incident in Acts 16:18 represents a religious competition in which the God of Paul prevails over Apollo, the God of the slave girl.” Matthews explains that the portrayal of Apollo’s prophet in Acts 16:16–18 as a charlatanistic slave in the

⁸ Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 153–154, 180–184; contra Bock, *Acts*, 535; cf. L. Michael White, “Visualizing the ‘Real’ World of Acts 16: Toward Construction of a Social Index,” *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 258. Richter Reimer claims that the slave’s only means for improvement and “liberation” would be if she were manumitted and cared for by the Christ-followers in Philippi. White argues that Acts does not portray Paul facilitating the slave’s entrance into the Christ-movement because Acts portrays Paul as one who “deal[s] with heads of household,” who are socially superior to slaves and able to provide supportive hospitality to Paul and his companions.

⁹ Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View,” *JBL* 109 (1990), 453.

¹⁰ F. Scott Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts,” *BibInt* 7 (1999), 136, 150–151; see also Mary Rose D’Angelo, “(Re)presentations of Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts,” in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 186; Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online edition, 29.

¹¹ Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity*, *Contraversions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), ACLS Humanities E-book, 90; cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 405; Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 155.

employment of greedy masters serves to denigrate not only the slave but also Apollo because Apollo's spokesperson in Acts does not fulfill an "acceptable" role for female prophets in Greco-Roman society, specifically *virgin* or *educated woman*; instead, she is a female slave, who is at the bottom of the Greco-Roman social hierarchy.¹²

Taking cues from the previous studies that I have briefly reviewed above, I will argue that Acts 16:16–18 creates a contrast between Paul, who is portrayed as a true Judean prophet, and the divining slave, who is presented as a positively possessed prophetic medium for a Hellenistic divinatory spirit. The critical differences between the two prophetic characters are not their message, but their different genders and especially the different spirits that possess them. I will argue that Acts 16:16–18 attributes to the slave a prophetic message that is subtly deceptive and syncretistic, since it originates from a prophetic spirit other than the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew God. The exorcism of the slave's possessing spirit silences the deceptive oracle, but Paul waits several days before performing the exorcism because it is then that the slave's persistence threatens to give the impression to the Philippians that Paul and Silas are also charlatans. Through Paul's exorcism of the Pythian spirit, Acts 16:16–18 indicates that prophetic witnesses to Christ, including miracle-working witnesses, are proclaimers of *the* means of salvation, specifically salvation given by the Hebrew God through Jesus Christ. In addition, I will argue that the exorcism of the divinatory spirit from the *female* divining slave by the *male* prophetic witness Paul reinforces the Acts' presentation of the *prototypical* prophetic witness as a man, a characterization that has dominated thus far in Acts. Since miracle-working up to this point in

¹² Matthews, *First Converts*, 89, 91–92; cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 131; D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts," 451, 453, 456–457; Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 21–24; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 221; Pervo, *Acts*, 405; Spencer, "Out of Mind," 138.

Acts functions primarily as a characteristic of *prototypical* prophetic witnesses, the prototypical miracle-worker is also male.

This chapter of my study will follow the same basic structure of the previous two chapters. I spend the bulk of the chapter analyzing the conflict between Paul and the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18. Next, I will explain how Acts 16:16–18 contributes to the character type and social identity of *miracle-worker*. Lastly, I will plot the relevant characters in Acts 16:16–18 onto my model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts.

I. Paul Encounters a Divining Slave in Philippi (Acts 16:16–18)

Paul and Silas' encounter with a divining female slave in Acts 16:16–18 is a small piece of Acts' larger narrative about Paul's work in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40). These three verses are crucial to creating the primary conflict within the larger narrative of Paul's Philippian mission, since the exorcism of the Pythian spirit leads to the trial and imprisonment of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19–40). Nevertheless, Acts 16:16–18 by itself contains a recognizable narrative plot: introduction of characters and setting of scene (v. 16–17), rising action of conflict in the slave's continued proclamation and Paul's exasperation (v. 18a–b), climax of conflict as Paul's exorcistic proclamation (v. 18b), and resolution as departure of spirit from the slave (v. 18c). In addition, prior to Paul's encounter with the divining slave, Acts narrates several incidents which are pertinent to the development of the character type of miracle-worker and, more specifically, to the development of the character Paul as a prophetic witness to Christ.

Paul the Miracle-Worker between the Second and Third Μαγεία-Miracle Conflicts (Acts 13:13–16:15)

Following Paul's confrontation with the μάγος Elymas in Acts 13:4–12, the reader is left with the possibility that Paul will develop into a miracle-worker like Peter, who frequently performs

miracles as part of his role as prophetic witness to Christ.¹³ Only a chapter later, Paul performs his second miracle, the healing of a lame man in Lystra (Acts 14:8–10). Paul’s healing of the lame man at Lystra is very similar to Peter’s healing of the lame man at the temple (Acts 3:1 – 10). Just as Peter stares (ἀτενίσσας) at the lame man whom Peter heals (Acts 3:4), Paul stares (ἀτενίσσας) at the lame Lystran before healing him (14:9).¹⁴ In addition, Acts 14:9 indicates that the lame Lystran has “faith to be saved,” which is very similar to Peter’s attribution of the healing of the lame man at the temple to faith in Jesus’ name (Acts 3:16).¹⁵ The similarities between Peter and Paul continue in Acts 14:11–18. In response to the Lystrans’ proclamation of Barnabas and Paul as the deities Zeus and Hermes, Paul declares to the crowds that he and Barnabas are only humans and that God is the one responsible for healing the lame man (Acts 14:15–17). Paul’s attribution of the miracle to God is similar to Peter’s attribution of the lame man’s healing to God (Acts 3:12–13). Thus, in Acts’ narration of Paul’s second miracle, Peter continues to serve as the miracle-working exemplar by which Acts patterns Paul as a miracle-worker. Later, Acts 15:6–11 further strengthens the link between Peter and Paul when Peter speaks before the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church in order to defend Paul’s mission to the Gentiles by comparing his own experience with God’s acceptance of Gentiles into the Christ-movement.

In addition to the development of Paul as a career miracle-worker after the second μαγεία-miracle conflict episode,¹⁶ the beginning of Acts 16 returns to the theme of portraying

¹³ Acts 3:1–10; 5:1–11, 15; 8:17; 9:32–43.

¹⁴ See also Acts 13:9, in which Paul stares (ἀτενίσσας) at Elymas prior to cursing him.

¹⁵ Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 282.”

¹⁶ In this chapter, I use the word career in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free, 1973], 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin

Christ-follower missionary activity as led by the Holy Spirit. Earlier, in Acts 8:29, the Holy Spirit verbally instructs Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch, and at the end of this narrative episode, the Holy Spirit miraculously transports Philip from the road between Jerusalem and Gaza to the town of Azotus (Acts 8:39–40). After that, Acts 13:2–3 presents Barnabas and Paul’s missionary journey as initiated and sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. In similar fashion, Acts 16:6–7 indicates that the Holy Spirit on two separate occasions prevents Paul from journeying first to Asia and then to Bithynia. Although Paul’s revelatory dream of the Macedonian man bidding Paul to come to Macedonia is not explicitly attributed to the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:9–10), the Holy Spirit’s prevention of Paul’s journey to both Asia and Bithynia a few verses earlier suggests to the reader that the travel instructions that Paul receives in the dream are also part of the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Paul’s missionary travels. Thus, just as Peter is instructed by the Holy Spirit to travel to Cornelius’ house, where Peter preaches to the first Christ-following Gentiles (Acts 10:19–20), Paul’s missionary work in Gentile regions is also guided by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Paul’s Encounter with the Divining Slave (Acts 16:16–18)

The opening sentence of Acts 16:16–18 establishes the scene as Philippi, through which Paul and his companions are traveling to a “place of prayer” (προσευχή). This “place of prayer,” which lies outside of the city walls, is where Paul meets Lydia (Acts 16:13–15). Acts 16:16 is ambiguous as to whether Paul’s first encounter with the female slave occurs while Paul is traveling to the place of prayer for the first time or during a subsequent trip to the place of

M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003], 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

¹⁷ Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 577–578; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 189; 224, n. 2; 227, n. 2, republished with English translations of Hebrew and Greek text as *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSup 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 188.

prayer.¹⁸ If Acts 16:16 introduces action that occurred while Paul is traveling to the place of prayer for the first time, the narrative presents Paul meeting the divining slave before he meets Lydia and his subsequent encounters with the slave occur after the events of Acts 16:13–15.¹⁹ However, if Acts 16:16 indicates action chronologically subsequent to Acts 16:13–15, the narrative presents Lydia meeting Paul and entering the Christ-movement prior to the events of Acts 16:16–18; thus, the initial clause of Acts 16:16 indicates that Paul travels to the place of prayer frequently after Lydia’s entrance into the Christ-movement.²⁰ Regardless of how the reader understands the exact chronological order of events in Acts 16:13–18, the narrative portrays Paul interacting with Lydia and the divining slave during the same general time frame.

Acts 16:16–17 provides five significant features of the divining slave’s character. The first characteristic of the slave is that she is a female slave, that is, a παιδίσκη. LSJ defines παιδίσκη as a diminutive, feminine form of παῖς and provides numerous possible translations for παῖς, including *child, boy, girl, slave, man servant, and maid servant*.²¹ According to LSJ, παιδίσκη translates as *young girl, maiden, young female slave, bondmaid, maidservant, or prostitute*.²² Since Acts 16:16 indicates that the slave has “masters” (κύριοι), it is evident that the παιδίσκη in Acts 16:16–18 is a slave. Most English translations of Acts 16:16 render παιδίσκη as “slave-girl.” In addition, most scholarly interpreters of this passage also assume that since παιδίσκη can refer to both a female slave and a girl that the diviner in Acts 16:16–18 must be a young woman or a girl.²³ However, I am skeptical about the LSJ’s indication that the

¹⁸ Pervo, *Acts*, 404

¹⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 1992), 293.

²⁰ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 493.

²¹ LSJ, s.v. “παῖς.”

²² LSJ, s.v. “παιδίσκη.”

²³ The following are examples of studies that specifically refer to the slave as “a girl” or “young”: Douglas J. Davies, “Purity, Spirit and Reciprocity in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Anthropology and Biblical Studies*:

masculine form *παῖς* may refer to a male slave of any age and the feminine form *παιδίσκη* is restricted only to young female slaves.²⁴ As Jennifer A. Glancy explains, “Beyond an accident of language, the male slave endured the permanent status of a boy, excluded from maturing into the category of manhood.”²⁵ Accordingly, a reader could suppose that referring to an enslaved woman as a “girl” could also be a means of demeaning an enslaved woman and limiting her personal freedom and individuality by rhetorically restricting her to a role requiring a parent or custodian, specifically the role of a child.²⁶ In the second edition of *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BAGD), the definitions for *παιδίσκη* are *maid*, *female slave*, and *servant-girl*.²⁷ However, the third edition of this lexicon (BDAG) lists only one translation, specifically *female slave*;²⁸ thus, BDAG removes any indication that *παιδίσκη* refers to a *young* slave. In summary, I suggest two reasons why *παιδίσκη*, when it refers to a slave, does not specify that the slave is young. First, since the masculine noun *παῖς*, when referring to a slave, is not limited to young male slaves, it seems illogical to limit the translation of the feminine noun deriving from the same root to *girl*, especially since there is no noun containing the *παιδ*-root for an older enslaved woman.²⁹ Second, referring to a slave as

Avenues of Approach, eds. Louise J. Lawrence and Mario I. Aguilar (Leiden: Deo, 2004), 269; Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 247; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 210; Robert F. O’Toole, “Slave Girl at Philippi,” *ABD* 6:57; Daniel Rakotojoelinandrasana, “The Gospel in Adversity: Reading Acts 16:16–34 in African Context,” *WW* 21 (2001), 192; Spencer, “Out of Mind,” 146; Trebilco, “Paul and Silas,” 61.

²⁴ LSJ, s.v. “παῖς” and “παιδίσκη.”

²⁵ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 24.

²⁶ Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 586.

²⁷ BAGD, s.v. “παιδίσκη.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Nevertheless, it is important to note here that although in modern Western culture the conceptual pairs of boy-man and girl-woman function as analogous pairs under the superordinate conceptual pairing of child-adult; however, the extreme importance of the value of masculinity in the Greco-Roman culture causes the pairs boy-man and girl-woman not to function as analogous pairs the same way as they do in modern Western culture. In particular, as Maud H. Gleason explains, “Among the educated upper class of the [Roman] empire, a masculine identity was an achieved state.” She continues a paragraph later, “Manliness was not a birthright. It was something that had to be won” (Maud H. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995], 159). Furthermore, manliness (*ανδρεία*, *virtus*) in the Greco-Roman culture could be a

child (παῖς) is a common way of demeaning a slave in both ancient and modern times without indicating anything about a slave's age.³⁰ Therefore, using the diminutive παιδίσκη for a female slave of any age may simply be a way to denigrate further an enslaved woman. Thus, I will translate παιδίσκη as *female slave*.

The ancient reader would likely have imported Greco-Roman stereotypical concepts of actual female slaves to the female diviner in Acts 16:16–18. The primary identity of a slave is that of *property*. The diviner is the legal property of her masters, who direct and control her life. Female slaves were subject to the same abuses, punishments, tortures, and exploitations as male slaves.³¹ Slaves of both sexes were sexually available to their slaveholders.³² A slaveholder could grant to others sexual access to his slaves; thus, a slaveholder could force a slave into prostitution.³³ Slaveholders' primary concern in respect to female slaves was their potential for childbearing and nursing.³⁴ Thus, the sale of female slaves typically occurred before the age of thirty-five,³⁵ and typically, female slaves did not receive manumission until after menopause.³⁶

The second aspect of the portrayal of the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18 is the presentation of the divining slave *speaking openly within the public space* of the city's streets

virtue demonstrated by exceptional women (Emily A. Hemelrijk, "Masculinity and Femininity in the 'Laudatio Turiae,'" *CQ*, n.s., 54 [2004], 188–193; Matthew B. Roller, "Exemplarity in Roman Culture: The Cases of Horatius Cocles and Cloelia," *CP* 99 [2004], 1–56; e.g., 4 Macc, 15:30; Livy, *History of Rome* 2.13.4–11; Plutarch, *On the Bravery of Women*; Seneca the Younger, *Consolatio ad Marciam*, 16; Valerius Maximus, 3.2); however, femininity does not appear in Greco-Roman culture as an esteemed virtue for both women and men (Hemelrijk, "Masculinity and Femininity," 188–190). Cf. D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts," 453: "Women are by no means excluded from imitating or indeed possessing the virtue of 'manliness' (courage) in antique literature. But there are no female exemplars in Luke-Acts."

³⁰ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 24.

³¹ Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald with Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2006), 102. For information on violent treatment of slaves, see K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 113–137.

³² S. Scott Bartchy, "Slavery (New Testament)," *ABD* 6:69; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 118; Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 9, 21.

³³ Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 116; cf. Matthews, *First Converts*, 89.

³⁴ Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 48, 53–56; Osiek and MacDonald, *Woman's Place*, 99–100.

³⁵ Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 53–55.

³⁶ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 17.

and daily *following a foreign man* (Paul) through the streets of the city, while proclaiming him a servant of the Highest God (v. 17). Participation in the public life of the streets would have been completely inappropriate for a high-status free woman; however, for a female slave, public activity would have been normal.³⁷ The participle that translates as “following” in v. 17 is from the verb *κατακολουθέω* (follow), which occurs only twice in the NT and only within the Gospel of Luke and Acts.³⁸ In both cases, the subjects of the verb *κατακολουθέω* are female characters. In addition to Acts 16:17, Luke 23:55 reads, “The women that had come with [Jesus] from Galilee, having followed (*κατακολουθήσασαι*), observed the tomb and how his body was placed.” In Luke 23:55, the implied object of the women’s following is Joseph of Arimathea, who carries Jesus’ corpse to the tomb. Although Luke 23:55 may be portraying the Galilean women as symbolically remaining followers of Jesus even after he is dead, the verb *κατακολουθέω* in this verse indicates the mundane act of following rather than discipleship.³⁹ The verb that the Gospel of Luke typically uses to refer to Jesus’ disciples *following* him is the uncompounded *ἀκολουθέω*.⁴⁰ Therefore, *κατακολουθήσασαι* in Acts 16:17 does not indicate that the divining slave joins the Christ-movement. Instead, *κατακολουθήσασαι* in v. 17 simply portrays the slave tailing behind Paul and his companions as they travel around Philippi.

The third aspect of the presentation of the divining slave is her role as a participant in *ecstatic prophecy* (*μαντευομένη*), that is, oracular divination through trance.⁴¹ She prophesies by means of a “Pythian spirit” (*πνεῦμα πύθωννα*).⁴² In addition, Acts creates rhetorical distance

³⁷ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 41.

³⁸ BDAG, s.v. “κατακολουθέω.”

³⁹ Contra Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 156–157.

⁴⁰ For the uses of *ἀκολουθέω* in reference to discipleship in the Gospel of Luke, see Luke 5:11, 27, 28; 9:11, 23, 49, 57, 59, 61; 18:22, 28, 43; 22:39, 54; 23:27, 49; cf. Acts 12:8–9; 13:43; 21:36.

⁴¹ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 216; Johnson, *Acts*, 294.

⁴² A significant variant reading of Acts 16:16 describes the divinatory spirit as a *πνεῦμα πύθωνος*. For further discussion of this text-critical issue, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 448; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 214–216. The two variants both

between the prophetic activity of the slave and Christ-following prophetic characters by describing the slave's prophetic activity as μαντευσμένη (divining), although Acts uses words from the root προφητ- to refer to prophets and prophecy in the Christ-movement.⁴³ Furthermore, for readers familiar with the LXX, the use of μαντεύομαι to describe the slave's divinatory activity adds connotations of illegitimacy to the slave's magico-religious activity because the LXX typically reserves μαντεύομαι and lexically related words for the divinatory practices of the Israelites' foreign rivals.⁴⁴

The concept of a *Pythian spirit* (πνεῦμα πύθωνα) derives from the foundation legend for the Delphic oracle, according to which, Apollo killed a monstrous snake named Python at Delphi prior to establishing the oracle.⁴⁵ In traditional Greek culture, the Delphic woman prophet, called the *Pythia* (Πυθία), functions as the possessed divinatory medium for Apollo, so that she functions as “the voice of Apollo.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, LSJ translates πνεῦμα πύθωνα in Acts 16:16 as “a spirit of divination,” thus indicating that the possessing spirit in Acts 16:16–18 is neither specifically Apollo nor a spirit associated with Apollo. Along similar lines, Hans Conzelmann notes that by the early Roman Imperial period, “Pythian spirit” had become a generic designation for a divinatory spirit. However, by the Hellenistic period, some popular diviners outside the established Delphic oracle seem to have operated as divinatory mediums for the god Apollo.⁴⁷ Plutarch comments critically that in order to promote the authenticity of their utterances,

have significant external support (πύθωνα: Ϝ⁷⁴ Ϝ A B C* D* 81 326 *pc*; πύθωνος: Ϝ⁴⁵ C³ D¹ E Ψ 33 1739 *Ϝ*). According to Metzger, πύθωνα is the preferable reading because it has slightly weightier early textual evidence and, more importantly, it is the more grammatically difficult reading.

⁴³ Matthews, *First Converts*, 89. μαντεύομαι in Acts 16:16 is a NT *hapax legomena*.

⁴⁴ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 210, 216–217.

⁴⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 65; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:785.

⁴⁶ Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 10, 37; see also Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 200–203; LSJ, s.v. “Πυθία” and “Πύθων; L. Maurizio “Anthropology and Spirit Possession: A Reconsideration of the Pythia's Role at Delphi,” *JHS* 115 (1995), 69–86; O'Toole, “Slave at Philippi,” 6:58.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles* 414E.

εὐρυκλεῖς (divinatory mediums) claim that Pythian Apollo possesses them.⁴⁸ Although πνεῦμα πύθωνα in Acts 16:16 is often interpreted as a generic term for “divinatory spirits,” a critical reading of Plutarch’s comments on εὐρυκλεῖς suggests that Acts 16:16 presents either Apollo or a spirit subordinate to him as the source of the divining slave’s oracles.⁴⁹

The terms ἐγγαστρίμαντις (belly-seer), ἐγγαστρίμυθος (belly-talker), εὐρυκλής (medium), and πύθων (Pythian) are conceptually related terms dealing with popular mediumistic divination.⁵⁰ A critical reading of Plutarch’s elitist criticism of εὐρυκλεῖς (mediums) suggests that although Plutarch considers these popular diviners to be frauds who alter their voices for the sake of verisimilitude,⁵¹ the diviners themselves and likely many of those who observed them considered the εὐρυκλεῖς to be genuine intermediaries of Apollo or a spirit subordinate to Apollo.⁵² The terms ἐγγαστρίμαντις and ἐγγαστρίμυθος are very insightful in understanding how these diviners supposedly spoke on behalf of a deity or spirit. As David E. Aune explains, a

⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles* 414E; see also BDAG, s.v. “πύθων”; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 131; Werner Foerster, “πύθων,” *TDNT* 6:918. According to Plutarch, εὐρυκλεῖς take their name from Eurychles (Εὐρυκλῆς), a famous mediumistic diviner (cf. Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1019–1023).

⁴⁹ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:784–785; Pervo, *Acts*, 405; Witherington, *Acts*, 493–494; cf. David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 41; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 67; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 214; Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 155, 166. Klutz suggests that the spirit may have been a lesser spirit subordinate to Apollo.

An adequate recognition of the elitist perspective demonstrated in Plutarch’s comments on εὐρυκλεῖς makes unnecessary and inappropriate any distinctions between πύθωνες (so-called “ventriloquists”) and the slave in Acts 16:16–18 who has a “Pythian spirit,” since the translation “ventriloquists” for πύθωνες is itself an inadequate translation because the πύθωνες and also εὐρυκλεῖς themselves likely considered themselves genuine prophets and mediums (contra LSJ, s.v. “Πύθων”; cf. Frederick E. Brenk, “The Exorcism at Philippi in Acts 16.11–40: Divine Possession or Diabolic Inspiration?” *FN* 13 [2000], 8–9). Therefore, the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18 seems to qualify as a πύθωνες, that is, someone who claims to be a prophet or divinatory medium for Apollo (Aune, *Prophecy*, 41; contra Conzelmann, *Acts*, 131; Matthews, *First Converts*, 93; Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 155, 165–166; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:785).

⁵⁰ Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 157 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 93–94; see also Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 244; LSJ, s.v. “ἐγγαστρίμαντις”, “ἐγγαστρίμυθος,” and “Εὐρυκλῆς.” Although the traditional translation for εὐρυκλῆς is “ventriloquist,” I prefer the translation “medium” because it does not carry the unwarranted connotations of verisimilitude and deception that “ventriloquist” does (cf. Bock, *Acts*, 535; Justin Taylor, “The Roman Empire in the Acts of the Apostles,” *ANRW* 26.3:2450; contra Foerster, “πύθων.” 6:917–920; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 146.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles* 414E; see also Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1019–1023; Plato, *Soph.* 252C.

⁵² Brenk, “Exorcism at Philippi,” 8.

very descriptive translation of ἐγγαστρίμυθος would be “belly-talker.”⁵³ Accordingly, ἐγγαστρίμαντις can descriptively translate as “belly-seer.” These translations capture more clearly the notion that a divinatory spirit resides in the medium’s abdomen and speaks out through his or her mouth.⁵⁴ The conceptualization of a spirit residing in the abdomen of a person through whose mouth the spirit delivers divinatory oracles easily fits the anthropological definition of spirit possession, since the divinatory spirit effectively controls the speech abilities of the medium, who acts as the “voice box” of the foreign spirit residing within the abdomen of the human host.

Klauck argues that Paul’s *exorcism* of the Pythian spirit is the only indication to the reader that the divining slave is *possessed* by the Pythian spirit. Since Klauck considers *possession* a Judean concept rather than a Greek concept, the presentation of the relationship between the slave and the Pythian spirit in Acts 16:16–18 reflects “a specifically Jewish Christian perspective.”⁵⁵ Klauck’s claim that Greeks did not have a concept of “possession” is similar to Wesley D. Smith’s argument that Greek culture did not contain a concept of *spirit possession* prior to Judean and Christ-follower influence upon Greco-Roman culture.⁵⁶ However, as I discussed in ch. 5, it is inappropriate to use Smith’s and similar arguments to study human-spirit relations in Acts because Smith, and apparently Klauck also, define “possession” too narrowly in terms of the *entrance* of a spirit or deity into the body of a human, rather than as the direct controlling influence of a spirit or deity over a person.⁵⁷ Under the modern anthropological definition of spirit possession, numerous examples of spirit possession exist in Greco-Roman

⁵³ Aune, *Prophecy*, 40–41; see also Pervo, *Acts*, 405.

⁵⁴ LSJ, s.v. “ἐγγαστρίμαντις” and “ἐγγαστρίμυθος”; O’Toole, “Slave at Philippi,” 6:58; Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 93–94.

⁵⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 66.

⁵⁶ Wesley D. Smith, “So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece,” *TPAPA* 96 (1965), 403–426.

⁵⁷ Vincent Crapanzano, “Spirit Possession,” *ER* 14:12–13; cf. J. S. Morrison, “The Classical World,” in *Oracles and Divination*, eds. Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1981), 99–100.

culture, including the ecstatic behavior of the Delphic Pythia, the Dionysian Maenads, and the Sibyl. Furthermore, even if I were to concede for a moment to Smith's argument regarding the absence of spirit possession in Greek culture prior to Judean and Christ-follower influences upon Greco-Roman culture, Smith's insights would still be unhelpful in analyzing Acts 16:16–18 because the concept of possession would have already entered Greco-Roman culture via Judaism and the Christ-movement by the time Acts was written.⁵⁸

Similar to Klauck, Heininger claims that Paul exorcises the divinatory spirit from the slave because Paul interprets the relationship between the slave and the spirit as that of “possession” (*Besessenheit*).⁵⁹ Heininger limits “possession” to negative possession and argues that Acts presents Paul as operating from the Jewish/Jewish-Christian perspective (*jüdisch-judenchristlicher Perspektive*) on mediumistic divination, according to which the divinatory spirit in Acts 16:16–18 is a malevolent spirit.⁶⁰ However, all other exorcism narratives in the Gospel of Luke and Acts clearly indicate that the possessing spirits are malevolent spirits in two ways: (1) labeling the spirits as “unclean” (ἀκάθαρτον) or “evil” (πονηρόν)⁶¹ and (2) portraying them as harmful to their human hosts.⁶² Acts 16:16–18 does not label the slave's divinatory spirit as “unclean” or “evil” and does not indicate that the spirit harms the slave.⁶³ Consequently, I do not agree with Heininger in reasoning that Paul exorcises the Pythian spirit because it is a malevolent, possessing spirit.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Smith, “So-Called Possession,” 404–425.

⁵⁹ Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 281–282.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 278–282; cf. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 495–496; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 66.

⁶¹ Matthews, *First Converts*, 89; cf. Luke 4:33, 36; 6:18; 8:29; 11:24; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12–13, 15–16.

⁶² Matthews, *First Converts*, 90; cf. Luke 6:18; 8:27, 29; 11:26.

⁶³ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 170.

⁶⁴ Contra Aune, *Prophecy*, 268; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 332; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 140.

However, by using an anthropological understanding of spirit possession, which understands possession as primarily the controlling influence of a spirit other than the spirit of the person being controlled, I understand neither Acts nor the character Paul to be operating by an inherently Judean concept of possession. Furthermore, the use of an anthropological understanding of possession allows me to treat the relationship between the slave and the Pythian spirit as *possession* without having to interpret the Pythian spirit as a malevolent spirit. In other words, I understand the relationship that Acts presents between the slave and the Pythian spirit as a relationship of *positive possession* through which the slave functions as a mediumistic diviner.

The claim by LSJ that the “Pythian spirit” had become a generic label for any divinatory spirit may ultimately stem from the elitism of most ancient authors, such as Plutarch, who cannot entertain the possibility that a deity, such as the great Apollo, would actually stoop to inhabiting a person of low social status. Furthermore, several texts in the *PGM* include ritual instructions for communicating with a deity, especially Helios-Apollo.⁶⁵ For example, *PGM* I.262–347, which is entitled “Apollonian invocation,” includes the following lines:

When you have completed all the instructions set out above, call the god with this chant:

“O lord Apollo, come with Paian.
Give answer to my questions, lord. O master
Leave Mount Parnassos and the Delphic Pytho
Whene’er my priestly lips voice secret words,
First angel of [the god], great Zeus. . . .

And when he comes, ask him about what you wish, about the art of prophecy, about divination with epic verses, about the sending of dreams, about obtaining revelations in dreams, about interpretations of dreams, about causing disease, about everything that is a part of magical knowledge. (*PGM* I.296–335 [Betz])

The goal of these ritual instructions is a conversation between the ritual actor and Apollo in order that the human actor can question Apollo about popular divination and healing. In regard to

⁶⁵ Aune, *Prophecy*, 46.

identifying the exact nature of the Pythian spirit in Acts 16:16–20, it is significant that the invocation in *PGM* I.262–347 requests that Apollo leave the Delphic oracular shrine and come to the human ritual actor. Such a request would certainly affront the religious sensibilities of Plutarch and many other elite writers of that time; nevertheless, whoever actually performed the ritual in *PGM* I.262–347 would feel at liberty to make such a request of Apollo.

In light of the conceptual and anthropological connections between the Greco-Roman understandings of the popular divination associated with belly-talkers, belly-seers, Apollo, and mediumistic divination, Acts' characterization of the divining slave's divinatory spirit in Acts 16:16 as a "Pythian spirit" places the slave's divinatory practice within the same conceptual realm of mediumistic divination as the εὐρυκλῆϊς, ἐγγαστρίμαντις, and ἐγγαστριμυθος.⁶⁶ Thus, the ancient reader, who would be familiar with all these terms and concepts, would likely understand the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18 to be someone who is, or claims to be, possessed by a divinatory spirit that is either Apollo or a spirit subordinate to Apollo.⁶⁷

The fourth aspect of the slave's characterization is that her skill in divination produces a considerable profit for her slaveholders (Acts 16:16). Mediumistic divination functions as a specialized skill for the slave. As already noted, slaves with specialized skills were considered to have greater economic value in Greco-Roman society. As a result, such skilled slaves would typically fare better at the hands of their slaveholders than would unskilled slaves, who would be subjected to the most menial duties. As a result, the reader of Acts 16:16–18 is likely to imagine that the divining slave enjoys a better existence than the typical domestic slave and that her value to her slaveholders is dependent upon her specialized skill of divination.

⁶⁶ Aune, *Prophecy*, 41, 268.

⁶⁷ Brenk, "Exorcism at Philippi," 9; Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 162, n. 9; Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 165–166.

The fifth aspect of the narrative's description of the divining slave is the content of her proclamation concerning Paul and his companions: "These people are slaves of the highest God, who announce to you a way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). Several elements of this proclamation echo significant themes so far in Acts. The oracular proclamation identifies Paul and his companions as "the slaves of the Highest God" (δούλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). The concept *slaves of God* reflects back upon Peter's adaptation of Joel 3:2 (2:9 ET), in which God proclaims, "And indeed upon my male slaves (τοὺς δούλους μου) and female slaves (τὰς δούλας μου) in those days, I will pour out from my Spirit, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:18). Next, the slave's oracle indicates that Paul and his companions proclaim (καταγγέλλουσιν) a message concerning divine salvation to the overwhelmingly Gentile population of Philippi. This description of the missionaries' activity directed toward the Philippians is fully compatible with Acts' portrayal of Paul as a missionary in the Gentile regions of the Roman Empire. Ironically and perhaps even comically, a literal slave, who is the medium for a spirit other than the Holy Spirit, delivers this oracle concerning how the metaphorical prophetic slaves of the Christ-movement are delivering a message of salvation to the Philippians. Thus, a prophet not commissioned by the Hebrew God is prophesying (μαντευομένη; v. 16) about the salvation proclaimed by the Christ-followers.

Deut 18:9–22, which I discussed in relation to Elymas in the previous chapter, lists two characteristics of people who are not legitimate Hebrew prophets: speaking in the name of a deity other than the Hebrew God and speaking a prophecy not commissioned by the Hebrew God (Deut 18:20). The divining slave in Acts 16:17 seems to speak a prophetic message that the Hebrew God through Jesus has already commissioned the Christ-followers to proclaim (Acts 1:8), and the slave delivers this prophecy by means of a spirit other than the Holy Spirit of the

Hebrew God. Thus, a reader familiar with Deut 18:9–22 would be suspicious of the legitimacy of the divining slave from the beginning. Moreover, in light of the sectarian particularity of the Christ-movement thus far in Acts, the slave’s association with the Pythian spirit would likely cause most ancient Christ-following readers to be suspicious of the slave, even if a particular reader is unfamiliar with Deut 18:9–22 (cf. 1 Cor 10:20–22).⁶⁸

In light of the source of the divining slave’s prophecy, specifically a Pythian spirit, the reader may be surprised that v. 18 presents Paul implicitly allowing the divining slave to follow him and make her proclamation for several days. Although an ancient reader, along with numerous modern biblical scholars, may question why Paul permits the slave to deliver this proclamation for several days, the narrative never provides a reason for Paul waiting several days before attending to the slave; instead, the narrative provides only a reason for why Paul does eventually exorcise the Pythian spirit, specifically Paul becomes exasperated (*διαπονηθείς*). The verb *διαπονέω* occurs only twice in the NT, and both occurrences are in Acts.⁶⁹ Acts 4:2 uses the participle *διαπονούμενοι* to express the Judean leaders’ reaction to Peter and John’s teaching the people and proclaiming of the resurrection of the dead in Acts 3:12–26. As a response to someone else’s actions, *διαπονέομαι* indicates a negative reaction; thus, the NRSV translates *διαπονούμενοι* in Acts 4:2 and *διαπονηθείς* in Acts 16:18 as “annoyed.” Similarly, BDAG lists possible translations of *διαπονέομαι* as *be (greatly) disturbed* and *annoyed*. LSJ lists several possible translations for the active form *διαπονέω*: *work out with labor, elaborate, cultivate, practice, work out thoroughly, cultivate thoroughly, work hard (intransitive), hard-*

⁶⁸ Daniel Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark / Continuum, 2003), 111; cf. Heining, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 280–281.

⁶⁹ BDAG, s.v. “*διαπονέομαι*.” Apparently, since *διαπονέω* appears in the NT only in the middle voice, BDAG lists the verb as deponent (*διαπονέομαι*). Mark 14:4 in its Western recension (D, Θ, 565, [it]) also includes *διαπούντο*.

working (participle), *be worked hard* (passive).⁷⁰ These translations from LSJ indicate that *διαπρονέω* connotes *difficulty* and *thoroughness*, which suggest that the emotion that Acts 16:18 attributes to Paul is more than simple frustration or annoyance.⁷¹ Thus, *διαπρονηθείς* in Acts 16:18 indicates to the reader that after the slave and her proclamation have followed Paul for several days, he becomes “fed up” with her and simple annoyance has turned into *exasperation*.⁷² Nevertheless, the narrative provides no explicit reason for why Paul now becomes exasperated; instead, Acts 16:18 moves directly to portraying Paul’s exorcism of the Pythian spirit as a remedy to his exasperation with the slave. Thus, the narrative leaves the reader to surmise on his or her own not only why Paul waits several days before exorcising the Pythian spirit but also what exactly about the slave and her proclamation eventually leads to Paul’s exasperation and exorcism of the Pythian spirit. Obviously, these two unresolved issues are intimately related.

Two possible reasons for why Acts has Paul wait so long before exorcising the Pythian spirit are common among modern biblical scholars. The first reason, which I will label the *socio-economic reason*, postulates that since the diviner in Acts 16:16–18 is a slave and, thus, legally the property of her masters, Paul waits so long before exorcising the Pythian spirit because he refrains from damaging the slaveholders’ property in order to avoid any negative social and legal results that the exorcism might incur.⁷³ The second possible reason for why Paul waits so long to exorcise the Pythian spirit, which I will label the *magico-religious reason*, recognizes that Acts does not present the Pythian spirit as an evil or malevolent spirit in a relationship of negative spirit possession with the slave; instead, the Pythian spirit positively possesses the slave.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ LSJ, s.v. “*διαπρονέω*.”

⁷¹ Johnson, *Acts*, 294; Witherington, *Acts*, 495.

⁷² Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:787; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 71–72.

⁷³ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 174–175; Trebilco, “Paul and Silas,” 63–64.

⁷⁴ Contra Barrett, *Acts*, 2:785. Although Barrett claims that the slave in Acts 16:16–18 is a possessed mediumistic diviner, her possessing spirit “is not a good spirit.”

Therefore, Paul exorcises the Pythian spirit only after sufficient time has passed for Paul's initial inaction toward the slave to appear as an implicit endorsement of the slave's divinatory method and oracle.⁷⁵

Postulation of both of the socio-economic and magico-religious reasons requires psychological speculation, which is not particularly appropriate for my narrative critical perspective on Acts 16:16–18. From a narrative critical perspective, however, it is possible to propose two additional reasons. The *ethical reason* takes account of Acts' indication that the divining slave "produced much profit for her masters by giving oracles," which indicates that she collected fees for her oracles (Acts 16:16). Thus, a reader may presume that the divining slave follows Paul daily and delivers her oracle in hopes that Paul will eventually pay her for the advertisement she is providing. However, the reader can also presume that as a Christ-following miracle-worker, Paul will never pay the slave, since this would qualify in Acts as an inappropriate use of material possessions. If Acts were to present Paul paying the slave for her oracle, this would suggest three things to the reader. First, payment would suggest that Paul endorses the oracle. Second, paying the slave would suggest that Paul tolerates, if not fully accepts, the slave and her method of mediumistic divination, specifically divination by Apollo or a spirit subordinate to him; however, through the exorcism, Acts presents Paul as disapproving of the oracle and the slave's method of divination. Third and most importantly, paying the slave would suggest that Paul finds acceptable the receiving of fees for prophetic oracles. However, up to this point in Acts, Christ-following prophetic characters, including miracle-workers, have neither accepted payment or praise for their prophetic activities. Furthermore, Peter severely rebukes Simon of Samaria, when Simon presumes that Peter and John are willing to take money in exchange for giving him the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18–24). Acts also

⁷⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 69.

seems to make a fine, but important, distinction between Paul's willingness to accept hospitality and material support for his missionary endeavors in general and the charging of fees for oracles (Acts 16:16). Thus, although Paul *reluctantly* accepts Lydia's hospitality in support of him and his mission (Acts 16:15), Paul is not willing to pay the divining slave, since paying her would endorse the charging of fees for prophetic activity. By paying the slave and implicitly endorsing the collection of fees for prophecy, Paul would implicitly place himself within the realm of low-status, popular magico-religious figures, whom higher status characters and readers would consider charlatans; however, accepting hospitality from Lydia places Paul in the company of people with moderate to high socio-economic status, whose magico-religious activities a more educated and higher-status reader is likely to find more socially acceptable than the activities of low-status "charlatans," such as the divining slave.

Presumably, after several days, Paul's exasperation stems from the slave's attempts to solicit a fee from Paul, since by now her implicit attempts to solicit a fee from Paul might communicate to the Philippians that Paul is also a charlatanistic popular magico-religious specialist who keeps company with other charlatans. Even more significantly, the *dramatic reason* for Paul's delay in exorcising the Pythian spirit is that the delay builds narrative tension in what is otherwise an extremely brief story; thus, the delay increases the dramatic significance of the story within the larger narrative unit of Paul's Philippian mission (Acts 16:12–40). The ethical and dramatic reasons are not mutually exclusive and complement each other by explaining Paul's reason for waiting so long and the dramatic effect of Paul's delay.

Concerning why Paul would exorcise the Pythian spirit, despite the apparent truthfulness of the slave's oracle, Trebilco provides the most plausible explanation. Trebilco argues that the slave's proclamation is deceptively ambiguous in two ways. First, Trebilco demonstrates that not

only ancient Judeans used the phrase ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God) to refer to the Hebrew God but also worshipers of the Greek and Roman deities used this phrase to refer to the deity whom a particular worshiper considered the supreme deity. Trebilco argues further that typically Judeans preferred the phrase ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest) over the phrase ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God), which was more typical of worshipers of Greco-Roman deities. Therefore, although the phrase ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God) could refer to the Hebrew God, Trebilco suggests that the ancient reader of Acts would likely have recognized the epithet ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God) as primarily used by those who are not Judeans.⁷⁶ Even if a reader is skeptical concerning whether ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God) is primarily a designation for Greco-Roman deities and ὁ ὑψίστος is primarily for the Hebrew God, the appearance of ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψίστος (the Highest God) within the slave's proclamation creates a great amount of ambiguity within the oracle.⁷⁷ Thus, Acts seems to present the proclamation as having the potential to lead the Philippians into identifying Paul and Silas as those who serve a deity other than the Hebrew God.⁷⁸

Trebilco's second and related explanation for why the slave's proclamation is ambiguous is that the slave presents Paul and Silas preaching *a* way of salvation (ὁδὸν σωτηρίας), rather than *the* way of salvation (τὴν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας). Although an anarthrous Greek noun can translate into English as if it were arthrous, Acts' typical pattern of using the arthrous ὁδός to refer to the Christ-movement suggests that the best translation for the anarthrous ὁδὸν σωτηρίας in Acts 16:17 is "*a* way of salvation."⁷⁹ For an ancient reader, the anarthrous ὁδὸν

⁷⁶ Trebilco, "Paul and Silas," 51–58, 59.

⁷⁷ Cf. Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 162, who argues that θεὸς ὑψίστος is used equally by both Judeans and Gentiles.

⁷⁸ Trebilco, "Paul and Silas," 60–61.

⁷⁹ Cf. Acts 9:2; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22.

σωτηρίας would be quite ambiguous and allow the reader to see the slave announcing the Christ-movement as *a* way of salvation, not *the* way of salvation.

Therefore, within the narrative world of Acts, the slave's proclamation is doubly ambiguous for the residents of Philippi because the proclamation does not specify for the Philippians that Paul and his companions are slaves of the Hebrew God and are proclaiming *the* way of salvation. Trebilco claims that Acts places in the slave's mouth an ambiguous proclamation and that Acts has Paul exorcise the Pythian spirit in order to keep the slave from misleading the residents of Philippi into regarding the Christ-movement as only one means of salvation from a deity other than the monotheistic Hebrew God.⁸⁰ Building upon Trebilco's article, Daniel Marguerat also explains that through Paul's invocation of Jesus' name, Acts 16:18 not only presents Paul drawing on power that is not his own but also identifies Jesus Christ as *the* way to salvation.⁸¹ Therefore, numerous biblical scholars, such as Klauck and Klutz, seem correct in claiming that the primary reason for the exorcism in Acts 16:18 is to put an end to a deceptive and misleading oracle that, within the narrative world of Acts, would seemingly encourage syncretistic understandings of the Christ-movement among the Philippians.⁸²

Acts 16:18 turns the reader's attention back to Paul and indicates that as an exorcist Paul does not act on his own ability or authority. First of all, v. 18 presents Paul as being "in the Spirit," which is presumably the Holy Spirit. Once again, Acts invokes language previously used to describe the relationship between the Holy Spirit and miracle-workers in a way that resembles spirit possession; therefore, the narrative presents the exorcistic pronouncement as ultimately coming from God through Paul via the Holy Spirit, who divinely possesses Paul. Furthermore,

⁸⁰ Trebilco, "Paul and Silas," 64–65.

⁸¹ Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle in Acts," 113.

⁸² Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 68–70; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 211, 230, 245; see also Barrett, *Acts* 2:786; cf. Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 166, who claims that although the slave's proclamation may be ambiguous, it is not necessarily deceptive.

the close juxtaposition of the indication that *Paul is “in the [Holy] Spirit”* and *the invocation of Jesus’ name* in Paul’s exorcistic pronouncement alludes back to Acts 1:8, which indicates that those who receive the Holy Spirit will have power and function as witnesses to Jesus. Together the portrayal of Paul being “in the [Holy] Spirit” and his invocation of Jesus’ name indicate that Paul is acting as an authorized representative of God and Jesus Christ.⁸³ Thus, in Acts 16:18, the narrative presents Paul as utilizing the miracle-working authority granted to him by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ Furthermore, since Acts presents Paul as being “in the [Holy] Spirit,” Acts portrays Paul as following the direction of the Holy Spirit during the exorcism; thus, the exorcism is not the result of Paul’s own initiative. Therefore, Acts carefully presents Paul’s exorcism of the Pythian spirit in a way that avoids portraying Paul as seizing divine power by his own initiative through the purely instrumental employment of the name *Jesus Christ*. In other words, Acts 16:18 presents the exorcism in a way that portrays Paul as a divinely authorized prophetic witness, rather than as an impious popular μάγος.

In contrast, three elements of Acts 16:16–18 suggest to the reader that the divining slave is an illegitimate magico-religious specialist, specifically an illegitimate prophet. First, the divining slave’s status as a mediumistic diviner possessed by the spirit of either the Greek deity Apollo or a spirit subordinate to Apollo is incompatible with the Christ-movement’s sectarian particularity in relation to prophecy and monotheism as presented thus far in Acts.⁸⁵ As I argued in the previous chapter, Acts thus far has presented Christ-following prophetic characters, such as Peter and Paul, as the only legitimate prophets. In addition, when Acts presents Paul and Barnabas forbidding the Lystrans from worshiping the two missionaries as Hermes and Zeus,

⁸³ Cf. Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in Acts,” 113.

⁸⁴ Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 163; see also Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 218–219; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 76–77.

⁸⁵ Cf. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 241–242; Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in Acts,” 111.

Paul criticizes the Lystrans polytheistic religion: “We ourselves, just like you, are also humans, who proclaim to you *in order that you turn from these foolish things and to the living God*, who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and all things in them. . . . (Acts 14:15).” As one who delivers oracles by means of a deity or spirit other than the Hebrew God, the divining slave functions as an illegitimate prophet in Acts.

Second, Acts ascribes to the divining slave an oracle that is deceptive, since the proclamation could function as a means of syncretizing the Christ-movement and negating the sectarian particularity that Acts has so far attributed to the Christ-movement. In other words, the slave is deceptively presenting the Christ-movement as one of many means of salvation from one of many deities within Greco-Roman culture, and this characterization of the Christ-movement is incompatible with how Acts has so far portrayed the Christ-movement. Thus, as the deliverer of a deceptive message, the slave is an illegitimate prophet. Yet, her deception is even more subtle than Elymas’ in Acts 13:4–12. Although Elymas is openly hostile to the Christ-following missionaries Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:8), the divining slave follows Paul and his companions almost as if she is one of their disciples (Acts 16:17). Thus, Paul’s exorcism of the Pythian spirit is Paul’s means of ending the deception.

Acts also refrains from having Paul engage in a discussion with the divining slave, who is of lower social status than Paul. In addition to Paul being of higher *social status* than the slave, he is of a higher *magico-religious status* than the slave within the symbolic universe of Acts. The reference to Paul being “in the [Holy] Spirit” portrays Paul as possessed by the Holy Spirit. Paul’s exorcism of the Pythian spirit presents Paul’s possessing spirit—the Holy Spirit—as a spirit superior to the Pythian spirit possessing the slave. Furthermore, the absence of any debate between Paul and the diving slave corresponds well with Paul’s superior social and magico-

religious statuses. The lack of debate accompanied by a brief command of exorcism would indicate to the reader that Paul and, more importantly, his possessing spirit are so superior to the divining slave and the Pythian spirit that to debate with them is not only unnecessary but also would be a dishonor for Paul and the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶

The third element of Acts 16:16–18 that indicates to the reader that the divining slave is an illegitimate prophet is the exorcism itself. It is unlikely that Paul would have exorcised a divinatory spirit that he considered a legitimate source of divinatory information; however, the exorcism itself implies that the Pythian spirit is an illegitimate prophetic spirit and the slave is an illegitimate diviner because she presents deception as truth.⁸⁷

Although the rival to Paul in Acts 16:16–18 is not a μάγος, an ancient reader might associate the divining slave with μαγεία, since the conflict within Acts 16:16–18 functions similarly as the two previous μαγεία-miracle conflicts (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12) by contrasting a Christ-following missionary with a magico-religious specialist outside the Christ-movement in order to develop the character type and social identity of *Christ-following miracle-worker*. In Acts 16:16–18, Paul’s successful exorcism of the Pythian spirit serves to demonstrate that Paul, as a prophetic character, is superior to popular diviners outside the Christ-movement and presents Paul as a legitimate prophetic character delivering *the* true message of salvation from *the* Highest God. In the previous two μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, the legitimization of the Christ-following prophetic miracle-workers occurs through their besting of magico-religious specialists who *deceive* others by presenting falsehood as truth. Simon of Samaria presents himself as “someone great” to the Samaritans, and in response, the Samaritans proclaim him “the power of god that is called great” (Acts 8:9–11). Both Simon’s devotion to Philip and Peter’s

⁸⁶ Cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 77–81.

⁸⁷ Cf. Marguerat, “Magic and Miracle in Acts,” 111.

rebuke of Simon serve to legitimate Philip, Peter, and John as prophetic miracle-workers. Elymas the μάγος and false-prophet attempts to deceive the proconsul Sergius Paulus so that Sergius Paulus will not accept Paul's preaching about Jesus Christ (Acts 13:4–12). Paul's cursing of Elymas legitimates Paul as a true prophet and miracle-worker, as opposed to Elymas the false-prophet and μάγος. In Acts 16:16–18, Paul's exorcism of the Pythian spirit not only demonstrates that the divining slave is an illegitimate prophetic character whose oracle is deceptive, but the exorcism also legitimates Paul as a true prophet who preaches *the* way of salvation from *the* true God.

In addition, the placement of Acts 16:16–18 between the accounts of Paul's encounters with Lydia (Acts 16:14–15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:25–34) invites the reader to compare these three individual characters that Paul encounters in Acts 16. In all three cases, each character is likely a Gentile who encounters the missionary Paul and his companions. Paul meets Lydia at the “place of prayer” (προσευχή) near the river outside the city gates. Since Paul goes to the προσευχή on the Sabbath, the people gathered at the προσευχή are worshipers of the Judean God. For the purposes of my study, it is not necessary to engage in a detailed discussion of whether the προσευχή is an actual synagogue building or merely a designated meeting spot for worshipers of the Judean God.⁸⁸ What is significant is that the place of prayer is a meeting place for worshipers of the Hebrew God. In addition, the location of the place of prayer outside the city walls situates the place of prayer on the religious and geographical margins of the

⁸⁸ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:781–782. Bruce, *Acts*, 331; Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 212–214; Johnson, *Acts*, 292; Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 75, 90–92; Taylor, “Roman Empire in Acts,” 26.3:2446; Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:230–231; Witherington, *Acts*, 491. Johnson suggests that the προσευχή refers to a “house of prayer,” which would be a synagogue building; however, the group of women assembled on the river bank are not the house of prayer for which Paul is looking. Johnson suggests that Paul somewhat serendipitously comes across the group of women, among whom is the Gentile Lydia, who worships the Hebrew God, and Paul takes the advantageous opportunity to preach to the women. Richter Reimer claims that the verb συνέρχομαι, which describes how the women “gather” in Acts 16:13, refers to purposeful assembly (Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 75); therefore, whether the gathering of women is the προσευχή or not, this gathering of women is a purposeful gathering, not an accidental grouping.

Roman *colonia* of Philippi.⁸⁹ At the place of prayer, Paul encounters a group of women, among whom is the Thyatiran merchant Lydia. In addition to describing Lydia as a merchant of purple cloth (πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως), Acts 16:14 describes her as “fearing God” (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν).

Much debate exists over whether σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν and the similar phrase φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν function as labels (*God-fearer*) for Gentile worshipers of the Hebrew God.⁹⁰ Acts describes only three individual characters as “fearing God,” namely Cornelius the centurion (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν; Acts 10:2, 22), Lydia (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν; Acts 16:14), and Titus Justus (σεβουμένου τὸν θεόν; Acts 18:7). Although Acts 16:13–15 does not explicitly indicate that Lydia is a Gentile, Acts 10 clearly presents Cornelius as a Gentile. Titus Justus is most likely a Gentile, since Paul goes to Titus Justus’ house in Acts 18:7 immediately after v. 6 presents Paul saying, “Being clean, I from now on will proceed to the nations.” φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν appears twice more in Acts 13:16, 26, in which Paul in the same speech addresses the “Israelites and those who fear God” (Ἰσραηλιῖται καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν; v. 16) and the “sons of the family of Abraham and those among you who fear God” (υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραὰμ καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν; v. 26). Although φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν in Acts 13:13, 26 could be appositional to “Israelites” and “sons of the family of Abraham,” the appearance of ἐν ὑμῖν (among you) in Acts 13:26 suggests that οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν (those who fear God) more likely refers to a group distinct from the Judeans, to whom “Israelites” and “sons of the

⁸⁹ Brenk, “Exorcism at Philippi,” 3; cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 490.

⁹⁰ Brenk, “Exorcism at Philippi,” 5–6; Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew,” *HTR* 82 (1989), 31–33; Louis H. Feldman, “Jewish ‘Sympathizers’ in Classical Literature and Inscriptions,” *TPAPA* 81 (195), 200–208; Thomas M. Finn, “The God-Fearers Reconsidered,” *CBQ* 47 (1985), 75–84; John G. Gager, “Jews, Gentiles, and Synagogues in the Book of Acts,” 73 *HTR* (1986), 91–99; A. T. Kraabel, “The Disappearance of the ‘God-Fearers,’” *Numen* 28 (1981), 113–126; Joshua Levinson, “Bodies and Bo(a)rders: Emerging Fictions of Identity in Late Antiquity,” *HTR* 93 (2000), 356–360; J. Andrew Overman, “The God-Fearers: Some Neglected Features,” *JSNT* (1988), 17–26.

family of Abraham” clearly refer. Furthermore, Acts 18:13 narrates how the Corinthian Judeans accuse Paul of “wrongly persuad[ing] people to worship God (σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν) contrary to the law.” Since the context of this accusation is the court of the Roman governor Gallio, the Judeans are likely indicating that Paul is teaching both Judean and Gentiles, thus allowing the phrase “to worship God” (σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν) to refer inclusively to both Judeans and Gentiles, especially since Paul’s teaching Gentiles would be more of an issue for the Roman governor than would his teaching Judeans.

Other instances of σέβομαι and φοβέομαι in Acts that are relevant to identifying the ethnicity of Lydia occur in Acts 10:35; 13:50; 17:4, 17. Although φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν in Acts 10:2, 22 describes the Gentile Cornelius as a worshiper of the Hebrew God, Acts 10:35 presents Peter, during his sermon at Cornelius’ house, using the phrase ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτόν inclusively to refer to any person who fears God, regardless of that person’s ethnicity. Acts 13:50 portrays the Judeans in Pisidian Antioch inciting “devout prominent women” (τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας) and the prominent people (τοὺς πρώτους) of the city against Paul and Barnabas. The narrative here seems to be presenting the women in Acts 13:50 as high-status Gentile women, who are presumably worshipers of the Hebrew God.⁹¹ In Acts 17:4, Paul’s preaching persuades “a large crowd of devout Greeks (τῶν σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων) and prominent women (γυναικῶν τῶν πρώτων)” in Thessalonica with the result that they are devoted to Paul and Silas. Later, Acts 17:17 presents Paul dialoguing (διελέγετο) every day in the synagogue with the Judeans and the worshipers (τοῖς σεβομένοις) that happened to be there in the synagogue. In this verse, the Judeans and the worshipers (τοῖς σεβομένοις) seem to be

⁹¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 417.

two distinct groups, thus suggesting that the worshipers (τοῖς σεβομένοις) are Gentiles worshipping the Hebrew God in the Judean synagogue at Thessalonica.

In summary, nearly every reference to people who “fear God” seems to refer to Gentile worshipers of the Hebrew God, and the one exception occurs in Acts 10:34, which uses to phrase “the fearer of God” to refer to any Judean or Gentile who worships the Hebrew God. In addition, Acts in several other places appears to use the participle of σεβῶμαι without an explicit object worship to describe Gentile worshipers of the Hebrew God (Acts 13:50; 17:4, 17). Thus, the phrase “fearing God” (σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν; φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν) in Acts most likely refers to a Gentile worshiper of the Hebrew God.⁹² Although both Lydia and the divining slave are Gentiles, Acts presents them as having very different magico-religious involvement. Acts characterizes Lydia as worshiper of the Hebrew God of the Judeans and the divining slave as a servant of the Greek deity Apollo.

An adequate comparison between Lydia and the divining slave also involves analyzing differences in their socio-economic roles. Debate exists over what socio-economic status Lydia as a merchant of purple cloth (πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως) would have occupied within the narrative world of Acts. In the early Roman Empire, purple dye was made from both plant and animal materials. The most expensive purple dye was made from sea snails and was typically used to dye cloth used by elite people. The less expensive purple dye was made from plant material, particularly from the madder plant. During the early Roman Empire, the term πορφύρα could refer to any of a number of purple dyes of varying shades and prices.⁹³ The city of Thyatira, which Acts 16:14 presents as Lydia’s hometown, was a center of purple cloth

⁹² Matthews, *First Converts*, 59; contra Johnson, *Acts*, 293, 297. In regard to Lydia’s ethnicity, Johnson argues, “[the writer] Luke’s usage [of σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν] is sufficiently flexible to make it impossible to know for certain whether the designation in this case means that she was a Gentile attracted to the synagogue’s teachings, or whether she was in fact a pious Jew. . . .” (p. 293).

⁹³ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 101–105.

production, and the purple dye produced in Thyatira was likely made from vegetable matter, especially from the madder plant. A reader familiar with the purple industry or with the city of Thyatira would possibly know what sort of purple cloth came from Thyatira and would imagine that Lydia deals in relatively inexpensive purple products.⁹⁴ However, it is uncertain, and probably unlikely, that the average Greco-Roman reader would have concluded that Lydia sold a particular grade of purple products. Thus, determining exactly what kind of purple cloth Lydia sells is not very relevant for a narrative-focused reading of Acts 16:13–15.

Richter Reimer argues that Lydia is likely a freedperson because her name is an *ethnicon*, a place name that functions as a personal name, and *ethnica* are typically names for slaves. In particular, the name *Lydia* is the former name of the region in which Thyatira lies. Richter Reimer also claims that Lydia must be a freedperson, since she is a householder.⁹⁵ However, drawing upon the work of David W. J. Gill, Matthews argues that *ethnica* are not sufficient indicators of slave status because evidence exists for elite women in the first and second centuries CE bearing *ethnica*, including the name Lydia.⁹⁶ Thus, Acts 16:13–15 gives no indication of whether Lydia is freeborn or freed.

Concerning the size of Lydia's business, Richter Reimer argues that Lydia would have required numerous workers, some of whom could have been her slaves, to assist in the production of the purple products; nevertheless, her business would not have been a very large operation because "at that time there was no large-scale textile production." Thus, Richter

⁹⁴ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 104–105; Taylor, "Roman Empire in Acts," 26.3:2449.

⁹⁵ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 107–108.

⁹⁶ Matthews, *First Converts*, 86; see also Barrett, *Acts*, 2:782; David W. J. Gill, "Acts and the Urban Élites," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, eds. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 114. Matthews identifies the implied readers of Acts as "a group of people with some wealth and education, into which persons of low status with wealth were included" (p. 86).

Reimer claims that Lydia was not a wealthy person and her work was “a subsistence occupation.”⁹⁷

Matthews, however, rejects this characterization of Lydia for two reasons. First, Matthews claims that Richter Reimer has inappropriately assumed that Lydia as a merchant of purple goods would have also produced the goods she sold; however, Acts presents Lydia as only a merchant and not a producer of purple goods. Second, Matthews criticizes Richter Reimer’s use of the well-documented elite disdain for manual labor and direct involvement in trade to argue that Lydia was of low-socio-economic status. Instead, Matthews argues that Lydia’s involvement in trade indicates that although the local “elite” would not have accepted her as an equal, the implied audience of Acts would have accepted Lydia as part of a “‘quasi-elite’ class.”⁹⁸

Richter Reimer and Matthews paint two different pictures of Lydia. Richter Reimer portrays Lydia as a freedwoman from Thyatira, who has a small household and operates a cottage business for the production and sell of purple textiles, which provides her a subsistence income. Matthews, however, describes Lydia as a fairly wealthy woman from Thyatira who has a large household and a large business for the selling of purple textile goods, which earns her considerable wealth and places her among the “quasi-elite” merchants of Philippi.

Richter Reimer’s characterization of Lydia’s socio-economic status depends upon a strict bifurcation of Greco-Roman society into two distinct groups: (1) elite, upper class and (2) plebian, lower class.⁹⁹ From Matthews’ perspective, ancient non-elite persons would have a much more complex view of Greco-Roman social stratification, and the implied reader of Acts would likely have come from a layer of society just below the elite. Matthews’ perspective on

⁹⁷ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 111–112.

⁹⁸ Matthews, *First Converts*, 88.

⁹⁹ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 112.

Lydia's socio-economic status attempts to account for the disjunction between wealth and social status that sometimes occurred in Greco-Roman society. Although Greco-Roman society may be divided into two *social* status categories (elite and non-elite), *economic* stratification in Greco-Roman society was much more diversified. While members of the Greco-Roman elite typically were wealthy, not all wealthy people in Greco-Roman society were elite. The existence of wealthy non-elite people is a form of status ambiguity in Greco-Roman society, just as much as elite people that are not wealthy. If Lydia is a wealthy, non-elite merchant, she represents a person of ambiguous status in Greco-Roman society.¹⁰⁰

Gerhard E. Lenski's model of the stratification of advanced agrarian societies allows for the disjunction of social status and economic status provided by cases of status ambiguity. In ch. 5, I discussed how in Lenski's model the merchant class stretches across a broad economic range from *subsistence* equivalent to that of most peasants to *wealth* equivalent to that of the middle sector of the governing class. The elites of the Greco-Roman society were from the governing class and the highest level retainers of that society; thus, some merchants of Greco-Roman society likely attained the same wealth as much of the elite class. Nevertheless, the wealthiest merchants did not share the same *social* status as the elites; therefore, Matthews' label "quasi-elite" is somewhat misleading. Furthermore, the only socio-economic information that Acts provides about Lydia, specifically that she is a purple merchant and a householder, does not

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Richard I. Pervo, "Wisdom and Power: Petronius' *Satyricon* and the Social World of Early Christianity," *ATR* 67 (1985), 307–325. Pervo suggests that many of the historical early Christ-followers experienced the same "status dissonance" as attributed to the character Trimalchio and his wealthy associates in Petronius' *Satyricon*. Particularly relevant to my analysis of Lydia is Pervo's discussion of Trimalchio's wife Fortunata. Although Fortunata and her husband may be as wealthy as some of the elite, she does not always conduct herself in the manner expected of elite women. The cumulative portrayal of Fortunata is of a woman very wealthy in her own right, quite scrupulous, and assertive. Similarly, the character Lydia in Acts 16:13–15 is a woman of some means, who is scrupulous and assertive enough to invite Paul into her home that requires Paul to accept the invitation, lest he be dishonored. Furthermore, Lydia's decision to take into her home a wandering male religious teacher could be construed by rivals as improper and an occasion for rumors of sexual impropriety (see especially Pervo, "Wisdom and Power," 323–324).

automatically place her at the top of the merchant class. In addition, her request that Paul stay at her home suggests that she possesses some degree of expendable income in order to support Paul. A reader could place her anywhere within the top to the middle of the merchant class, which includes a range of economic statuses as high as that of high level retainers and as low as middle level peasants, which would be levels PS3–PS5 on Steven J. Friesen’s poverty scale.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, Matthews argues that since other relatively high status Gentiles play the role of significant new Christ-followers, Lydia is also likely of relatively high social status.¹⁰² However, not all new Christ-followers in Acts, or even during Paul’s missionary activity, are of either economically or socially high status. In particular, the jailer that joins the Christ-movement in the second half of Acts 16 is likely neither a very wealthy nor a very high-status person, although he does hold a local government post. Therefore, it is best to cast Lydia’s economic range as somewhere above subsistence and lower than the upper sector of the elite.¹⁰³ Her social status would be among the non-elite; however, if she is fairly wealthy, her wealth would likely gain her some elevated status among the non-elite.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Steven J. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus,” *JSNT* 26 (2004), 341.

¹⁰² Matthews, *First Converts*, 87–88; cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 404; White, “Visualizing the World,” 258–259; Witherington, *Acts*, 491. Other high status persons who join the Christ-movement include the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–40), Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10:1–48), Proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:4–12), elite women of Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), elite men and women of Berea (Acts 17:12), and Dionysius the Aeropagite (Acts 17:33).

¹⁰³ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 47.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Pervo, “Wisdom and Power,” 307–325. Although employing a literary critical approach, rather than a social-scientific-critical approach, Pervo argues that Petronius’ *Satyricon* provides an opportunity to understand better the social concerns and conflicts of non-elite persons living above the subsistence level. Pervo claims that much of the NT demonstrates the same concerns over proper behavior at symposia, popular wisdom, the miraculous, and transformations of status that appear in the *Satyricon*. Pervo concludes that the early Christ-movement would have resonated well with the non-elite, particularly those living above the subsistence level. In terms of Lenski’s model of advanced agrarian society, these above-subsistence non-elite persons would be located among the upper-level peasants, upper-level artisans, upper-level merchants, and retainers, which are the same social levels into which I have classified much of the Christ-movement as portrayed in Acts (Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, McGraw-Hill Series in Sociology [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966], 210–284; Gerhard Lenski and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 5th ed. [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987], 188–191, 202–204).

In regard to socio-economic status, the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18 provides a very contrasting figure to Lydia. Whereas Lydia is a successful merchant and householder, the divining slave is at the bottom of the social ladder in Philippian society. Although the slave practices a special skill, her masters control her “business” of divination, and any money she makes belongs to them. The inclusion of Lydia in the Christ-movement could contribute to an increase in the social status of the Christ-movement in Philippi; however, if the slave were to join the Christ-movement, it would likely lower the overall social status of the Christ-movement. The inclusion of Lydia within the Christ-movement and the exclusion of the slave from the Christ-movement portray the Christ-movement as attractive both to narrative characters and to readers of relatively higher social and economic status. With the inclusion of other higher status Christ-followers (including Paul) within the Christ-movement and the exclusion of the low status divining slave, Acts subtly transforms the Christ-movement from a popular Judean movement led primarily by peasants and artisans to a movement attractive to higher sector peasants, wealthy merchants, retainers, local elites, and even a Roman governor.¹⁰⁵

Closely related to the different socio-economic statuses of Lydia and the divining slave are their different relationships with the wealth they earn. Lydia demonstrates her faithfulness to Jesus Christ by sharing her possessions with Paul.¹⁰⁶ The slave, however, has no control over the money she earns, and her slaveholders’ use her as a means of gaining wealth.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Lydia demonstrates proper Christ-following behavior concerning property and wealth as exemplified by Barnabas earlier in Acts 4:36–37; however, the slaveholders’ use of their property (the

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Matthews, *First Converts*, 87–88; Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 81–85; White, “Visualizing the Real World,” 258.

¹⁰⁶ Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 161, 163; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:784; Wall, “Acts,” 10:231.

¹⁰⁷ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 210.

divining slave) to gain wealth from magico-religious activity (divination) is more akin to the deceitful plot of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–11.¹⁰⁸

According to Acts 16:14, God opens Lydia’s heart, while she “listens” (ἤκουεν) to Paul, in order that she might take heed of Paul’s words. By presenting God as opening Lydia’s heart, the narrative portrays even the reception of Paul’s message as divinely directed. Lydia’s listening results in the baptism of her and her household. Thus, Acts 16:14 introduces Lydia as a passive character who *listens* attentively and piously to Paul and Silas, but the divining slave is an impious, active character who *speaks* deceptively about Paul and Silas.¹⁰⁹ When Lydia does become active, it is to offer lodging to Paul. Thus, even when Lydia becomes an active participant in the Christ-movement, she functions as a *supporter* of Paul, the male prophetic proclaimer of salvation. However, through exorcism, Paul silences the divining slave, who actively proclaims Paul and Silas as proclaimers of divine salvation.¹¹⁰ By comparing Lydia and the divining slave, a reader can understand Acts as suggesting that the proper role of women in relation to the message of salvation is the role of provider of material support to missionary men, but not that of prophetic proclaimer of salvation. In addition, the portrayals of Lydia and the divining slave stand in stark contrast to the Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18, which indicates that a reader should expect women prophetic witnesses to Jesus Christ; instead, in Acts 16, the reader encounters a relatively silent Christ-following woman and a female prophet outside the Christ-movement whose deceptive proclamation of salvation could lead the Philippians to misunderstand Paul’s testimony to salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus, the contrasting portrayals of Lydia and the divining slave seem to undercut Peter’s adaptation of

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Lucian, *Philosophies for Sale*, 11, 22–25.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 219.

¹¹⁰ Spencer, “Out of Mind,” 147–149.

Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18 and appears to limit the role of Christ-following prophetic witnesses to men.

Despite Lydia's warm reception of Paul and his companions, Paul and Silas face hostility from the Philippian leaders and populace. After the masters of the divining slave carry Paul and Silas to court, where the slaveholders accuse Paul and Silas of causing a disturbance and teaching customs unlawful for Romans, the city magistrates order the two missionaries beaten and locked overnight in jail. An earthquake in the night provides an opportunity for the two missionaries to share their message of salvation to the jailer. The jailer, like Lydia, accepts their message, and he and his household receive baptism. Furthermore, like Lydia, the jailer cares for the material needs of Paul and Silas, when he treats their wounds and provides them food. Just as Lydia's primary service to the cause of the Christ-movement is providing hospitality to Paul and Silas, the jailer also serves Jesus Christ through hospitality toward Paul and Silas.¹¹¹ Thus, it seems that Acts does not portray the caring for the material needs of missionaries as service only for women. Nevertheless, Acts' presentations of both Lydia and the jailer suggest that the proper role for a new Christ-member is listening to and supporting the missionaries, who are the only ones in Philippi qualified and sufficiently capable of proclaiming the message of salvation. In Acts 16, both male and female characters provide material support for Paul; nevertheless, so far in Acts, only men have spoken prophetically concerning Jesus Christ.

The contrasting of the divining slave with Lydia and the jailer facilitates a greater comparison between Paul and the divining slave. Ultimately, three major differences exist between Paul and the divining slave. First, *Paul is a Christ-following missionary commissioned by Jesus Christ* to spread the message of salvation through Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15–16; 13:2); however, *the divining slave is not an authorized representative of Jesus Christ*, although she still

¹¹¹ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 161, 163.

makes a proclamation about the salvation preached by Paul and Silas (Acts 16:17). Second, Acts presents *Paul and the divining slave as being possessed by two different spirits*. On several occasions, Acts' presentation of the relationship between Paul and the Holy Spirit sufficiently resembles spirit possession for the reader to consider Paul divinely possessed by the Holy Spirit, including within Acts' presentation of Paul being "in the [Holy] Spirit" when he exorcises the Pythian spirit (Acts 9:17; 13:9, 52; 16:6–7, 18). The third difference between Paul and the divining slave derives from the second difference. Through Paul's association with the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, he has received a message to proclaim to others around the Roman Empire, including in Philippi. The message that Paul preaches is that salvation has come from the Hebrew God through Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15–16; 19–20, 27; 13:15–41). As Acts 1:8 indicates, Jesus himself commissions those who witness concerning him, and the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew God empowers those empowered to witness. Through this message of salvation, Acts presents the Christ-movement as having a sectarian particularity according to which the Christ-following prophetic preachers are *the* commissioned heralds of a message, which comes from *the* Highest God and proclaims *the* way of salvation through Jesus Christ.¹¹² The deceptive message of the divining slave comes either directly or indirectly from *a* high-ranking deity in the Olympic pantheon, specifically Apollo. The slave's oracle does not specify which deity is the Highest God, and since the source of the oracle is either Apollo or a subordinate of Apollo, a Greco-Roman reader would likely assume that "Highest God" refers to some Greco-Roman deity. Finally, the slave's oracle indicates that the salvation proclaimed by the Christ-following missionaries is *a* means of salvation, not *the* means of salvation. Since the Christ-followers'

¹¹² For further discussion of sectarian particularity, see Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 91–96; Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study*, World University Library (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 31–32; Bryan R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 41–51.

authority and ability to proclaim the testimony to Jesus Christ comes from the relationship of divine possession between the Holy Spirit and the Christ-followers, the third and ultimate difference between Paul and the divining slave is that Acts presents *Paul as possessed by a legitimate source of prophecy* (the Holy Spirit) and *the divining slave as possessed by an illegitimate source of prophecy* (the Pythian spirit), which provides deceptive oracles from an illegitimate deity (Apollo).¹¹³

Although Paul silences the slave, he more importantly silences the possessing spirit who is likely either Apollo or a spirit subordinate to Apollo. Since the divining slave is a human host for a possessing spirit, ultimate responsibility for the slave's behavior and speech should be ascribed to the possessing spirit, namely the Pythian spirit.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the brief indication that Paul is "in the [Holy] Spirit" notifies the reader that the defeat of the Pythian spirit is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit, who empowers Paul for his preaching and miracle-working. The ultimate conflict in Acts 16:16–18 is between the Holy Spirit and Apollo, in which the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew God effectively defeats Apollo, either directly or indirectly, depending on whether the reader identifies the Pythian spirit as Apollo or a spirit subordinate to Apollo.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the exorcism through Jesus Christ's name clears away the ambiguity of the slave's oracle by indicating that the Hebrew God, whom the Christ-followers worship, is the Highest God that provides the only means of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Although the exorcism of the Pythian spirit shows that the Pythian spirit is inferior to the Holy Spirit, Acts 16:16–18 does not make a connection between Apollo and the devil. In

¹¹³ Cf. Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle in Acts," 111.

¹¹⁴ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 166; cf. Emma Cohen and Justin L. Barrett, "Conceptualizing Spirit Possession: Ethnographic and Experimental Evidence," *Ethos* 36 (2008), 247; Lenora Greenbaum, "Possession Trance in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Descriptive Analysis of Fourteen Societies," in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 59.

¹¹⁵ Matthews, *First Converts*, 90; Wall, "Acts," 10:232.

addition, since Acts appears to present the relationship between the Pythian spirit and the divining slave as positive possession, the exorcism of the Pythian spirit is not the same as the exorcism of unclean and evil spirits performed elsewhere in Acts. Acts presents the motivation for Paul's exorcism of the Pythian spirit as the silencing of a deceptive proclamation of salvation, not the liberation of a person from the malevolent bondage of a diabolical spirit. Thus, Acts 16:16–18, unlike Justin Martyr, does not resort to identifying Greek deities as disguised diabolical spirits, who attempt to deceive humans into worshipping them instead of the Hebrew God.¹¹⁶

As discussed in previous chapters, Acts presents the Christ-following prophetic characters' relationship with the Holy Spirit in a way that portrays the Christ-following prophetic preacher gaining a powerful social voice through the Holy Spirit. For instance, in Acts 4:8–20, Peter demonstrates exceptional rhetorical skill and confidence before the Judean leaders because he is filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 8). Similarly, the reader may presume that through the Holy Spirit, Philip acquires a social voice among the Samaritans (Acts 8:4–13) and that Paul, although he has served as a retainer to the elite Judean leaders of Jerusalem, finds through the Holy Spirit an influential voice in the court of proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:4–12). Therefore, the reader should presume also that the Holy Spirit is responsible for providing an authoritative voice to Paul among the Gentiles of Philippi. In other words, Paul seems to be able to cultivate an audience, especially among Gentile worshipers of the Hebrew God, because he preaches by the authority of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

¹¹⁶ Glancy, *Slavery in Christianity*, 162, n. 9; e.g., Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 5.1–4; 9.1; 25.1–3; 41.1; 54.1–10; 56.1–4; 62.1–2; 64.1–6; 66.4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 7.3; 55.2–3; 73.2–3; 83.4; 91.3; cf. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 246–247. Klutz argues that although Acts never explicitly presents the Pythian spirit as a “demon” (a diabolical spirit), similarities between the exorcism of the Pythian spirit and Jesus' exorcisms implicitly “demonized” the Pythian spirit.

The diviner in Acts 16:16–18 is a female slave, a social role that places her at the bottom of the Greco-Roman social structure; however, this slave gains a social voice through her possessing Pythian spirit, which allows her to announce publicly oracles to the Philippians and to earn a substantial profit for her masters from her oracles. An ancient reader would likely presume that without this Pythian spirit, she would have no significant social voice. Thus, possession by the Pythian slave results in behavior that is inappropriate for her social status, specifically following around a Roman citizen (Paul) that is not her master and proclaiming an oracle about him. However, Acts presents Paul treating the slave's oracle and the Pythian spirit from which it derives as completely unacceptable and deceptive.¹¹⁷ Paul's solution for this problem is the exorcism of the Pythian spirit that positively possesses the slave, although exorcism is typically a response to negative possession. Thus, Acts presents Paul as treating the Pythian spirit as a harmful spirit not because the Pythian spirit harms the slave, but because the Pythian spirit is harmful to the message of salvation, the Christ-movement, and the Philippians, whom the oracle may deceive.¹¹⁸ Thus, Paul silences the social voice of the only female character with direct prophetic discourse in Acts, despite the adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) in Acts 2:17–18, according to which God's out-pouring of the Holy Spirit will result in both male and female prophets. This silencing through exorcism effectively presents Paul as a *prototypical prophetic witness*, who is *Judean, free, male, Christ-following, and possessed by the Holy Spirit*.

¹¹⁷ Marguerat, "Magic and Miracle in Acts," 111.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 5.1–4; 9.1; 25.1–3; 41.1; 54.1–10; 56.1–4; 62.1–2; 64.1–6; 66.4; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5.4; Justin Martyr, *Dialog.* 7.3; 55.2–3; 73.2–3; 83.4; 91.3. Acts presents Paul dealing with the Pythian spirit in exactly the same way as Luke's Gospel and Acts present Jesus, Peter, and Paul dealing with evil and unclean spirits, specifically through exorcism may actually have contributed to the second-century identification of Greek and Roman deities as evil spirits disguising themselves as deities. The logic behind such an identification concludes that since Paul treats the Pythian spirit the same way Jesus, Peter, and Paul treat evil spirits, the Pythian spirit, must be an evil spirit; therefore, Apollo, whom the Pythian spirit represents, must be a ruler of evil spirits and an evil spirit himself.

The open-ended quality of Acts 8:4–25 and the suggestiveness of Elymas’ blindness at the end of Acts 13:4–12 invite the reader to postulate the fates of Simon and Elymas after their respective narratives; however, Acts 16:16–18 does not provide hints as to what might happen to the female slave after the exorcism of the Pythian spirit. Richter Reimer speculates the possibility that the Philippian church could have purchased and manumitted the slave. However, Richter Reimer notes that this speculation is completely hypothetical and focuses on the fate of the historical slave, assuming she actually existed.¹¹⁹

After the exorcism in Acts 16:18, the narrative of Acts 16:19–40 never mentions what happens to the slave; instead, the narrative turns to Paul and Silas’ legal trouble stemming from the exorcism. When the slave’s masters learn that the slave can no longer earn them a profit through mediumistic divination, they bring Paul and Silas before the city magistrates and accuse the missionaries of “stir[ring] up our city” and “announc[ing] customs for which it is not lawful for us to accept or to practice because we are Romans.” The first half of the accusation accuses Paul and Silas of disturbing the peace. In regard to the second half of the accusation, Craig S. de Vos discusses the possible illegal action of which the slaveholders accuse Paul and Silas. De Vos argues that the slaveholders are not likely accusing Paul and Silas of illegally persuading people to become Judeans, since Roman law during the first century CE did not forbid Roman citizens from becoming Judeans.¹²⁰ De Vos also claims that the slaveholders are not accusing Paul and Silas of illegally encouraging Roman citizens to participate in foreign cults because the law against Romans practicing foreign cults was rarely enforced, except for cases in which the foreign cultic “practice disturbed the peace or offended the *mos maiorum* (ancestral

¹¹⁹ Richter Reimer, *Women in Acts*, 182–184.

¹²⁰ Contra Conzelmann, *Acts*, 132.

practices).”¹²¹ De Vos, instead, argues that Paul and Silas are being accused of illegally performing *μαγεία*, since Paul and Silas not only perform an exorcism but also are of a foreign ethnicity (Judean). The possible accusation of *μαγεία* laid against Paul and Silas functions as an attempt to deviantize and criminalize Paul and Silas.¹²² To de Vos’ argument, Andy M. Reimer adds that the use of ritual to cause financial loss for someone was treated as illegal *magia* under Roman law, and Paul’s exorcism effectively damaged the slaveholders’ property, thus Paul would be liable to a charge of performing illegal *magia*.¹²³ Reimer appears to be referring to the Twelve Tables’ prohibition against the use of incantations to damage or steal crops from someone else’s field and the use of derogatory lyrics to harm someone. The Twelve Tables, which likely originate from the fifth century BCE, functioned as the basis of much Roman common law throughout subsequent Roman history. The Twelve Tables’ prohibition on damaging or stealing crops seems to have become the basis for later Roman law prohibiting malevolent *magia*.¹²⁴ In addition, the *Lex Cornelia* (first century BCE), which prohibits the use of malevolent incantations and poisons, by the first century CE was extended through legal interpretation to prohibit malevolent *magia* in general.¹²⁵ However, Acts does present Paul and

¹²¹ Craig S. de Vos, “Finding a Charge that Fits: The Accusations against Paul and Silas at Philippi (Acts 16.19–21),” *JSNT* 74 (1999), 52–53; contra Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 587–588; Taylor, “Roman Empire in Acts,” 26.3:2453–2454.

¹²² De Vos, “Finding a Charge,” 56–62; see also Andy M. Reimer, “Virtual Prison Breaks: Non-Escape Narratives and the Definition of ‘Magic,’” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, *JSNTSup* 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 133–136; cf. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 162.

¹²³ Reimer, “Virtual Prison Breaks,” 135–136.

¹²⁴ Fritz Graf, “Excluding the Charming: The Development of the Greek Concept of Magic,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 41–42; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, *Revealing Antiquity* 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 41–43; Hans G. Kippenberg, “Magic in Roman Civil Discourse: Why Rituals Could Be Illegal,” in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, *SHR* 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 144–147; Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book, 19; Anne-Marie Tupet, “Rites magiques dans l’Antiquité romaine,” *ANRW* 16.3:2592–2595, 2610–2617.

¹²⁵ Richard Gordon, “Imagining Greek and Roman Magic,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999),

Silas as the source of a public disturbance, although not a riot as in Acts 19:23–40; 21:27–24;¹²⁶ therefore, an ancient reader might understand the slave’s masters to be accusing Paul and Silas not only of performing illegal, popular *μαγεία* but also illegally spreading foreign cults.

After the magistrates have Paul and Silas beaten and incarcerated for one night, they order the release of the two missionaries, and when the magistrates learn that Paul and Silas are Roman citizens, they ask the two missionaries to leave Philippi. Although Paul and Silas leave Philippi under duress, Acts presents them as having established a church within the city and proceeding on with their missionary journey. Thus, despite another encounter between Christ-following missionaries and a rival popular magico-religious specialist, the Christ-followers’ mission of proclaiming the testimony concerning Jesus Christ unto the ends of the world (Acts 1:8) once again continues successfully and triumphantly.

II. Developing the Identity of Miracle-Workers in Acts 16:16–18

Although the conflict in Acts 16:16–18 is not between competing wonder-workers as in the first two *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12), the climactic action in this conflict is a miraculous act, specifically an exorcism performed by the missionary Paul; thus, the conflict in Acts 16:16–18 contributes to the development of the miracle-worker character type in Acts. By Acts 16, the reader should be aware that Paul is Acts’ new primary protagonist, especially following Peter’s defense of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles before the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:6–11. Peter’s defense of Paul’s ministry is the last appearance of Peter in Acts and functions to characterize the rest of Paul’s ministry through the end of Acts 28 as a continuation of the Christ-following mission to Gentiles, a mission which Peter initiates in Acts 10:1–11:18.

255–256; Graf, “Excluding the Charming,” 41–42; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 46; Kippenberg, “Magic in Roman Discourse,” 147–149.

¹²⁶ Bruce, *Acts*, 335–336; Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1994), 121–123.

Acts 16:16–18 provides significant contributions to the continued development of the character Paul. The exorcism of the Pythian spirit solidifies Paul’s role as prototypical miracle-worker. By the end of this short episode, Acts has presented Paul involved in many miraculous events similar to those of the miracle-working exemplar Peter. Paul has pronounced a miraculous announcement of judgment against Elymas in a fashion similar to Peter’s miraculous announcements of judgment pronounced against Ananias and Sapphira (cf. Acts 5:1–11). In Acts 14:8–10, Paul heals a lame man, a miraculous feat already performed twice by Peter in Acts 3:1–10; 9:33–34. In Acts 16:16–18, Paul performs an exorcism of a Pythian spirit, just as Peter exorcises unclean spirits (Acts 5:16). However, by the end of the episode in Acts 16:16–18, Paul has not duplicated four of Peter’s miracles. First, he has not imitated Peter’s healing by means of his shadow (Acts 5:15). Second, Paul has not miraculously escaped incarceration, as Peter does in Acts 12:1–19; however, this will change in Acts 16:25–40, when an earthquake opens the doors of the Philippian jail and the jailer takes the two missionaries into his home.¹²⁷ Third, although Peter has raised Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36–43), Paul has not yet resuscitated a dead person. Lastly, Paul has not bestowed the Holy Spirit upon someone, as Peter does in Acts 8:14–17; however, Acts 14:14, with no explanation, refers to Paul as an “apostle,” which opens up the possibility that Paul also at some point will bestow the Holy Spirit upon others. Nevertheless, the miracles that Paul does perform are enough to establish for Paul a miracle-working career, albeit a miracle-working career primarily modeled after Peter’s miracle-working career.

Klutz, however, argues that Acts’ two accounts of Paul’s exorcisms (Acts 16:16–18; 19:11–12) presents Paul’s exorcistic activity as “stand[ing] in direct continuity with that of

¹²⁷ Cf. Reimer, “Virtual Prison Breaks,” 128–139.

Jesus.”¹²⁸ Although Peter serves as the exemplar for Paul’s miracle-working in general, Klutz demonstrates how the direct exorcistic pronouncement attributed to Paul in Acts 16:18 is very similar to Jesus’ exorcistic activity in the Gospel of Luke.¹²⁹ Furthermore, since Acts does not ascribe to Peter exorcistic direct speech, Paul’s exorcistic pronouncement in Acts 16:18 is more akin to Jesus exorcistic pronouncements than to Acts’ summary statement of Peter’s exorcistic activity.¹³⁰ Therefore, for a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke, the development of Paul as a miracle-worker in Acts 16:16–18 not only presents Paul as a miracle-worker like the miracle-worker exemplar Peter but also portrays Paul’s miracle-working corresponding directly to Jesus’ miracle-working; therefore, Acts 16:16–18 holds open the possibility that Paul may develop into a Christ-following miracle-working exemplar in his own right.¹³¹

Since Acts 16:16–18 is primarily a conflict between two prophetic figures, Paul’s miraculous defeat of the divining slave illustrates that the role of *miracle-worker* is primarily a subordinate category of the character type of *prophetic witness*. Accordingly, Paul exorcises the Pythian spirit in defense of the Christ-movement’s message of salvation through Jesus Christ in order to emphasize that the salvation provided by the Hebrew God through Jesus Christ is not *a* means of salvation, but *the* means of salvation. Thus, Acts 16:16–18 serves to increase the particularity of the Christ-movement by portraying salvation through Jesus Christ as the only legitimate form of salvation.

Along similar lines, Acts 16:16–18 effectively indicates that the only legitimate prophetic characters are the Christ-following prophetic characters. Acts depicts Paul expressing a limited

¹²⁸ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 239.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 230, 239–242.

¹³⁰ See also Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, “Relationships between Miracle and Prophecy in the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2:1495; F. Neirynek, “The Miracle Stories in the Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Gembloux, Belgium: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 178; cf. Luke 4:35; 8:29; 9:42; 13:12–13; Acts 5:16.

¹³¹ Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 145.

amount of tolerance toward the divining slave, since he allows her to make her proclamation for several days; however, Paul becomes exasperated with the slave and exorcizes her possessing spirit, when her oracular proclamation becomes too threatening to the particularity of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus, despite Paul's initial tolerance of the divining slave and her deceptive message, Paul's exorcism of the Pythian spirit ultimately demonstrates that the Christ-following prophetic witnesses are more powerful than prophetic characters outside the Christ-movement and that only Christ-following prophetic witnesses are legitimate prophets proclaiming the true message of salvation sent by the Highest God, namely the God of the Hebrews. Therefore, the exorcism in Acts 16:16–18 ultimately portrays the Christ-following prophetic witnesses as the only legitimate prophets.

Acts' legitimization of the Christ-following prophetic miracle-workers, as represented by Paul in Acts 16:16–18, derives from Acts' presentation of the Christ-followers being divinely possessed by the Holy Spirit. According to Acts 1:8 and 2:1–21, it is through the Christ-followers' reception of the Holy Spirit that the Christ-followers are authorized and empowered to proclaim their testimony regarding salvation through Jesus Christ. Prophetic characters outside the Christ-movement, as represented by the divining slave in Acts 16:16–18, are not possessed or empowered by the Holy Spirit, which demonstrates that they are also not authorized to testify concerning Jesus Christ. Thus, although the divining slave's proclamation of salvation appears true at first, closer inspection of the oracle reveals its deceptiveness. Therefore, Acts portrays Paul under the direction of the Holy Spirit utilizing divine power (cf. Acts 1:8) to silence the slave and to demonstrate the legitimacy and superiority of Christ-following prophetic characters. Thus, Acts 16:16–18 also demonstrates that the only legitimate spirit of prophecy is the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew God, who possesses the Christ-followers. Other spirits of prophecy or

divination are liable to pervert the message of salvation through Jesus Christ and deceive their human audiences.¹³²

The presentation of Paul as the only legitimate prophetic character in Acts 16:16–18 also emphasizes that Christ-following prophetic characters should not employ miracle-working as a form of showmanship; instead, miracle-working, as presented so far in Acts, is used to confirm and illustrate the message of salvation. Furthermore, Paul, who does not accept payment for his miracles or prophetic proclamations, stands in stark contrast to the divining slave whose oracles make a considerable profit for her masters; therefore, Acts 16:16–18 affirms that Christ-following prophetic witnesses are not greedy, since they do not take money in exchange for prophetic oracles or miracle-working.

Acts 16 develops the character type of *prophetic witness*, and its subset *miracle-worker*, not only through Paul's interaction with the divining slave but also through his interaction with Lydia (Acts 16:13–15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:25–40). Since the exorcism of the Pythian spirit effectively identifies the divining slave as an illegitimate prophetic specialist, Acts 16 effectively presents Lydia as the only female character in Acts 16 who behaves in an appropriate manner toward Paul and his companions. Acts 16 portrays Lydia as neither a prophet nor a miracle-worker; instead, she functions as a patron by hosting Paul at her home.¹³³ According to Acts' portrayal of Lydia, an exemplary Christ-following woman is a relatively wealthy woman who serves Jesus Christ by materially supporting male missionaries.¹³⁴ However, Lydia is not a completely passive character. Her invitation to Paul for him to lodge at her home is a well-spoken honor challenge that would place Paul in an awkward position if he were to refuse the invitation. In Acts 16:15, she tells Paul, "If you have judged me to be faithful

¹³² Cf. Wall, "Acts," 10:232.

¹³³ Matthews, *First Converts*, 62.

¹³⁴ Johnson, *Acts*, 292–293.

to the Lord, upon entering my house, stay there.” A refusal of this invitation would indicate that Paul considers Lydia unfaithful, which is a decision that not only shames Lydia but also shames Paul and the Christ-movement.¹³⁵ The shameful implication of a refusal on Paul’s part would be that Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Christ-followers, is unable to save the most prominent new Christ-follower in Philippi; thus, if Lydia is not faithful enough, what hope is there for the rest of the new Christ-followers in Philippi? Acts presents Paul accepting the invitation, but somewhat reluctantly, as demonstrated by Lydia’s need to insist that Paul stay at her home (Acts 16:15). Thus, Acts portrays Lydia as someone able to navigate effectively the agonistic social universe of the Roman Empire through a social voice that Acts presents as appropriate for Lydia, specifically that of a woman patron.

The divining slave, however, attempts to employ the more direct social voice that she receives through possession by the Pythian spirit, which Acts ultimately portrays as an illegitimate spirit familiar; thus, Acts presents Paul ultimately not accepting the legitimacy of the slave’s oracle, her possessing spirit, and her increased social voice, which she gains as the human host of a socially superior possessing spirit. Therefore, while Acts portrays Lydia as employing a legitimate social voice for Christ-following women, Acts presents the divining slave as employing an illegitimate social voice. Subtly, Acts indicates that the exemplary Christ-following woman is a behind-the-scenes supporter of the Christ-movement and its recognized male leaders. Although Acts 16:13–18 does not present the *female prophet* as an inherently illegitimate (that is, deviant) social role for Christ-following women, which would be a direct contradiction of Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18, Acts 16:13–18 does seem to suggest to the reader that the *female prophet* is an atypical role for Christ-following women.

¹³⁵ Witherington, *Acts*, 493.

Lydia is not the only Christ-follower to whom Acts 16 ascribes direct speech that is not prophetic speech. The Philippian jailer also speaks non-prophetically to Paul twice. The first time he asks Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what is necessary for me to do in order to be saved” (Acts 16:30). The second time the jailer tells Paul and Silas in the morning that the magistrates have released them (Acts 16:36). However, the service that the Philippian jailer performs for Paul and Silas is the same service that Lydia performs, specifically hospitality. The limitation of Lydia’s and the jailer’s service to hospitality, combined with the exorcism of the Pythian spirit, suggests to the reader that Acts limits the role of prophetic witness to a limited number of Christ-followers. So far in Acts, the named characters who have functioned as prophetic witnesses to Jesus Christ are Peter, John, the Twelve, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Paul, and Silas.¹³⁶ In addition to this list, Acts 2:40 indicates that *all* the Christ-followers on Pentecost, not only Peter, testified to Jesus Christ. All of these prophetic Christ-following characters at some point receive a commission from either Jesus Christ or recognized leaders of the Christ-movement. Acts 1:8 functions as a commission for Peter, the rest of the Twelve, and apparently also all the other Christ-followers gathered on Pentecost. Although the Seven are explicitly selected as administrators of aid to the widows in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:1–7), Acts portrays Stephen and Philip as also legitimately capable of testifying to Jesus Christ. Barnabas receives a commission from the Jerusalem church in Acts 11:22. Of course, Paul receives a commission from Jesus Christ during his vision of Jesus and subsequent recovery from blindness (Acts 9:1–20). Silas is first commissioned by the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church to carry to Antioch their instructions regarding the entrance of Gentiles into the Christ-movement (Acts

¹³⁶ For instances in Acts where named Christ-followers function as prophetic witnesses, see the corresponding texts for each character listed: Peter (Acts 2:14–39; 3:1–26; 4:8–20; 5:1–11, 29–32; 8:20–22; 10:34–43); John (Acts 4:19); the Twelve (Acts 2:42; 4:33; 5:29–32); Stephen (Acts 6:9; 7:2–56); Philip (Acts 8:5–6, 12; 8:25–40); Barnabas (Acts 11:26; 13:1–3, 5, 7, 43, 46–47; 14:1, 3, 7, 14–19, 21–28; 15:36); Paul (Acts 9:19–22, 27; 11:26; 13:1–3, 5, 7, 9–11, 16–41, 43, 45–47; 14:1–3, 7, 14–19, 21–28; 15:36); Silas (Acts 15:32, 40).

15:22), although Acts 15:32 advises that Silas is already a recognized prophet prior to being commissioned to carry the letter to Antioch. Thus, the exorcism of the Pythian spirit brings to the surface a trend in Acts, specifically that not just anyone both inside and outside the Christ-movement can be a legitimate prophetic witness to Jesus Christ; instead, Acts so far has portrayed as legitimate prophetic witnesses those who have received a commission from Jesus or a local church.¹³⁷ Aside from apparently commissioned prophetic witnesses, Acts portrays the only other prophetic characters thus far in the book, namely Elymas and the divining slave, as illegitimate prophets. In Acts 13:4–12, the portrayal of Elymas as an illegitimate prophetic character is related both to his status as false-prophet and μάγος; however, in Acts 16:16–18, the divining slave’s status as illegitimate prophet stems solely from her prophetic practice. Thus, although Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18 indicates that all Christ-followers are capable of being prophetic witnesses to Jesus Christ, the portrayal of actual prophetic witnesses in the narrative world of Acts is limited to those commissioned by Jesus or by a local church as recognized prophets, teachers, and leaders in the Christ-movement.

A significant event in the development of the *miracle-worker* character type, however, occurs after the μαγεία-miracle conflict in Acts 16:16–18. After the exorcism, the slave’s masters take Paul and Silas before the city magistrates, who order the two missionaries beaten in response to the slaveholders’ accusations. Up to this point in Acts, opposition from political leaders against the Christ-movement has come from Judean leaders, particularly the leaders of Jerusalem,¹³⁸ and the only Roman political leader whom the Christ-followers have encountered, namely Sergius Paulus, joins the Christ-movement (Acts 13:12). Furthermore, Acts presents Paul as encountering firm and often violent opposition from Judean populations in the cities that he

¹³⁷ Cf. Wall, “Acts,” 10:232.

¹³⁸ Acts 4:1–23; 5:17–40; 6:8–8:3; 9:1–2; 11:19; 12:1–19.

visits.¹³⁹ Even when Paul and his companions face opposition from the Gentile populations of a city, Acts presents them as being incited by the Judeans (Acts 14:2–6, 19–20). However, Acts 16:19–40 presents Paul and Silas encountering opposition from both the Gentile population and the local political leaders of Philippi, and neither group is incited by local Judeans. Thus, Acts 16:19–40 indicates that although opposition to miracle-working prophetic witnesses typically comes from Judeans, both Gentile populations and Roman authorities on their own are capable of opposing the Christ-movement.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Acts 16:19–40 mitigates its own negative portrayal of Roman authorities in two ways. First, Acts 16:19–24 presents local Gentile charlatans, specifically the divining slave’s greedy masters, inciting the Philippians and the magistrates. Second, Acts 16:19–40 also portrays the magistrates violating Roman law through the beating of Roman citizens without first conducting a trial.¹⁴¹ Despite Paul and Silas’ imprisonment, Acts 16 presents the greed of the Philippian slaveholders and the ineptitude of the Philippian magistrates as more detrimental to Roman civil order and moral welfare than Paul and his Christ-following companions.¹⁴²

Acts 16:16–18 adds little new to the developing character type and social identity of the *Christ-following prophetic witness*, and its subset *prophetic miracle-worker*; however, the narrative strongly reinforces trends already present in Acts’ development of the character types of prophetic witness and miracle-worker within the first fifteen chapters of Acts. Most significantly, Acts 16:16–18 stresses that the prototypical miracle-worker is a prophetic witness to Jesus Christ and that miracle-working is a means to affirm and to demonstrate non-verbally

¹³⁹ Acts 9:23–25, 29–30; 13:45, 50–51; 14:2–6, 19–20; cf. D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts,” 458.

¹⁴⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 403; Witherington, *Acts* 499–500.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 133.

¹⁴² Cf. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 233; Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 215.

the salvation available through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the prototypical prophetic miracle-worker is a recognized, male leader within the Christ-movement.

III. Plotting the Characters from Acts 16:16–18 onto the Model (Figure 8.1)

In this chapter of my study, I need to plot only three characters onto my model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts: Peter, Paul, and the divining slave. Although Peter does not appear in Acts 16:16–18, I retain him as the exemplar for miracle-workers for referential purposes. For three reasons, I move Paul further to the left on the model and place him at a location slightly to the right of the Twelve’s position in Figure 5.2. First, after the second $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict in Acts 13:4–12, Paul performs several more miracles before and during his stay in Philippi (Acts 14:8–10; 14:19–20; 16:16–18), which qualify him as a career miracle-worker and not a one-time miracle-worker like Ananias of Damascus (cf. Acts 9:10–19). Second, Acts 14:14 designates Paul and Barnabas as “apostles,” although Acts does not present Paul exercising the exact same authority as the Twelve, to whom Paul appears to defer in Acts 15:6–35. Nevertheless, Acts’ labeling of Paul as an “apostle” effectively increases Paul’s status within the Christ-movement. Third, I refrain from plotting Paul in the same location as I plotted the Twelve in Figure 5.2 because Paul has not yet demonstrated the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit on others, as Peter and John have already done in Acts 8:14–17. However, the labeling of Paul as an “apostle” (Acts 14:14) opens the possibility that he may eventually bestow the Holy Spirit on someone.

Although Acts 16:16–18 does not explicitly link the divining slave with $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$, a close association between popular divination and popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ existed within Greco-Roman culture. In addition, the similarities between Acts 16:16–18 and the first two $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes in Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12, particularly the defeat of a magico-religious specialist outside the Christ-movement by a named Christ-following missionary, might suggest to a reader

the possibility that the divining slave is a practitioner of popular divinatory *μαγεία*.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, I plot the divining slave on the model tentatively, since Acts does not explicitly link her with *μαγεία*; thus, I represent the divining slave with a dashed circle. I place the divining slave close to the center dividing line on the right side of the model for two reasons. First, as I have noted, Acts does not explicitly link her to *μαγεία*. Secondly, unlike Elymas in Acts 13:4–12, neither she nor her proclamation are flagrantly hostile to the Christ-movement, despite the deceptiveness of her proclamation. Although the possibility of repentance appears for Simon and Elymas in the previous *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12), Acts 16:16–18 does not seem to provide an opportunity for repentance to the slave. The absence of an opportunity for repentance may be related to her identity as a doubly possessed person. She is possessed by the Pythian spirit, and as a slave, she is the possession of her masters. Thus, I cannot treat this character as someone personally responsible for her oracular proclamations or her charlatanism because both the Pythian spirit and her slaveholders control her. Therefore, I do not factor in the absence of an opportunity for repentance into the plotting of the divining slave onto the model (see Figure 6.1). Lastly, since Acts 16:16–18 is likely presenting the divining slave as a Gentile, I place the slave at the bottom third of the model, which is the category of “Gentile.”

Although Paul’s magico-religious rival in Acts 16:16–18 is not a popular *μάγος*, the fourth and final *μαγεία*-miracle conflict in Acts 19:8–20 places its Christ-following protagonist (Paul) back into competition with popular *μάγοι*; however, unlike the three previous *μαγεία*-miracle episodes (Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; Acts 16:16–18), the fourth *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episode narrates no direct interaction between the miracle-working protagonist (Paul) and the

¹⁴³ Bock, *Acts*, 535–536.

μαγεία-working antagonists (the Sons of Sceva). Nevertheless, the implicit competition between Paul and the Sons of Sceva and the explicit conflict between the Sons of Sceva and a possessing *daimonia* contribute immensely to Acts' development of a social identity for Christ-following miracle-workers. The next chapter of this study will analyze this final μαγεία-miracle conflict and prepare for this study's final conclusions, which follow immediately in the last chapter.

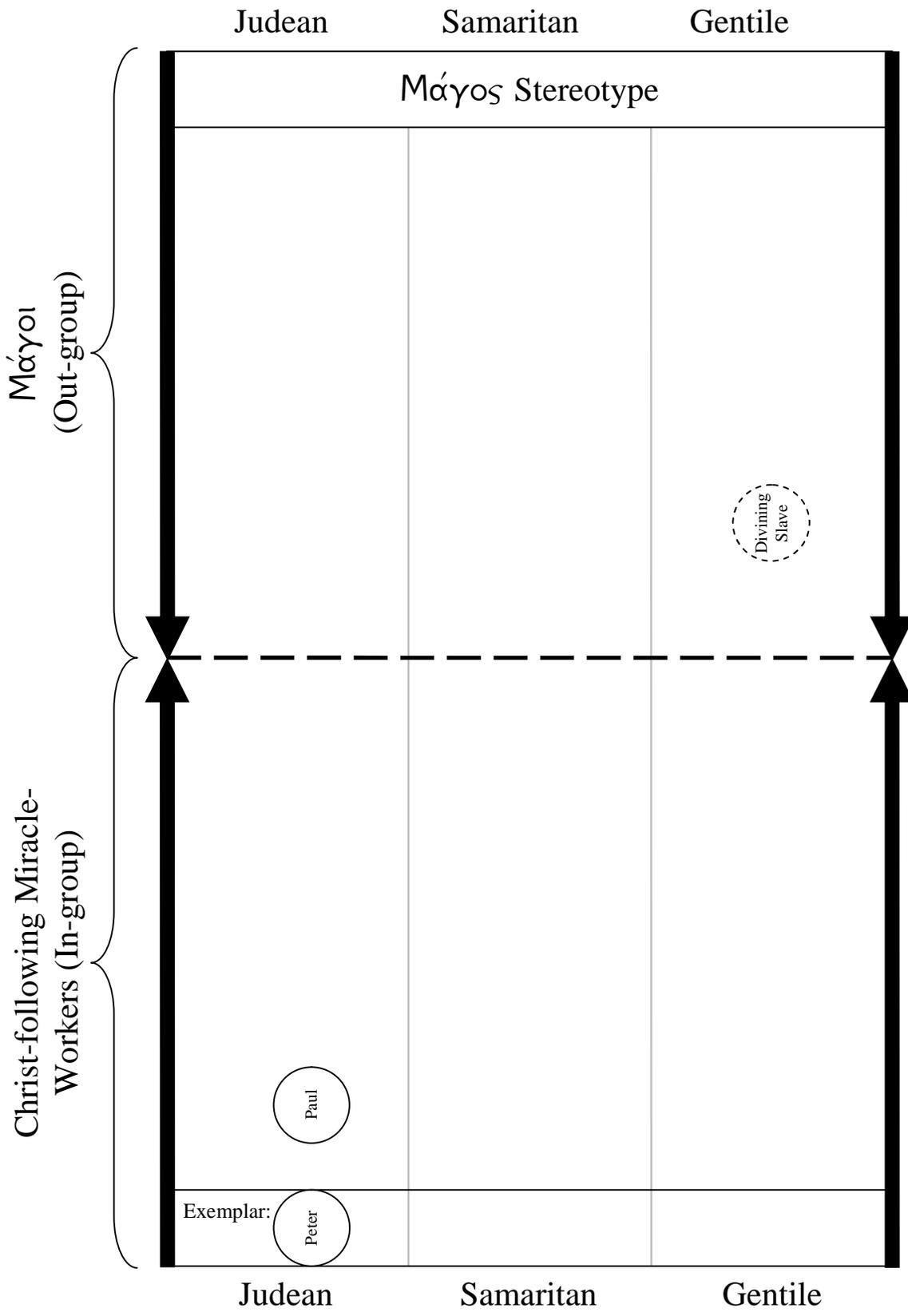


Figure 8.1 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 16:16–18.

CHAPTER 9
JUDEAN EXORCISTS IN EPHESUS
(ACTS 19:8–20)

Although Acts 19:8–20 neither explicitly presents any character as a μάγος nor contains a direct confrontation between wonder-working characters, this narrative unit qualifies as a μαγεία-miracle conflict because several conflicts within the episode participate in Acts’ distinguishing between popular μαγεία and Christ-follower miracle-working. Several elements in the narrative’s portrayal of both miracle-working associated with Paul and the exorcistic technique of the sons of Sceva resemble stereotypical activities of popular μάγοι. In particular, the Ephesians’ use of clothing that touched Paul in order to heal and perform exorcisms could be interpreted as the instrumental manipulation of divine power, and the invocation of Jesus’ name by the sons of Sceva during an exorcism also could be interpreted as the coercion of a spirit authority.¹ The primary conflict in Acts 19:8–20 is between the sons of Sceva and the evil spirit that these Judean exorcists attempt to exorcise. An implicit conflict exists between Paul and the Ephesian Christ-followers over their continued use of μαγεία after their entrance into the Christ-movement. Lastly, although no direct confrontation exists between Paul and the sons of Sceva, the narrative presents these characters in such a way that a reader could view them as

¹ Cf. Andy M. Reimer, “Virtual Prison Breaks: Non-Escape Narratives and the Definition of ‘Magic,’” in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 135. Reimer comments, “Exorcism, of course, was not by default magic, but exorcisms with particular social consequences could be well construed as magic.” In my understanding of the social construction of ancient μαγεία, the factors leading to the labeling of exorcisms as μαγεία involves the application of the social stereotypes of μάγοι and μαγεία to a particular exorcist and his or her activity. Thus, the labeling of exorcisms as μαγεία involves not only the social results of an exorcism but also how the observers perceive the exorcism, the exorcist, and the results of the exorcism. For example, see Origen, *Against Celsus*, 16.6; 6.14, 40–41, in which Celsus identifies Christ-followers’ exorcistic rituals as μαγεία (Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004], 155).

competitors, maybe even opponents. Therefore, I will argue that like the previous *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes, Acts 19:8–20 presents two contrasting sets of magico-religious characters (Paul and the sons of Sceva) in order to present Christ-following wonder-workers in Acts as miracle-workers, not popular *μάγοι*.

A consequence of the development of the *miracle-worker* character type in Acts 19:8–20 is the identification of certain wonder-working activities as *μαγεία* and the placement of the practitioners of these activities outside the boundaries of the Christ-movement. Thus, the narrative effectively places on the margins of the Christ-movement, if not outside the Christ-movement, any wonder-worker (even a Christ-following wonder-worker) that does not share a significant resemblance with the *miracle-worker* character type. Therefore, Acts 19:8–20 establishes symbolic boundaries for the Christ-movement in regard to wonder-working and wonder-workers. In this chapter, I will also argue that the development of the symbolic boundaries of the Christ-movement in Acts 19:8–20 is achieved not only through the failure of the sons of Sceva but also through the portrayal of Paul as a categorical exemplar for *miracle-workers* in Acts.

Acts 19:8–20 divides easily into three sections: the description of Paul's wonder-working in Ephesus (vv. 8–12), the narrative about the failed exorcism of the sons of Sceva (vv. 13–16), and the narration of the consequences of the failed exorcism (vv. 17–20). Most recent treatments of Acts 19:8–20 recognize the connections among the three sections of Acts 19:8–20, including the theme of popular *μαγεία* that appears implicitly in the second section (vv. 13–16) and explicitly in the conclusion of the passage (vv. 17–20). In addition, several interpreters have

noted how the distinction between popular μαγεία and miracle-working becomes ambiguous in the first section.²

Two options for addressing the similarity between Paul's miracles and popular μαγεία appear within scholarly studies of Acts 19:8–12. First, Stanley E. Porter argues that despite the apparent similarities between Paul's miracles and popular "magic", one major difference exists between them, specifically that Acts attributes Paul's miracles to the initiative and agency of God and attributes popular μαγεία to the initiative and agency of the wonder-worker. Thus, the miracles in Acts 19:8–12 are not *Paul's* miracles; instead, they are *God's* miracles worked through Paul.³

Hans-Josef Klauck, however, provides a second and more nuanced approach to addressing the resemblance of Paul's miracles to popular "magic." Klauck notes how the miracle-working handkerchiefs (σουδάρια) and aprons (σιμικίνθια) in Acts 19:12 function in the same way as amulets and talismans functioned in popular "magic." In other words, amulets, talismans, and Paul's clothing in Acts 19:12 all functioned as mediums for the storage and distribution of wonder-working power.⁴ Klauck also claims that "a few criteria for discernment" existed in Greco-Roman culture for distinguishing between miracles and popular "magic"; however, he provides only one example of these criteria for distinguishing between magic and miracle, notably that miracle-workers do not accept payment for their wonders, but popular

² Bernhard Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie: Paulus als Wundertäter nach der Apostelgeschichte," in *Biographie and Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, eds. Eve-Marie Becker and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 187 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 284; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 98; cf. Stanley E. Porter, "Magic in the Book of Acts," in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 119; contra C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 2:906.

³ Porter, "Magic in Acts," 119–120; see also Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 284.

⁴ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98; see also Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 284.

μάγοι do.⁵ This particular criterion for distinguishing between “miracle” and “magic” seems to be based upon the Greco-Roman stereotypical qualities of popular μάγοι, a social identity that within Acts functions largely as the foil to the *Christ-follower miracle-worker* identity.

Nevertheless, Klauck argues insightfully that distinguishing Paul’s miracles from “magic” is “ultimately . . . a question of interpretation.”⁶ Klauck here is not far from Kimberly B. Stratton’s identification of the *miracle discourse*, in which the distinction between μαγεία and miracle is ultimately a social construction that designates in-group wonder-working as miracle and out-group wonder-working as μαγεία. However, although Stratton clearly and insightfully explains that the actual criteria for distinguishing between μαγεία and miracle are social constructs based upon socially constructed stereotypes for popular μάγοι, Klauck only notes the subjective nature of the *application* of these criteria. Thus, he is ambiguous as to whether the criteria themselves are social constructs or objective standards.⁷

Some of the ambiguity that appears in Klauck’s and Porter’s discussions of miracle and magic in Acts 19:8–12 results from a failure to identify clearly a distinction between the modern concept of *magic* and the Greco-Roman concept of μαγεία. Thus, although the use of Paul’s clothing to heal and exorcise in Acts 19:11–12 fits the modern social-scientific definition of magic (the ritual manipulation of materials and verbal formulas to effect observable change), Acts clearly indicates that the miracles in Acts 19:11–12 are not μαγεία, which is a socially constructed term for magico-religious deviance in Greco-Roman society. Thus, I will argue that

⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 216–218. Although refraining in *Magic and Paganism* from providing a clear definition of “magic” (p. 2), Klauck in *Religious Context* provides a discussion of the differences between magic and religion. As noted in ch. 3 of my study, Klauck relies upon the work of William J. Goode, whose magic-religion continuum is a bricolage of intellectualist and sociological characteristics of magic and religion that do not easily fit together. However, unlike Klauck, Goode specifically notes that magic and religion are ideal types and that the distinction between magic and miracle is ultimately a heuristic distinction (William J. Goode, *Religion among the Primitives* [New York: Free Press, 1951], 38–55).

although the miracles in Acts 19:11–12 substantially resemble *magic*, Acts indicates to the reader that these miracles are not *μαγεία* and that Paul is not a *μάγος*.

Despite my concern that most scholarly interpreters do not adequately distinguish between modern *magic* and Greco-Roman *μαγεία*, I agree with the majority of scholars that Acts 19:8–12 is concerned with the development of Paul as a miracle-worker.⁸ In particular, the description of Paul's extraordinary healing abilities and the subsequent section about the sons of Sceva indicate to the reader that Paul is not a popular *μάγος*, but God's miracle-working intermediary agent, despite the similarities between his healing techniques and popular *μαγεία*. Although Acts 19:8–20 indicates that both Paul and the charlatanistic sons of Sceva attempt to exorcise evil spirits through the invocation of Jesus' name, the narrative presents God as the direct agent of the miracles associated with Paul, so that Paul is presented as the intermediate agent of these miracles (v.11). I will argue in this chapter that Acts 19:8–20 develops Paul as miracle-worker to the extent that he becomes an exemplar of the category of *miracle-worker* in his own right.

Two approaches to the second section of Acts 19:8–20 are common among recent studies of this passage. First, Susan R. Garrett develops an interpretation of Acts 19:13–16 primarily as a part of her argument that the defeat of *μάγοι* in Acts is effectively the defeat of Satan. Since Garrett interprets *μαγεία* as under the control of Satan, she understands the sons of Sceva to be servants of Satan; thus, their defeat functions as the final defeat of Satan as the source of *μαγεία*.⁹ Garrett identifies the defeat of the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13–16 as a demonstration of Jesus' response to accusations that he exorcises *daimonia* by means of Beelzebul, an apparent

⁸ E.g., Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 283–286; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 148–150.

⁹ Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 91–94.

reference to Satan (Luke 11:15). Luke 11:17–20 presents Jesus explaining that exorcising *daimonia* by Beelzebul signifies that Satan’s kingdom is divided against itself and will fall. Garrett sees the self-destruction of Satan’s kingdom occurring in Acts 19:13–16 when one servant of Satan (the possessing evil spirit) defeats the sons of Sceva, who also serve Satan.

Two problems hinder Garrett’s argument. First, as I discussed in ch. 3, Garrett’s claim that the Gospel of Luke and Acts together portray Satan as the source of μαγεία and μάγοι as the servants of Satan lacks sufficient support within the Gospel of Luke and Acts.¹⁰ Second, Acts 19:13–16 contains no suggestion that the sons of Sceva exorcise evil spirits by means of Satan’s power; instead, Acts 19:13–14 presents the sons of Sceva, along with several other Judean exorcists, attempting to exorcise evil spirits by the authority of Jesus. As I will further discuss later in this chapter, although I understand the defeat of the sons of Sceva to function as the final defeat of μάγοι and μαγεία in Acts, I do not see Acts presenting their defeat as the defeat of Satan or the symbolic defeat of Satan’s kingdom. Instead, the narrative seems to present the ministry of the Christ-followers, especially Paul’s exorcisms, as contributing to the defeat of Satan.¹¹

The most common interpretation of vv. 13–16 identifies the sons of Sceva as usurpers of miracle-working power. The narrative presents the seven exorcists operating as popular μάγοι, since they treat the name of Jesus as a powerful ritual instrument that they wield to conduct automatically efficacious exorcistic rituals. For instance, Klauck explains that the failure of the exorcistic ritual and the evil spirit’s direct speech indicate to the reader that the sons of Sceva

¹⁰ David Frankfurter, “Luke’s μαγεία and Garrett’s ‘Magic,’” *USQR* 47 (1993), 82–89; James Hanson, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *WW* 12 (1992), 87; Antoinette Clark Wire, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *ThTo* 47 (1990), 312; cf. Todd E. Klutz, review of *The Demise of the Devil*, by Susan R. Garrett, *JSNT* 48 (1992), 122.

¹¹ Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 135.

have no authority to invoke the name of Jesus for wonder-working purposes.¹² The results of the defeat of the sons of Sceva are not only the presentation of Paul as a wonder-worker superior to popular μάγοι but also that the presentation of Paul as a legitimate miracle-worker, not a deviant popular μάγος.

A further significant result of the defeat of the sons of Sceva is a renunciation of μαγεία among the Ephesian Christ-followers, which occurs within the third section of Acts 19:8–20. According to Bernhard Heininger, the Christ-followers' abandonment of μαγεία is effectively the Christ-movement's final and complete abandonment of μαγεία.¹³ Taking a moral-ethical approach, Klauck argues that the abandonment of μαγεία by the Ephesian Christ-followers signifies that "one must bid magic farewell altogether, and keep the new Christian life pure in the face of all risks posed by magic."¹⁴ This interpretation of the significance of Acts 19:17–20 is not all that different from Klauck's interpretations of Acts 8:4–25 and 13:4–12, in which he sees a warning to Christ-followers to avoid syncretizing the Christ-movement with μαγεία.¹⁵ It is conceivable that an ancient Christ-following reader could use this text to condemn the use of books containing instructions for popular rituals for performing extraordinary deeds, such as the books burned in Acts 19:19. Nevertheless, the deviantization of specific practices as μαγεία, including the use of such books, is predicated upon Acts' identification of what is legitimate miracle-working and who is a legitimate miracle-worker.

Therefore, I understand the primary significance of Acts 19:17–20 to be the portrayal of the normative Christ-movement as rejecting μαγεία in general. Subsequently, the ancient reader

¹² Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 100; see also Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 284–285; G. W. H. Lampe, "Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History*, ed. C. F. D. Moule (London: Mowbray, 1965), 178; Porter, "Magic in Acts," 119–120.

¹³ Heininger, "Im Dunstkreis der Magie," 286.

¹⁴ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23, 54–55.

could employ this portrayal of the Christ-movement in Acts 19:17–20 in order to prohibit Christ-followers from engaging in particular behaviors that the reader considers to be *μαγεία*, such as the use of written instructions for popular wonder-working rituals. Thus, that which Klauck identifies as the primary significance of Acts 19:17–20, I identify as a secondary *use* of the text predicated upon that which I identify as the primary function of the text, specifically the portrayal of the Christ-movement being opposed to the popular *μαγεία* in order to differentiate the Christ-movement’s miracle-working traditions from popular *μαγεία*. I will argue that Acts 19:17–20 contributes to Acts’ overall presentation of the Christ-movement, especially its wonder-working traditions, as not being popular *μαγεία* and that this characterization of the Christ-movement is achieved by making legitimate miracle-working the prerogative of certain authorized leaders in the Christ-movement. Although Acts 19:17–20 effectively concedes the possibility that deviant Christ-followers may engage in popular *μαγεία*, the final rejection of *μαγεία* by the Ephesian Christ-followers serves to distance the Christ-movement from popular *μαγεία* and to distinguish between Christ-follower miracles and popular *μαγεία*.

This chapter of my study will provide my social-scientific-critical analysis of each of the three sections of Acts 19:8–20, which will be followed by my discussion of the development of the miracle-worker character type and social identity in Acts 19:8–20. Subsequently, I will plot the relevant wonder-working characters in Acts 19:8–20 onto my model for characterizing wonder-workers in Acts. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the miracle-worker character type and social identity in the remainder of Acts (chs. 20–28).

I. Miracle and *Μαγεία* in Ephesus (Acts 19:8–20)

Before I am able to discuss the passage at hand (Acts 19:8–20), I must first discuss the portrayal of miracle-workers and miracle-working between the third and fourth *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts.

By the time that Paul departs Philippi at the end of Acts 16, the narrative of Acts has developed Paul into a prototypical miracle-worker primarily modeled after the exemplary miracle-working character Peter. In Acts 17:1–19:7, only two significant events occur in relation to the development of Paul as a miracle-worker and the development of the *miracle-worker* character type. First, Paul experiences his second revelatory dream in Acts 18:9. As I discussed in ch. 5 of my study, Paul’s nocturnal vision (ἐν νυκτὶ δι’ ὀράματος) is a revelatory dream that not only serves as partial fulfillment of Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1 (2:28 ET), in which God says that as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit the “young people will see visions” and the “elders will dream dreams” (Acts 2:17–18) but also presents God endorsing and protecting Paul during his stay at Corinth. Second, in Acts 19:1–7, Paul encounters some “disciples” (μαθηταί) who had only received “the baptism of John.” It is unclear whether the word “disciples” (μαθηταί) indicates that these people are Christ-followers because Paul’s explanation of John’s baptism suggests that these “disciples” do not recognize Jesus as “the one who comes after [John].” Nevertheless, all other occurrences of “disciple” (μαθητή) in Acts appear to refer to Christ-followers.¹⁶ Regardless of whether the reader understands the “disciples” to be Christ-followers or only followers of John the Baptist, significant for the development of Paul as a miracle-worker is the narrative’s presentation of Paul bestowing the Holy Spirit upon these “disciples” following their baptism in Jesus’ name (vv. 5–6). Although Acts 14:14 already labeled Paul an “apostle,” Acts 19:6 portrays him engaging in a particularly apostolic behavior, specifically bestowing the Holy Spirit on people through the imposition of hands. Just as the apostles Peter and John

¹⁶ Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BCENT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 599; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 385; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, SBT, 2nd ser., 15 (London: SCM, 1970), 83–89; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 268–277, republished with English translations of Hebrew and Greek text as *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSup 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 218–225; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 570–571.

bestowed the Holy Spirit upon the Samaritans through the imposition of hands (Acts 8:18), Paul also places his hands upon the twelve Ephesian “disciples” with the result that they receive the Holy Spirit (19:6).¹⁷ When Paul bestows the Holy Spirit on the twelve Ephesian “disciples,” Acts’ presentation of Paul as a miracle-worker takes one large step closer to portraying Paul as an exemplary miracle-worker equal to Peter. Nevertheless, Peter has performed one extraordinary feat that Paul still has left to do, specifically resuscitating a dead person (Acts 9:36–43; cf. 20:7–12).

Paul’s Miracle-Working in Ephesus (Acts 19:8–12)

Acts 19:8–12 is a summary of the beginning of Paul’s work in Ephesus. The first three verses of the summary narrate Paul’s typical pattern of first preaching to the Judeans and next to the Gentiles after the Judeans reject him and his message.¹⁸ The narrative’s placement of Paul’s preaching activity first within the synagogue and later within a lecture hall for a period of two years presents Paul as a respectable religious teacher, rather than as a street preacher liable to accusations of charlatanism.¹⁹ The result of Paul’s two-year ministry is the successful preaching of “the word of the Lord” to both Judeans and Gentiles not only in Ephesus but throughout the region of Asia (v. 10).

¹⁷ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 236. The imposition of hands upon the Ephesian “disciples” not only involves the presentation of Paul as a miracle-worker but also contributes to Acts’ presentation of a hierarchy of leaders within the Christ-movement, which corresponds with Acts’ limitation of miracle-working characters to only male leaders within the Christ-movement. Thus, as Acts presents a certain scheme of institutionalized hierarchical leadership within the Christ-movement, it is simultaneously institutionalizing miracle-working by portraying prototypical miracle-workers as recognized leaders within the Christ-movement.

¹⁸ Cf. Acts 13:46; 17:2; 18:4–6.

¹⁹ Witherington, *Acts*, 574–575; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:905; Bruce, *Acts*, 388–389. The Western text’s addition of the time frame of the fifth to the tenth hours (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.) indicates that Paul was not teaching at the typical time when elite students would receive instruction from formal teachers of philosophy, rhetoric, etc. Thus, the Western text suggests to the reader that the people Paul instructs are not elites (Bruce, *Acts*, 388–389; Witherington, *Acts*, 574–575).

Acts 19:11–12 describes Paul’s miracle-working activity in Ephesus in a way similar to the description of the Twelve’s miracle-working, particularly Peter’s miracle-working, in Acts 5:12–16. Most notable is that Acts does not attribute the miracles associated with Peter and Paul directly to the agency of these two miracle-workers. In both Acts 5:12 and 19:11, the human miracle-workers are the mediums through whom divine miracles occur.²⁰ Acts 19:11 specifies that God, not Paul, is the primary agent of the miracle-working in Ephesus.²¹ Acts 5:14–15 and 19:12 also present both Peter and Paul as both active and passive miracle-workers. Not only do Peter and Paul actively engage in miracle-working, but they also serve as passive conduits of miracle-working power.

As I explained earlier in this chapter, Porter specifically draws attention to the presentation of God as the primary agent for the miracle-working associated with Paul, whom the narrative, thus, presents as God’s miracle-working intermediary. Thus, Porter claims that in Acts 19:11–20, the presentation of God as the primary agent for the wonder-working associated with Paul prevents the characterization of Paul’s wonders as “magic”:

Some might be tempted to label what happens in Ephesus as magic, when Acts says that as people touched Paul’s facecloths and aprons they were healed (v. 12). However, this episode reveals the contrast between magic and miracle when it is shown that the things connected with Paul’s mission of glorifying God result in healings and related phenomena, while, when the same things are taken over by those who are not promoting the gospel, they do not

²⁰ Cf. Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 148. Twelftree correctly notes that the reference to Paul’s hands in Acts 19:11 does not indicate that Paul enacted miracles through the imposition of his hands upon the sick and possessed; instead, the reference to Paul’s hands is a metaphorical reference to Paul’s intermediate agency. However, I think Twelftree goes too far in saying that the writer of Acts “seems to avoid” reference to the imposition of hands in wonder-working, especially since Paul bestows the Holy Spirit on twelve Ephesians through the imposition of hands only a few verses earlier (Acts 19:6).

Although the imposition of hands develops in the second century into a means of transferring institutional authority within the Christ-movement, Paul’s imposition of hands upon the Ephesian “disciples” not only signifies his authority as an “apostle” but also involves the extraordinary bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon a person, which qualifies as a wondrous act. Therefore, Paul’s bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Ephesian “disciples” through the imposition of hands not only contributes to Paul’s identity as a miracle-worker but also contributes to the presentation of Paul as an “apostle,” a legitimate leader within the Christ-movement.

²¹ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:906–907; Porter, “Magic in Acts,” 119–120.

function similarly. Paul's healings take place within the context of God performing extraordinary events through Paul's hands (v. 11).²²

However, the identity of those whom Porter indicates "might be tempted" to classify Paul's wonder-working as "magic" is unclear. If Porter is referring to an ancient reader, Porter's observations are certainly appropriate because Acts' presentation of Paul as an intermediary agent of God's miracle-working may very easily prevent an ancient reader from classifying Paul's wonder-working as popular μαγεία. However, if Porter is referring to a modern reader attempting to classify Paul's wonder-working as "magic," according to a modern Western understanding of magic (ritual manipulation of verbal formulas and material objects to achieve an observable change), Porter's observations are inadequate because regardless of whether Paul is an intermediary agent of divine power, the wonder-working in Acts 19:12 still involves the ritual manipulation of materials to achieve healings and exorcisms. In other words, Paul's wonder-working in Acts 19:11–12 qualifies as *magic* under the modern Western concept of *magic*, while at the same time not being μαγεία. The ambiguity in Porter's argument results from his neither identifying the identity of the readers tempted to identify Paul's wonder-working as "magic" nor drawing a distinction between ancient μαγεία and the modern Western concept of *magic*.

Building upon Porter's observations, I understand Acts 19:11–12 to be presenting Paul's wonder-working as miracles ultimately attributable to God and, thus, not as instances of μαγεία stemming from the impious personal initiative of a wonder-working charlatan. Thus, the characterization of Paul's wonder-working as miracles, rather than as μαγεία, is not based upon any objective distinctions between magic and miracle or between μαγεία and miracle; instead, the characterization of Paul's wonder-working as divine action in Acts 19:11–20 stems from an

²² Porter, "Magic in Acts," 119.

ideology within Acts according to which Christ-follower miracle-working is not popular μαγεία and Christ-following miracle-workers are not popular μάγοι.

Several interpreters argue that Acts 18:11–12 effectively serves as a thematic parallel not only to the healings by means of Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:14–16) but also to the healing of the hemorrhaging woman that touches Jesus’ robe (Luke 8:43–48).²³ In Acts 5:14–16, the growth of the Jerusalem church through successful preaching and miracle-working results in a crowd of people bringing their sick and possessed to be healed by the Twelve, especially by means of the miracle-working exemplar Peter’s shadow. In similar fashion, Acts 19:11–12 presents Paul as such a successful miracle-worker that the ill and negatively possessed are healed when handkerchiefs (σουδάριον) and aprons (σιμικίνθιον) that have been in contact with Paul’s skin are placed upon them. The brevity of the narrative’s description of the miracle-working through clothing prompts numerous questions regarding not only whether the handkerchiefs (σουδάριον) and aprons (σιμικίνθιον)²⁴ are articles belonging to Paul or are brought to Paul but also whether Paul sanctioned or is even aware of these healing activities; however, the narrative provides no clues concerning such questions.²⁵ The key element of the healing seems to be that the clothing had been in contact with Paul’s skin (χρώς).²⁶ Thus, the handkerchiefs and aprons seem to function as mediums through which divine power (δύναμις) transfers from Paul to the sick and

²³ Bock, *Acts*, 602; Bruce, *Acts*, 389; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 648; Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 283–284; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98; Mary E. Mills, *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition*, JSNTSup 41 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 121; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 472; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:237; Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:267–268.

²⁴ Cf. BDAG, s.v. “σουδάριον” and “σιμικίνθιον”; LSJ, s.v. “σουδάριον” and “σημικίνθιον”; Richard Strelan, “Acts 19:12: Paul’s ‘Aprons’ Again,” *JTS*, n.s., 54 (2003), 154–157. A σουδάριον was likely a small cloth used to wipe the face. σιμικίνθιον is an alternate spelling of σημικίνθιον, according to LSJ. The nature of a σιμικίνθιον is less clear than that of the σουδάριον. The most common translation for σημικίνθιον/σιμικίνθιον is *apron*, especially that worn by a worker or an artisan.

²⁵ Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 578; contra Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 149.

²⁶ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:907; contra Bock, *Acts*, 601–602.

the possessed, much in the same way Jesus' robe in Luke 8:43–44 is the medium through which healing power migrates from Jesus to the hemorrhaging woman. Although, as I explained in ch. 2, I do not agree with anthropologist James George Frazer that *contagion* is a *universal* principle of magic, the narrations of the healing miracles in Acts 19:11–12 certainly appear to illustrate the cultural concept of ritual contagion, since that which is in direct contact with Paul's body (the handkerchiefs and aprons) functions as a vessel for transmitting the divine power that God gives to him.²⁷

The modeling of Paul after Peter has reached an extreme level at which Paul, like Peter, receives a summary description of his miracle-working ability that involves the ability to work miracles without conscious effort. Similar to the healings by means of Peter's shadow (Acts 5:14–15), healing through clothing that contacted Paul could qualify as magic, since the healings in Acts 19:11–12 involve the manipulation of materials to effect an observable change.²⁸ The automatic efficaciousness of the placement of the clothing upon the sick and possessed strengthens further the identification of the healings in Acts 19:11–12 as magic, according to the modern Western concept of *magic*. Nevertheless, Acts 19:11–12 does not present Paul's miracles as *μαγεία*, not even implicitly. Two elements of Acts 19:11–12, in particular, hinder the interpretation of Paul as a popular *μάγος* and his miracle-working as popular *μαγεία*. First, the

²⁷ Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 215–216; cf. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Touchstone / Simon & Schuster, 1996), 43–52, 1st ed. originally published in 1890 and abridged ed. originally published in 1922; Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 155, n. 25.

²⁸ Cf. Kee, *Miracle in Christian World*, 215–216; Porter, “Magic in Acts,” 119. Porter disagrees that Paul's wonders in Acts 19:13–16 are “magic”; however, Porter uses the term “magic” in this context to refer to what I label the ancient concept *μαγεία*. Furthermore, Porter does not pay *enough* attention to the constructionist nature of *μαγεία* with the result he does not *adequately* emphasize that Acts' portrayals of Paul's wonders as miracles and the sons of Sceva's failed exorcism as *μαγεία* do not reflect an inherent division between miracle and *μαγεία*, but is a rhetorical distinction reflecting the narrative's socially constructed moral universe. Kee, however, seems more aware at this point of the socially constructed nature of *μαγεία* and attributes the distinction between Paul's miracles in Acts 19 and *μαγεία* to the narrative presentation of Paul's wonders “as part of the more traditional redemptive enterprise in Acts.”

presentation of Paul as a respectable religious teacher in Acts 19:8–10 works against seeing Paul as a popular μάγος. Second, Acts 19:11 specifically indicates that God is the primary agent of the miracle-working associated with Paul. In other words, the narrative says that God, not Paul, works the miracles. Since the miracles in Acts 19:11–12 are divine acts, they are not μαγεία; thus, Paul is not a μάγος.²⁹

Among those who hear of Paul’s successful miracle-working are wandering Judean exorcists that engage in spiritual *name-dropping* when they not only attempt to invoke Jesus’ name but also mention his missionary Paul. In Acts 19:8–16, Paul emerges as an exemplary miracle-worker in his own right, when vv. 13–16 present wandering Judean exorcists attempting to access divine power “through the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches” (v. 13). The formula employed by the Judean exorcists indicates that Paul also invokes Jesus’ name during his miracle-working, although the description of Paul’s miracle-working in Acts 19:11–12 does not present Paul invoking the name of Jesus.³⁰ Therefore, the narrative presents the Judean exorcists attempting to access the same divine power that Paul is authorized to employ.³¹

Not only in the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context but also in most other socio-cultural contexts where exorcisms occur, exorcistic rituals typically contain some degree of complexity, often including the invocation of authoritative deities and spirits. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the complexity of exorcistic rituals within and outside the Greco-Roman socio-cultural context.

Within the context of Judean society during the Greco-Roman period, Josephus’ account of the Judean exorcist Eleazar demonstrates the complexity of exorcistic ritual (*Ant.* 8.46–49).

²⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 602; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:906–907; Wall, “Acts,” 10:268.

³⁰ Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 151.

³¹ Porter, “Magic in Acts,” 120; cf. Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 25, n. 2; 42, n. 37. As Twelftree explains although the oldest known use of the term ἐξορκιστής (exorcist) is in Acts 19:13, sufficient evidence exists that the exorcism of possessing spirits “was probably reasonably well known” practice at the time that Acts was written.

Eleazar conducts an exorcistic ritual containing the following steps: (1) drawing out the possessing spirit through the possessed person's nose by means of a ring containing a certain plant's root, (2) commanding the malevolent spirit not to return to the human host, (3) invoking Solomon's name, and (4) reciting other verbal formulas. Eleazar concludes the ritual by commanding the exorcised spirit to knock over a vessel containing water that Eleazar had previously placed not far from himself. This final step of the ritual served as visual proof that the exorcism was genuine and successful.³² In this account of a Judean exorcism in the first-century, not only does the exorcist invoke an authoritative name (Solomon), but he also interacts with the possessing spirit as a social entity to be commanded and persuaded, not as an impersonal force.³³

The *PGM* contains several texts regarding the treatment of persons possessed by *daimones*.³⁴ *PGM* IV.1227–1264 and IV.3007–3086 contain complete instructions for exorcistic rituals that invoke the names of several Hebrew personages, including Jesus.³⁵ Furthermore, both texts involve placing a phylactery upon the possessed person; however, the phylactery in *PGM* IV.3007–3086 is instrumental in the exorcism itself, while the phylactery in *PGM* IV.1227–1264 is a preventive against future possession. Nevertheless, these two texts provide instructions for rituals that involve the *preparation of ritual materials* and the *recitation of lengthy verbal formulas* containing *voces magicae* and numerous authoritative names.

³² Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46–49.

³³ Cf. Derek Collins, "Nature, Cause, and Agency in Greek Magic," *TAPA* 133 (2003), 37–45.

³⁴ *PGM* IV.86–87, 1227–1264, 3007–86; LXXXV.1–6; LXXXIX.1–27; XCIV.17–21.

³⁵ The most extensive exorcistic texts are in *PGM* IV, a fourth-century papyrus housed at Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In particular, *PGM* IV.3007–3086 invokes "the god of the Hebrews, Jesus" (cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:908; Bruce, *Acts*, 390; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971], 564; Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, Gender, Theory, & Religion [New York: Columbia University Press, 2007], 235, n. 39; Pieter W. van der Horst, "The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris [PGM IV] and the Bible," in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbotle, European Studies on Christian Origins, LNTS 306 [London: T & T Clark, 2007], 178). In addition to the exorcistic ritual texts of *PGM* IV.1227–1264 and IV.3007–86, *PGM* IV.86–87 contains a written exorcistic spell that the ritual specialist places in a phylactery. *PGM* LXXXIX.1–27 is a general healing text, which includes the treating of spirit possession. *PGM* LXXXV.1–6 and XCIV.1–7 are brief fragments of exorcistic texts.

PGM IV.1227–1264 is part of a lengthy fourth-century papyrus housed in the French Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and it provides instructions for an exorcism. The instructions contain three sections: (1) verbal formula, (2) preparation of olive branches, and (3) preparation of the phylactery. Particularly important for my analysis of Acts 19:8–20 is the verbal formula. The exorcist recites the verbal formula while standing behind the possessed person and holding olive branches over the possessed person’s head. The verbal formula reads:

Hail, God of Abraham; hail, God of Isaac; hail, God of Jacob; Jesus Chrestos, the Holy Spirit, the Son of the Father, who is above the Seven, who is within the Seven. Bring Iao Sabaoth; may your power issue forth from him, NN, until you drive away this unclean daimon Satan, who is in him. I conjure you, daimon, whoever you are by this god, SABARBARBATHIÔTH SABARBARBATHIOUTH SABARBARBATHIÔNÊTH SABARBARBAPHAI. Come out, daimon, whoever you are, and stay away from him, NN, now, now; immediately, immediately. Come out, daimon, since I bind you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I deliver you into the black chaos in perdition. (*PGM IV.1230–1249*; Betz).

Several elements within the verbal formula are significant for studying exorcisms in Acts 19:8–20. First, the various names for the deity invoked are names for the Hebrew God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Second, the exorcist is instructed to speak to both the deity being invoked and the possessing spirit as personal beings that are capable of social discourse. Second, the exorcist does not speak to the divine power of the invoked deity; instead, the formula treats divine power as an asset belonging to the deity invoked.

Although contained in the same fourth-century papyrus as *PGM IV.1227–1264*, the ritual instructions in *PGM IV.3007–3086* are much longer than those in *PGM IV.1227–1264*. The instructions in *PGM IV.3007–3086* divide into four sections: (1) preparatory ritual, (2) preparation and use of a phylactery, (3) verbal formula, and (4) instructions for the ritual purity of the exorcist. The closing lines of the instructions describe the ritual as a “Hebraic” ritual.³⁶ As with *PGM IV.1227–1264*, the verbal formula is most relevant to my analysis of Acts 19:8–20.

³⁶ The indication that *PGM IV.1227–1264* is a “Hebraic” ritual is a play upon the Greco-Roman stereotype of Judean popular μάγοι.

The verbal formula begins with the invocation of a single deity, namely “the god of the Hebrews, Jesus” (*PGM* IV.3015–3020; Betz). In the verbal formula, which is too long to quote here, the formula directly addresses both the deity invoked and the possessing spirit as personal social beings capable of interactive dialogue. In the verbal formula, the exorcist claims the authority of the deity and commands the *daimon* to reveal itself and leave the possessed person with the result that the exorcist appears as an intermediary agent of divine power. Furthermore, the verbal formula draws upon the exorcistic Solomonic tradition: “I conjure you, every daimonic spirit, to tell whatever sort you may be, because I conjure you by the seal which Solomon placed on the tongue of Jeremiah. . . .” (*PGM* IV.3035–3044; Betz).

Turning from ancient Greco-Roman examples of exorcisms, I will provide two examples of exorcistic rituals from modern anthropological research. The first example comes from anthropologist Isabelle Nabokov’s analysis of the exorcism of *pey* spirits by male ritual musicians in the South Arcot district of Tamilnadu, India. *Pey* spirits are the ghosts of deceased humans, and they are most commonly the spirits of men, who typically possess women. According to Nabokov, the exorcistic ritual, known as *pampaikkarar*, begins with drawing a circle enclosing the possessed woman and the *pey*. After verbally invoking several deities for protection, the exorcist musicians perform for several hours, during which time they compliment, lecture, and threaten the possessing spirit. During this phase of the ritual, the exorcists may resort to “verbal abuse and physical violence” in order to invoke a response from the *pey*. Eventually, the possessed woman will enter a possession trance, and the spirit and musicians will engage in a conversation, in which the musicians question the *pey*. In response, the spirit reveals its identity, life story, and demands. Through a series of negotiations, typically involving the sacrifice of a chicken, the *pey* confines itself to a knotted lock of the possessed woman’s hair. The musicians

chase the woman, whom they force to carry a large stone. Upon catching the woman, the musicians drag her to a tamarind tree, cut off the knotted lock of her hair, and nail the lock of hair to a tree. Within minutes, the woman's possession trance ends, and the musicians declare that the woman is free of the *pey*.³⁷

In this example of modern Indian exorcism, the exorcistic ritual is lengthy and complicated, involving not only a great deal of music but a lengthy interrogation of the *pey*. In addition, the exorcists interact with the *pey* as if it were a sentient, social being with whom the exorcists can speak and negotiate and upon whom they may even inflict physical pain. Thus, exorcism is not a step-by-step performance of a strict ritual routine, but it is a loosely structured social interaction between the exorcists and an antagonistic social partner, namely the *pey*. The public venue in which the exorcism occurs, specifically in the funeral grounds next to a temple, demonstrates further the social nature of the ritual.³⁸

Anthropologist John L. McCreery's analysis of a Taoist exorcism in Taipei also describes a complex social interaction between an exorcist and malevolent possessing spirits. The setting of this exorcism also emphasizes the social nature of the ritual. The Taoist exorcistic healer named Ong Kok-hui conducts the healing in the street in front of his temple. Just as in the *pey* exorcisms, the Taoist exorcist insults and threatens the possessing spirits in order to coerce them into negotiations, which end with the spirits leaving the possessed person. Two initial phases of the ritual are (1) the preparation and manipulation of a material "substitute" for the possessed and (2) the invocation of deities through which the exorcist is able to act superior to the possessing spirits. The primary function of these initial phases of the ritual is the exorcist's "establish[ment of] a relationship with demons, for only then can he pay them off and drive them

³⁷ Isabelle Nabokov, "Expel the Lover, Recover the Wife: Symbolic Analysis of a South Indian Exorcism," *JRAI*, n.s., 3 (1997), 302–307.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 303.

away.”³⁹ The remainder of the ritual is a social interaction aimed at expelling the malevolent spirits by negotiating a “pay off” for them to leave the possessed. Just as in Nabokov’s *pey* exorcisms in South Arcot, the Taoist exorcism in McCreery’s study is a lengthy, complex, and antagonistic social exchange between the exorcist and the possessing spirits. More apparent in McCreery’s article than in Nabokov’s article is the vital role played by the exorcist’s association with deities superior to the possessing spirits. According to McCreery, the Taoist exorcist is only able to exorcise the possessing spirits by associating himself with deities superior to the possessing spirits and assuming their authority to command the possessing spirits.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, both Nabokov and McCreery demonstrate that exorcism is not so much a rigidly fixed routine as it is a structured social interaction, in which the exorcist(s) assume(s) the authority of deities or spirits superior to the possessing spirit(s).

In light of the social nature in these exorcisms described by Josephus, the *PGM*, and modern anthropologists, I suggest that the most appropriate way to understand exorcisms in Greco-Roman socio-cultural contexts is to treat an exorcism as social interaction between the exorcist and the possessing spirit(s). On some occasions, the social interactions within Greco-Roman exorcisms also involve the invoked deities, spirits, and other personal entities superior to the possessing spirits. Thus, the typical Greco-Roman understanding of exorcisms would likely have been that of social interactions among humans and spirits; thus, ancient readers would have likely viewed the exorcisms in Acts as narratives of ritualized social interactions, not as narratives of routinized, formulaic rituals. Therefore, my ancient heuristic reader likely would view the exorcisms by clothing that touched Paul (Acts 19:12) and the failed exorcism by the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13–16) as ritualized social interactions.

³⁹ John L. McCreery, “Negotiating with Demons: The Uses of Magical Language,” *American Ethnologist* 22 (1995), 149.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 152–156.

Moreover, the few detailed presentations of exorcisms in the Gospel of Luke and Acts demonstrate that the writer Luke is aware of the Greco-Roman cultural perception of exorcisms as ritualized social interactions. For example, Jesus verbally converses with *daimonia* that he exorcises in Luke 4:40–41; 8:26–34. Of particular importance is the portrayal of Jesus negotiating with *daimonia* during an exorcism that ends with Jesus fulfilling the request of the *daimonia* that they be sent into a herd of pigs (Luke 8:30–33). Furthermore, the description of the possessing *daimonion* in Luke 11:14 as “mute” (κωφόν) suggests to the reader that the inability to speak is exceptional for possessing *daimonia* and that most possessing *daimonia* are vocal and converse with those attempting to exorcise them. The only narrative presentation of an exorcism in Acts is the failed exorcism that the sons of Sceva attempt in Acts 19:14–16. In this section of the fourth μαγεία-miracle conflict episode, the possessing spirit not only verbally converses with the human exorcists but also uses the body of its human host to assault physically the exorcists. These few detailed narrations of exorcisms indicate that the Gospel of Luke and Acts share in the Greco-Roman cultural perception of exorcism as a social interaction between the possessing spirit(s) and the exorcist(s).

Therefore, I understand the exorcisms in Acts 19:11–12 to be narratives about social interactions. The exorcisms that Acts attributes to Paul in v. 11 are narratives of direct social interactions between the divinely possessed Paul and the malevolent spirits that he exorcises by means of his exercising the miracle-working authority given to him through the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the exorcisms by means of handkerchiefs and aprons in v. 12 could be read as social interactions by proxy. The direct interaction in the exorcisms narrated in Acts 19:12 are between the possessing spirits and those who bring the clothing that has touched Paul’s skin to the possessed humans. In this case, those bringing the clothing to the sick and negatively

possessed are acting as envoys for Paul and are associating themselves with Paul, who associates himself with God—the ultimate source of Paul’s miracle-working authority. This reading of Acts 19:12 is supported by the association of Paul with the healings and exorcisms in Acts 19:12, despite Paul not being present at the exorcism. Although these exorcisms in v. 12 seem to qualify as narrations of *magic* (in the modern Western sense of *magic*), they are also narrations of social interactions among humans, the Holy Spirit, and the possessing evil spirits.

The Sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13–16)

The account of the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13–16) presents these exorcists engaging in direct discourse *with* a possessing spirit, who verbally communicates with the exorcists. Acts 19:13 tells the reader that several Judean exorcists, not only the sons of Sceva, are attempting to exorcise evil spirits through the invocation of “the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches.” These Judean exorcists are naming two authoritative figures Jesus and Paul. The naming of Paul not only specifies to which Jesus the exorcists are referring but more importantly functions as an attempt by the exorcists to draw themselves into the same social network that includes Jesus and his authorized representative Paul. Thus, the Judean exorcists are claiming that they also are in a relationship, albeit an indirect one with Jesus. This claim of association with Jesus and Paul resembles the patron-client relations of Greco-Roman society to the extent that the Judean exorcists seem to present Paul as a broker between themselves and Paul’s spiritual patron Jesus, who himself is a broker between Paul and the Hebrew God.⁴¹

The Judean exorcists’ ritual attempts to claim social relations between themselves and Jesus through the invocation of Jesus’ name are very similar to the invocation of authoritative names in the exorcistic rituals in *PGM* IV.1227–1264, 3007–3086. The exorcistic formula that

⁴¹ Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, JSNTSup 235 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 139–140.

the Judean exorcists pronounce in Acts 19:13 functions as a social activity that attempts to establish an unbalanced social relationship in which the exorcist through association with Jesus is superior to the possessing spirits.⁴² Therefore, the ancient reader is more likely to understand the exorcistic formula in Acts 19:13 to be an attempt to access the divine power held by Jesus himself through the exorcists' claiming social ties with Jesus via Paul than as an attempt to tap into the inherent instrumental power of Jesus' name.⁴³

Numerous modern biblical scholars taking a historical approach to Acts 19:14–16 draw attention to the fact that no other historical record exists for any Judean high priest (ἀρχιερεύς) named Sceva. These scholars have proposed several historical-critical solutions to this discrepancy between Acts 19:14 and the extant historical record.⁴⁴ From the narrative focused perspective that I have employed in my study, I cannot assume that an ancient Greco-Roman reader outside of Palestine, or at least outside of Judean elite circles, would have been aware that there was never a high priest named Sceva. Moreover, Darrell L. Bock and Ben Witherington III convincingly argue that since ἀρχιερεύς is anarthrous, the better translation of the term is “chief priest” (one of several elite Judean priests), not “high priest” (the supreme Judean priest), so that the absence of any historical evidence for a Judean high priest is inconsequential to a historical analysis of Acts 19:13–16.⁴⁵

Ernst Haenchen, who provides both historical and narrative-focused readings of Acts 19:13–16, argues that the defeat of the sons of Sceva is much more thematically significant if

⁴² Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 236; cf. Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124–125.

⁴³ Porter, “Magic in Acts,” 120; Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140.

⁴⁴ Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 603; Bruce, *Acts*, 390; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 164; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 646, 649–650; Witherington, *Acts*, 581. Conzelmann quickly concludes that Sceva is “a purely legendary figure.” Bruce suggests that Sceva was neither an actual high priest nor a chief priest, but was someone who surreptitiously assumed the title “chief priest” to bolster his prestige as an exorcist since as a “chief priest,” he would be seen as one who likely knew the true, unpronounceable name of God. Fitzmyer argues that Sceva is a high priest of the Roman Imperial cult, not of the Jerusalem temple.

⁴⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 603; Witherington, *Acts*, 581.

these seven exorcists are the sons of an actual Judean high priest, than the sons of a “rogue.” In other words, Paul’s superiority to the exorcistic sons of an actual Judean high priest is more valuable to the narrative than his superiority to some men fraudulent claiming to be sons of a high priest.⁴⁶ Richard I. Pervo, who also analyzes the text from both a historical perspective and narrative perspective, claims that the primary significance of the identification of Sceva as a high or chief priest is found in a narrative analysis of the text. In particular, Pervo claims that Sceva seems to derive from the Latin word *scaeva*, which often translates as *sinister* and *unfortunate*.⁴⁷

Ultimately, three factors lead me to read Acts 19:14 as portraying the character Sceva as a *Judean chief priest of the Jerusalem temple*. First, nothing in the narrative indicates in which particular cult Sceva serves as high priest; thus, the only other religious identifier for Sceva in Acts 19:14 is that he is a Judean. Therefore, the ancient reader would likely assume that Sceva serves in the Jerusalem temple, rather than identify Sceva as a high priest of the Roman imperial cult, as Joseph A. Fitzmyer does.⁴⁸ Second, on grammatical and stylistic grounds, *chief priest* is a better translation for the anarthrous ἀρχιερέως than *high priest*, since the Gospel of Luke and Acts typically refer to the Judean high priest with the arthrous ἀρχιερεύς.⁴⁹ Third, the description of Sceva is terse and seems to present the father of the seven exorcists in a matter-of-fact way (τινος Σκευᾶ Ἰουδαίου ἀρχιερέως). Nothing in the narrative itself suggests to the reader that any doubt exists as to whether Sceva was truly chief priest, especially a priest of the Jerusalem temple.⁵⁰ Thus, the ancient reader would most likely read Acts 19:14 as presenting

⁴⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, 565; see also, Pervo, *Acts*, 477.

⁴⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 476–477; see also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier / Liturgical, 1992), 340, 342–343.

⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 646, 649–650.

⁴⁹ Witherington, *Acts*, 581; see also Bock, *Acts*, 603.

⁵⁰ Haenchen, *Acts*, 565. It is important to recognize that the text gives no indication that Sceva lives in Ephesus or is even an exorcist himself; instead, the narrative informs the reader that Sceva’s *sons* are exorcists living in Ephesus. Thus, it is not even necessary for a reader to ask why Sceva is in Ephesus or why this chief priest works as an exorcist because the text indicates neither of these things (contra Bruce, *Acts*, 390; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 646).

these seven exorcists as members of an elite Jerusalemite family. Therefore, part of the irony of Acts 19:14–16 is that seven socially elite Judean exorcists, who hypothetically could themselves become chief priests, ritually invoke the names of two Judeans that are social deviants from the perspective of the Jerusalem elite. In addition, as a possible transliteration of the Latin word for “sinister” (*scaeva*), the name Sceva (Σκευᾶς) subtly reinforces the deviant characterization of the charlatanistic sons of Sceva.⁵¹

Even more ironic than the possible etymological root of Sceva’s name is the response of the evil spirit, who attacks the seven exorcists of elite social status so that they run naked and injured from the house into the public streets. The evil spirit, who is presumably a servant of Satan, defeats and publicly shames the sons of an elite, Judean chief priest. Thus, the social character of the failed exorcistic ritual in Acts 19:14–16 is apparent in two ways. First, the failed exorcism itself results in the public shaming of elite Judeans. Second, the direct discourse of the evil spirit draws attention to the existence and non-existence of certain relationships among Jesus, Paul, the sons of Sceva, and the evil spirit.

Acts 19:13–16 sets up a network of social relations that includes relationships not only between human characters but also between human and spirit characters (see Figure 9.1). The reader can understand the narrative to be establishing a relationship between the sons of Sceva and the Jerusalem elite via their relationship with their father Sceva the chief priest. As an example of the Judean exorcists in Acts 19:13, the sons of Sceva through their exorcistic formula attempt to claim a social relationship, albeit a tenuous relationship, with Jesus. The Gospel of Luke presents the chief priests of Jerusalem as opponents of Jesus and participants in the

⁵¹ In addition by giving a Judean chief priest a name that is a possible transliteration of the Latin word *scaeva* (sinister), Acts 19:13–16 contributes to Acts denigration of the religio-political institution in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 7:47–53).

conspiracy resulting in Jesus' crucifixion.⁵² Moreover, Acts has consistently portrayed the chief priests as opponents of the Christ-movement, even as opponents of Paul.⁵³ Nevertheless, and ironically, the sons of chief priest Sceva mention the social relationship that Acts has so far established between Jesus and Paul, and the mentioning of Paul appears to be an attempt by the sons to associate themselves with Paul.⁵⁴ The evil spirit's discourse sets up a social relationship between Jesus and the evil spirit, albeit an antagonistic relationship. In addition, the evil spirit notes that although it has no first-hand knowledge of Paul, it has heard of him. Thus, not only does the exorcists' invocation of Paul's name establish Paul's reputation as a known social personality within Ephesus, but so also does the evil spirit's second-hand knowledge of Paul. At the center of the social network created in Acts 19:13–16 is Jesus.

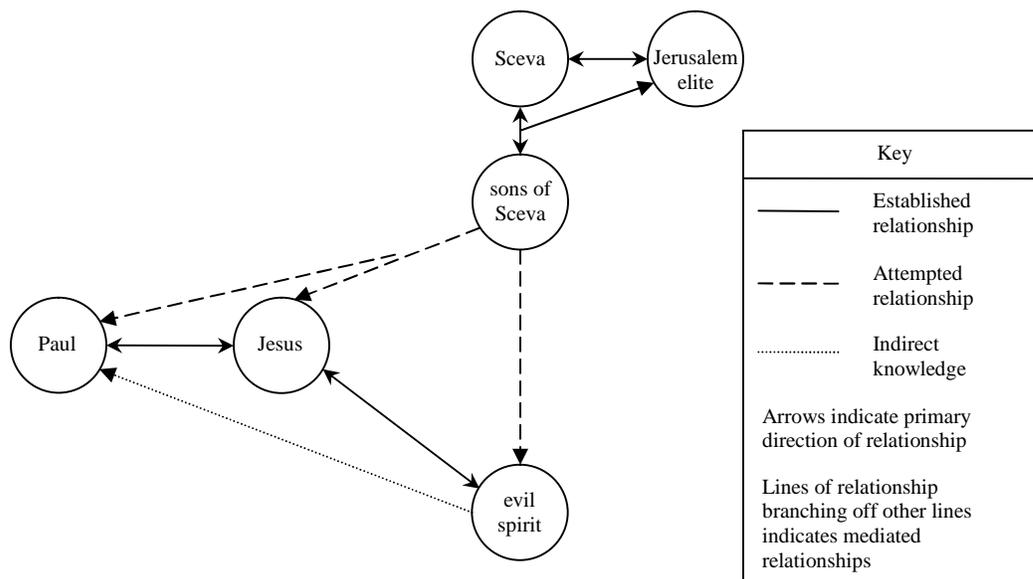


Figure 9.1 Human-spirit social relations in Acts 19:13–16.

⁵² Luke 9:21–22, 47–48; 20:1–26; 22:1–6, 47–54, 66–71; 23:1–25; 24:19–20; cf. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140.

⁵³ Acts 4:1–22; 5:24–40; 9:13, 19–21; **22:30; 23:12–15; 25:2–8; 15–19**; 26:10, 12. Boldfaced text indicates passages in which Acts portrays Judean chief priests as opponents of Paul. Cf. Acts 6:7, which presents many of the Judean chief priests joining the Christ-movement.

⁵⁴ Cf. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140.

The narrative gives no reason for the reader to doubt that the evil spirit knows Jesus. In addition, Acts provides ample illustrations of the social relationship that exists between Paul and Jesus starting in Acts 9. Just as Acts 1:8; 5:12–16 presents Jesus authorizing Peter via the Holy Spirit to employ divine power in order to work exorcisms and other miracles, Acts 19:11–12 presents Paul, who also is possessed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9; 16:18), as an authorized user of divine power. However, Acts 19:13–16 appears to portray the sons of Sceva claiming a relationship with Jesus that does not actually exist.⁵⁵ Their invocation of Jesus' name and reference to Paul are attempts to access the divine power that the Christ-following miracle-worker Paul accesses through the invocation of Jesus' name. Yet, unlike Paul, the sons of Sceva not only have no relationship with Jesus, but they also through kinship ties are directly connected to known opponents of Jesus and the Christ-followers.⁵⁶

Modern anthropological studies of shamans and mediumistic healers emphasize the importance of a healer's development of relationships with his or her spirit familiars.⁵⁷ In a study of a Puerto Rican mediumistic healer named Haydée, anthropologist Raquel Romberg illustrates the importance that mediumistic healers attach to the development of relationships between the

⁵⁵ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 125; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 151; Wall, "Acts," 10:268.

⁵⁶ Luke 9:21–22, 47–48; 20:1–26; 22:1–6, 47–54, 66–71; 23:1–25; 24:19–20; Acts 4:1–22; 5:24–40; 9:13, 19–21; 22:30; 23:12–15; 25:2–8; 15–19; 26:10, 12; cf. Acts 6:7.

⁵⁷ Mircea Eliade, "Shamanism (An Overview)," *ER* 13:202; Roberte N. Hamayon, "Game and Games, Fortune and Dualism in Siberian Shamanism," in *Shamanism: A Reader*, ed. Graham Harvey (London: Routledge, 2003), 65–66; David Holmberg, "Derision, Exorcism, and the Ritual Production of Power," *American Ethnologist* 27 (2000), 929–930; Joan D. Koss, "Social Process, Healing, and Self-Defeat among Puerto Rican Spiritists," *American Ethnologist* 4 (1977), 455–457; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 50–56; Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 37–38; Esther Pressel, "Umbanda in São Paulo: Religious Innovation in a Developing Society," in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*, ed. Erika Bourguignon (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 298–301; Susan J. Rasmussen, "'Magic,' Power, and Ritual in Shamanism," in *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, eds. Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jan Neumann Fridman (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1:165–166; Marina Roseman, *Healing Sounds from the Malaysian Rain Forest: Temiar Music and Medicine*, Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), EBSCO e-book, 151–174.

healer and his or her spirit familiars.⁵⁸ Mediumistic healers like Haydée do not wield spiritual power and authoritative names as mere instruments; instead, the invocation of deities and their names are means of accessing established relationships between the healer and the spirit or deity. It is through the relationship that the healer is able to access the spirit's or deity's power.

As a divinely possessed healer, Paul in Acts is an intermediary of God's power. Acts presents Paul being able to access this power because not only does Jesus commission Paul as his missionary representative (Acts 9:15–16; 13:2–4) but also Paul is empowered by the Holy Spirit, which possesses him (Acts 9:17; 13:9–11; 16:18). In other words, Paul exorcises spirits and heals sickness through his relationship with Jesus, who has authorized Paul to access divine power.⁵⁹ However, the sons of Sceva do not appear to be Christ-followers;⁶⁰ thus, their invocation of Jesus' name is a claim to a relationship with Jesus that does not exist. Therefore, Acts 19:13–16 presents them as charlatans trying to usurp divine power by falsely claiming a relationship with Jesus.⁶¹

Thematically a connection exists among the sons of Sceva, Simon of Samaria, and Elymas, specifically that Acts either explicitly or implicitly characterizes all these characters as

⁵⁸ Raquel Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 13, 20, 22, 153–155. In Romberg's study, the folk healer Haydée is a self-proclaimed *bruja*, who accordingly practices *brujería*. *Bruja* is a Spanish word that typically translates into English as “witch” or “sorceress,” and *brujería* typically translates as “witchcraft” or “sorcery” (*Merriam-Webster's Spanish-English Dictionary*, s.v. “brujería” and “brujo”). Although these two terms typically designate magico-religious deviants and their deviant behavior, Haydée and other practitioners of Spiritist-based folk religion in Puerto Rico have consciously adopted these deviant labels and their practices by *reinterpreting* these labels as positive labels for a beneficent healer and her practices. Thus, Haydée functions as a good example of the *reinterpretation* of a deviant label, which is sociologists Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo's seventh mode of adaptation to deviance labeling (cf. Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, “Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label,” *Social Problems* 22 [1974], 112–113). Furthermore, Haydée provides a modern correspondent to Stratton's claim that in the Greco-Roman world that the only self-proclaimed μάγοι would consciously be choosing a deviant label for themselves as form of subversion to the normative forms of magico-religious behavior. Thus, although the self-proclaimed μάγος (like Haydée) may adapt a title that he or she knows is deviant, he or she does not necessarily have to fulfill the role of popular μάγος through stereotypical behavior of popular μάγοι.

⁵⁹ Cf. Wall, “Acts,” 10:268.

⁶⁰ Witherington, *Acts*, 580.

⁶¹ Cf. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140.

charlatanistic *μάγοι*. The presentation of Elymas as a *μάγος* in Acts 13 is most explicit, but the least detailed, since the narrative simply labels Elymas a *μάγος* (vv. 6, 8). Elymas' charlatanism is his attempt to deceive Sergius Paulus by leading him away from faith in Jesus (Acts 13:8). Although the narrative identifies Elymas as a prophetic character, albeit a false-prophet (Acts 13:6), Acts 13:9–11 presents Paul prophetically rebuking Elymas as someone “full of all deceit and all pretense, Son of the Devil, enemy of all righteousness” that makes “crooked the straight ways of the Lord” and then cursing him with temporary blindness because Elymas opposes Paul's prophetic witness to Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:9, 11 presents Simon of Samaria as a practitioner of *μαγεία*, although the narrative does not explicitly label Simon a *μάγος*. Acts 8:4–25 portrays Simon as a charlatan by presenting him as primarily a wonder-working showman, who seems to accept divine honors from the Samaritan people. Thus, as with Elymas, Acts ultimately presents Simon of Samaria as a deceiver. Furthermore, his charlatanistic character emerges later in the narrative when Simon attempts to buy the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit on other people and Peter declares that the authority to bestow the Holy Spirit is a gift from God, thus, indicating that neither can Peter sell nor can Simon buy this authority. In response to Simon's request, Peter rebukes Simon with a curse of destruction that may possibly be averted through repentance.

Acts 19:13–16 never explicitly links the sons of Sceva with *μαγεία*; instead, two elements of Acts 19:8–20 imply that the sons of Sceva are practitioners of *μαγεία*. First, the succeeding narration of the Ephesian Christ-followers repenting of their *περίεργα* and the burning of books for performing these *περίεργα* (Acts 19:18–19) suggests to the reader that the sons of Sceva also practice *μαγεία*.⁶² Second, since the sons of Sceva are not Christ-followers

⁶² Pervo, *Acts*, 478–479.

and have no relationship with Jesus Christ, their invocation of Jesus' name effectively becomes a purely instrumental manipulation of Jesus' name in order to access and control divine power.⁶³ Attempting to access and to control deities and their divine power is a stereotypical quality of Greco-Roman popular μάγοι.⁶⁴ Unlike Simon and Elymas, whom Acts presents as charlatans because they deceive people, the failed exorcism of the sons of Sceva and the possessing spirit's violent treatment of them in Acts 19:14–16 portrays the sons of Sceva as charlatans. If any deception occurs on the part of the sons of Sceva, it is their attempt to claim falsely a relationship with Jesus Christ in order to exorcise the possessing evil spirit.

Interestingly, Acts 19:8–20 as a whole focuses less upon the theme of prophecy than upon the previous three μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes. In Acts 8:4–6, Philip appears as a prophetic witness to Christ within the city of Samaria. In addition, Peter's rebuking of Simon in Acts 8:20–23 functions as a prophetic oracle announcing judgment against Simon. Acts 13:4–12 not only presents Elymas as a false-prophet but also portrays Paul prophetically announcing judgment against Elymas. In Acts 16:16–20, a prophetic character, specifically a mediumistic diviner, delivers an oracle that characterizes Paul and his companions as prophetic characters, who proclaim a way of salvation from the Highest God. However, the diviner's oracle is deceptive, and Paul silences the divining slave by exorcising her possessing spirit. Although Acts

⁶³ Cf. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 139–140.

⁶⁴ Jan N. Bremmer, "Magic and Religion," appendix to *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 269–270; Fritz Graf, "Excluding the Charming: The Development of the Greek Concept of Magic," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 35, 222–223, 227–229; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philipp, Revealing Antiquity 10 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 27, 215–216, 223–224; Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, SNTSMS 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 126; Georg Luck, trans., annotator, and introducer, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Ebrary e-book, 39; Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 106; Mills, *Human Agents*, 24–25; Daniel Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 85.

19:8–9 portrays Paul as a respectable religious teacher speaking in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, Acts 19:4–12 portrays Paul as primarily a miraculous healer and exorcist, rather than as a prophetic witness delivering the message about Jesus Christ and judgments against deceivers. Therefore, although Acts 19:8–20 presents Paul as a miracle-worker and the sons of Sceva as charlatanistic *μάγοι*, it does not do so in the same way that the previous *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes present Christ-following protagonists as miracle-working *prophetic* characters and their opponents as deceivers, charlatans, and/or popular *μάγοι*. Nevertheless, the theme of *prophecy* that is quite explicit in the three previous *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts is not completely absent in Acts 19:8–20, since v. 11 presents Paul as an intermediate agent of God’s divine wonder-working power, a role that the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets present several prophetic characters fulfilling.⁶⁵ By presenting Paul as an intermediary agent through whom God works miracles, Acts 19:11 still portrays Paul engaging in activity characteristic of a prophet.

A reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke may recognize an affinity between the sons of Sceva and the unnamed exorcist in Luke 9:49–50, in which John reports an encounter with a person that is not one of “us” (*ἡμῶν*) and casts out *δαίμόνια* in Jesus’ name (v. 49).⁶⁶ In response, Jesus instructs that this unnamed exorcist should not be prevented from performing exorcisms in his name (v. 50) because Jesus claims, “whoever is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:50). Like the unnamed exorcist in Luke 9:49–50, the sons of Sceva also attempt to exorcise a malevolent spirit through the invocation of Jesus’ name, although Jesus has not commissioned them to do so; however, through the defeat of the sons of Sceva, the narrative signals to the reader that they are not authorized to use Jesus’ name to exorcise spirits. In regard to the affinity between Luke 9:49–50 and Acts 19:13–16, Graham H. Twelftree comments, “This

⁶⁵ E.g., Exod 14:10–31; 1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:1–7, 33–41.

⁶⁶ David E. Aune, “Magic in Early Christianity,” *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 1545; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 153.

story [Acts 19:13–16] raises the question why the sons of Sceva are condemned while the unknown exorcist in the Gospel is condoned (Luke 9:49–50).” Twelftree resolves the tension between the two narratives by indicating that Luke 9:49–50 concerns conflict “between exorcists within the Christian community” and Acts 19:13–16 involves “non-Christian exorcists.”⁶⁷ Thus, Jesus permits the unnamed exorcist within Luke 9:49–50 to continue exorcising through the invocation of Jesus’ name because the exorcist is a member of the “Christian community”; however, Acts 19:13–16 presents the sons of Sceva as usurpers of divine power, since they are not Christ-followers.

Several elements of Twelftree’s solution to the tension between Luke 9:49–50 and Acts 19:13–16 require further attention. First, in reference to the followers of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, the phrase “Christian community” is a rather vague and possibly misleading term. To lump the followers of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and the Christ-followers in Acts into an overarching category of “Christian community” is quite problematic not only historically but also in respect to the narrative development of the Christ-movement in the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Therefore, it is better to speak of the *followers of Jesus* in Luke 9:49–50, who include the Twelve and possibly the unnamed exorcist, and to speak of the *Christ-followers* in Acts 19, who primarily include Paul and the Ephesian members of the Christ-movement.

Second, it is important to identify explicitly the antecedent of the first person plural pronoun ἡμῶν (us) at the end of Luke 9:49. Two factors suggest that ἡμῶν in v. 49 refers to the Twelve. The antecedent of ἡμῶν in v. 49 could be οἱ μαθηταί (the disciples; Luke 9:43), which is an ambiguous term in the Gospel of Luke referring primarily to Jesus’ close followers; however, the Gospel of Luke specifically designates John as a member of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16), a select group from among Jesus’ general body of μαθηταί. More importantly, at this

⁶⁷ Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 153.

point in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has given only the Twelve “power and authority over all *daimonia* and illnesses” (Luke 9:1). Since the only group that Jesus has authorized to exorcise *daimonia* is the Twelve, the ἡμῶν (us) in v. 49 most likely refers to the Twelve, not to all the followers of Jesus. Twelftree seems correct in treating the unnamed exorcist as a follower of Jesus, but not a member of the Twelve. Therefore, Luke 9:49–50 seems to involve a dispute among followers of Jesus, namely between the Twelve and an unnamed disciple outside the Twelve. Accordingly, John’s problem with the unnamed exorcist is that the unnamed exorcist is performing exorcisms in Jesus’ name, although Jesus has formally bestowed his healing and exorcistic authority only upon the Twelve. Jesus’ instructions that the Twelve not hinder the unnamed exorcist indicate that although Jesus does not formally grant all his disciples the ability to exorcise and heal, he permits any of his followers to invoke his name for exorcisms and other miracles.⁶⁸

The permitting of all Christ-followers to perform exorcisms and healing wonders through Jesus’ name occurs in Acts explicitly within Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) in

⁶⁸ Cf. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 230. Klutz claims that in Acts, Paul “corresponds in several notable ways” to the unnamed exorcist in Luke 9:49–50. Like the unnamed exorcist, Paul is not a member of the Twelve and is able to perform exorcisms through Jesus’ name. Just as the Twelve oppose the unnamed exorcist, the Twelve also oppose Paul in Act 9:26. Finally, although the Twelve show some resistance toward accepting Paul, Jesus personally accepts Paul, just as Jesus accepts the unnamed exorcist (cf. Luke 9:50; Acts 9:1–20). Klutz concludes that the “effect” of the similarities between Paul and the unnamed exorcist is “to ground the legitimacy of Paul’s ministry not only in Jesus’ exorcistic pattern but also in his explicit and authoritative teaching on group boundaries” (*Exorcism Stories*, 230). However, the parallels between Paul and the unnamed exorcist are not as close as Klutz argues. First, unlike the unnamed exorcist, Paul is chosen and commissioned by Jesus (Acts 9:15; 13:2). Second, Klutz’s argument presupposes that Paul’s exorcistic activity requires legitimation, since he is not a member of the Twelve; however, Acts so far has not limited miracle-working to the Twelve. In particular, Acts presents Stephen and Philip working miracles (Acts 6:8; 8:6–7). Acts 8:7 even attributes the performance of exorcisms to Philip. Third, two important passages after Luke 9 already indicate that miracle-working is no longer limited to the Twelve: the commissioning of the seventy in Luke 10:1–20 and Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–5 (2:28–32 ET) in Acts 2:17–21. Lastly, despite the initial hesitation of the Jerusalemite Christ-followers (not just the Twelve) to accept Paul in Acts 9:26, Acts ascribes to the Twelve no obvious opposition to Paul. Even when Paul defends his ministry before the Twelve and the elders of the Jerusalem church, Acts attributes the opposition against Paul neither to the Twelve nor to the elders, but to certain unnamed Judeans (Acts 15:1–35). Moreover, Peter, who functions as the spokesperson for the Twelve in Acts, actually defends Paul (Acts 15:6–11). Thus, I see some affinity between Paul and the unnamed exorcist in Luke 9:49–50, specifically that both characters are legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers outside the Twelve; however, I do not accept all the similarities between Paul and the unnamed exorcist that Klutz proposes.

Acts 2:17–21, although the only legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers in Acts are Judean men holding recognized leadership positions in the Christ-movement. Since Acts 19:13–16 appears to present the sons of Sceva as being outside the Christ-movement, this narrative section not only portrays the sons of Sceva as illegitimately invoking Jesus’ name to exorcise malevolent spirits but also effectively limits the legitimate authority to invoke Jesus’ name for wonder-working to Christ-followers.⁶⁹ The evil spirit’s verbal response to the exorcistic formula of the sons of Sceva reveals not only that they are unable to access successfully divine power through Jesus’ name but also that they have no relationship with Jesus. The result of their illegitimate claim to divine power through Jesus’ name is that although they wish to cast the evil possessing spirit out of the possessed human, the possessing spirit using the possessed human’s body attacks the sons of Sceva, strips them naked, beats them, and chases them out the house and into the public streets (Acts 19:16).⁷⁰ Thus, the failed exorcism by the sons of Sceva ultimately leads to the evil possessing spirit publicly shaming the Sons of Sceva as powerless charlatans.

Several elements of the depiction of the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13–16 correspond to the stereotypical qualities of a popular μάγος. First, they attempt to *manipulate instrumentally spiritual power*, since they invoke the name of Jesus, although they have no relationship with Jesus or the Christ-movement.⁷¹ Second, they attempt to *control spiritual beings* through their

⁶⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 603–604; Heininger, “Im Dunstkreis der Magie,” 284–285; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 100; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124–125; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 340–341.

⁷⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 478; John Christopher Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought*, JPTSup 13 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 294. A well-known textual peculiarity in Acts 19:16 is the appearance of ἀμφότεροι in reference to all seven sons of Sceva, although ἀμφότεροι typically translates as “both.” The common solution is simply to translate ἀμφοτέρων in v. 16 as “all.” See Conzelmann, *Acts*, 164; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:911; Johnson, *Acts*, 341; Pervo, *Acts*, 475; Charles C. Torrey, “‘Two Sons’ in Acts 19:14,” in *ATHR* 26 (1944), 253–255; Witherington, *Acts*, 581, n. 94.

⁷¹ Bremmer, “Magic and Religion,” 269–270; Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic*, 126; Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 39; Luck, “Witches and Sorcerers,” 106; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 223; Mills, *Human Agents*, 24–25; Ogden, “Binding Spells,” 85.

exorcistic ritual.⁷² Third, the failed exorcism presents them as *charlatans*.⁷³ Fourth, from the perspective of a Greek or Roman reader, the Judean exorcists are *foreign* magico-religious specialists, reflecting the common characterization of the popular μάγος as a foreigner. Although being a foreigner is not enough on its own to classify a person or character as a popular μάγος, this quality does contribute to the overall stereotype of a popular μάγος.⁷⁴ The combination of these four qualities is likely to lead my ancient Greco-Roman reader to identify the sons of Sceva as popular μάγοι, although Acts 19:13–16 does not explicitly identify them as μάγοι or their activity as μαγεία.⁷⁵

Unlike the previous three μαγεία-miracle conflicts, Acts 19:8–20 does not contain a direct conflict between two human characters, although Acts 19:13, 15 suggest to the reader that Paul and the sons of Sceva function as competitors.⁷⁶ The narrative, however, presents a direct conflict between one set of human characters (sons of Sceva) and a spirit character (the possessing evil spirit), who happens to control the body of an unnamed human character (the possessed person). Nevertheless, the conflict between the evil spirit and the sons of Sceva reveals a glimpse of an even greater conflict that is just as much a social conflict as the conflict between the evil spirit and Sceva's sons and even the previous μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts 8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–18. The evil spirit's claim to know Jesus Christ presents the existence of a relationship between the evil spirit and Jesus; however, the references to evil spirits prior to Acts 19 depict the relationship between Jesus and evil spirits, including Satan himself, as an

⁷² Bremmer, "Magic and Religion," 269–270; Graf, "Excluding the Charming," 35, 222–223, 227–229; Graf, *Magic in Ancient World*, 27, 215–216, 223–224; Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers," 106.

⁷³ Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 118–119; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124.

⁷⁴ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124.

⁷⁵ Pervo, *Acts*, 478; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124.

⁷⁶ Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 565.

antagonistic relationship.⁷⁷ Furthermore, a reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke or even one of the other Synoptic Gospels would consider unclean and evil spirits in Acts to be the enemies of Jesus.⁷⁸

As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Garrett understands the possessing evil spirit's defeat of the sons of Sceva to be a demonstration of Jesus' response to accusations that he exorcises *daimonia* by Beelzebul: "Any kingdom divided against itself is destroyed and a house against a house falls. If Satan also was divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Since you say that I cast out *daimonia* by Beelzebul. If I cast out *daimonia* by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast out *daimonia*? According to this, they will be your judges" (Luke 11:17–19). Since Garrett understands the Gospel of Luke and Acts together to be presenting Satan as both the source of μαγεία and the master of μάγοι, she reads the defeat of the sons of Sceva as a sign of internal division within Satan's kingdom and the imminent fall of that kingdom.⁷⁹ Furthermore, since neither μαγεία nor μάγοι make any further appearances within Acts, Garrett argues that the defeat of Sceva's sons and the burning of the books for performing περίεργα effectively signal the final defeat of μαγεία and the impending end of Satan's kingdom.⁸⁰

Throughout my study of μαγεία-miracle conflicts in Acts, I have consistently refuted Garrett's argument that Acts portrays Satan as the source of μαγεία, and once again I find Garrett's final analysis of Acts 19:13–20 to be flawed because of her thematic association of Satan and μαγεία. Nevertheless, not all of Garrett's conclusions regarding Acts 19:13–20 are

⁷⁷ E.g., Acts 5:3; 10:37–38; 26:17–18.

⁷⁸ Matt 8:16, 28–34; 9:32–34; 10:1, 8; 12:22–29; 15:22–28; 17:14–18; Mark 1:23–27, 34, 39; 3:10–15, 22–27; 5:1–13; 6:7–13; 7:25–30; 9:17–27, 38–39; Luke 4:1–13, 33–37, 40–41; 7:21; 8:11–12, 26–39; 9:37–43; 13:32; 22:3–4; 22:31–32.

⁷⁹ See also Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 151–152.

⁸⁰ Garrett, *Demise of Devil*, 97–99.

that far off target. An ancient reader familiar with Luke 11:19–20 could still read Acts 19:13–20 as the final defeat of μαγεία and popular μάγοι in Acts without any need to refer to Garrett’s theme of *Satan as the source of μαγεία*.⁸¹

In Jesus’ response to his critics in Luke 11:15–16, his question regarding by whom the “sons” of his Judean opponents exorcise *daimonia* intimates that it is the exorcists among Jesus’ critics that are casting out *daimonia* by Satan. The defeat of the exorcist sons of the Judean chief priest Sceva (presumably an opponent of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke) by the evil spirit (presumably a servant of Satan)⁸² appears to be an illustrative demonstration of Jesus’ words in Luke 11:18–19 and an indication that the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself. The theme of *the defeat of Satan’s kingdom* in Luke 11:18–20 involves the slandering of Jesus’ Judean opponents as associates of Satan. This is a rhetorical shaming technique that later appears in Acts 13:10, where Paul claims that Elymas, an opponent of the Christ-movement, is a “son of the devil.” From a rhetorical perspective, the association of wonder-working opponents of Jesus and of the Christ-movement with Satan in Luke 11:18–20 and Acts 13:4–12 does not create a link between Satan and μαγεία, but a link between Satan and the Judean opponents of Jesus and the Christ-movement. As a demonstration of Luke 11:18–20, Acts 19:13–20 does not refer to a link between Satan and μαγεία thus far developed in either Luke’s Gospel or Acts; instead, it functions as a subtle means of shaming and deviantizing the Judean exorcists outside the Christ-movement. Although I find no link in Luke 11:18–20 between Satan and μαγεία, an ancient reader familiar with the Gospel of Luke could still read Acts 19:13–20 in connection with Luke 11:18–20, since Acts 19:13–20 portrays a *daimonion* defeating the exorcist “sons” of an

⁸¹ Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 481; Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 157 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 151.

⁸² See Luke 9:21–22, 47–48; 20:1–26; 22:1–6, 47–54, 66–71; 23:1–25; 24:19–20, in which the Judean chief priests are opponents of Jesus.

opponent of Jesus, which according to Luke 11:18–20 is an indication that Satan’s kingdom is divided and will fall. The irony in this reading of Acts 19:13–20 is that the narrative subtly presents the sons of an elite Judean religious leader, who supposedly is the servant of God, as the servants of Satan. Thus, in association with Luke 11:18–20, Acts 19:13–20 could be read as just as much an indictment upon elite Judeans, particularly those connected with the official temple leadership, as it is an indictment upon Judean wonder-workers.

Nevertheless, the portrait of the sons of Sceva specifically in Acts 19:13–16 is that of a group of ineffective, impious, μαγεία-working charlatans. After the sons of Sceva flee naked from the house, the narrative neither explicitly nor implicitly suggests to the reader the possibility of repentance on the part of the sons of Sceva. Like the divining slave in Acts 16:16–20, the sons of Sceva disappear from Acts as soon as they experience defeat; however, Acts 19:17–20 presents the defeat of the sons of Sceva as having results among the local Ephesian population, particularly among the Ephesian Christ-followers.

The Abandonment of Μαγεία in Ephesus (Acts 19:17–20)

According to Acts 19:17, the news of the failed exorcism by the sons of Sceva spreads throughout the population of Ephesus, not only among the Judeans but also among the Gentiles. However, unlike in the previous μαγεία-miracle conflicts, Acts 19:8–20 provides no indication that the defeat of the miracle-worker’s rivals results in people joining the Christ-movement; instead, Acts 19:17 only indicates that after all the Judeans and Greeks in Ephesus heard about the sons of Sceva’s failed exorcism, “fear fell upon all of them” and that “the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.”

The defeat of the sons of Sceva also results in a renouncing of μαγεία among the Ephesian Christ-followers. Acts 19:18 presents many of the Ephesian Christ-followers

confessing their “practices” (πράξεις), and v. 19 narrates how the Ephesian Christ-followers burned their books for performing these περίεργα.⁸³ Outside of Acts 19:19, the term περίεργος occurs only one other time in the NT. 1 Timothy 5:13 characterizes younger widows as susceptible to becoming *meddlesome* or *busybodies* (περίεργοι). The use of περίεργος in 1 Tim 5:13 draws upon the first and second definitions for the adjective as listed in LSJ: (1) *taking needless trouble, meddlesome, inquisitive, curious, overwrought, elaborate* and (2) *superfluous, futile, useless*. The third definition for περίεργος in LSJ derives from only two texts. First, the variant form ἰεουργία appears in Plutarch’s *Alex.* 2, and LSJ renders the term as *curious* and *superstitious*. The second example for LSJ’s third definition of περίεργος comes from Acts 19:19, which LSJ translates as *curious arts* and *magic*.⁸⁴ Thus, the primary use of the word περίεργος is the indication of *meddlesomeness, curiosity, superfluousness, and uselessness*. Nevertheless, the presentation of the burning of books associated with the practice of these *curious* and *superstitious* acts (περίεργα) has led to the consensus among modern interpreters that Acts 19:19 presents the περίεργα of the Ephesian Christ-followers as acts of popular μαγεία.⁸⁵ Furthermore, since Acts 19:17–20 narrates the results of the defeat of the charlatanistic sons of Sceva, the interpretation of the Ephesians’ πράξεις and περίεργα as popular μαγεία seems the best reading.

Acts 19:18–19 contributes significantly to Acts’ overall portrayal of the socio-economic status of the Christ-following community in Ephesus. The conclusion to the fourth μαγεία-

⁸³ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:912; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 101; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 152–153; Witherington, *Acts*, 582. The perfect tense of the participle πεπιστευκότων presents those renouncing μαγεία as people who are already members of the Christ-movement; thus, while fear falls upon all the Judean and Gentile residents of Ephesus in Acts 19:17, it is characters who were already Christ-followers prior to the defeat of the sons of Sceva that confess the practicing of περίεργα and that burn their books for performing περίεργα.

⁸⁴ LSJ, s.v. “περίεργος”; cf. BDAG, “περίεργος,” in which the definitions of the term are comparably similar to those in LSJ.

⁸⁵ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:912; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 164; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 101.

miracle conflict presents a considerable segment of the Ephesian Christ-followers as literate and possessing a considerable amount of disposable income. In addition to the generally expensive nature of books in Greco-Roman society in comparison to the relative poverty of the majority of Greco-Roman society, the considerable value of the books burned (fifty thousand pieces of silver) presents the Ephesian Christ-followers owning numerous books of very high value. Following the common assumption that “silver pieces” (ἄργύρια) in Acts 19:19 refers to silver drachmas, the total value of the books would be approximately 150,000 sesterces, the equivalent of 50,000 days’ worth of wages for a common laborer. This amount of money would have bought a substantial number of books—approximately 7,500 to 50,000 books—during the late first or early second century when book prices ranged from approximately 3 to 20 sesterces per book.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the possession of books suggests that the owners of the books are literate to some degree.

⁸⁶ For a discussion on the selling and pricing of books in the Roman empire during the late first century, see John J. Phillips, “Book Prices and Roman Literacy,” *CW* 79 (1985), 36–38; Raymond J. Starr, “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” *CQ* 37 (1987), 213–223. Starr explains that slaves, freedpersons, and other people of low social status typically performed the manual production of copies of a written document (“Circulation of Texts,” 213–214, 220–221). Starr also identifies three channels through which copies of books were made available to readers. First, the private circulation of books was most common among the elite. Typically, an author of a new work would provide copies of the text at his own expense to his friends. In addition, a person could request a friend to loan him or her a copy of a particular book so that he or she could have copies made at his or her own expense. An author or owner of a text could read the text aloud before friends, who would then have transcriptions made of the reading (“Circulation of Texts,” 213–216). Second, the author or owner of a particular text could have a copy made at his or her own expense and deposit that copy in a public library (“Circulation of Texts,” 216). Third, book dealers sold copies of a limited number of works they kept in stock; however, all other books that a book dealer sold were produced upon the request of the customer. According to Starr, book dealers occupied the social status of an artisan or a lower level merchant, since the book dealer was not only directly involved in commercial trade but also the book dealer himself or herself would often manually produce copies of books (“Circulation of Texts,” 219–223).

The primary evidence for the cost of books comes from Martial who indicates that the production of one of his books, including the price of a cheap papyrus roll, costs six to ten sesterces (*Epigrams* 1.66.1–4). Martial also notes that a copy of the short thirteenth book of his *Epigrams* sold for only four sesterces at a book dealer’s store (*Epigrams* 13.3.1–4). Phillips claims that at the time Martial was writing (late first century CE), a typical manual laborer earned a daily wage of 3 sesterces. Thus, Phillips argues that the most inexpensive copies of books likely cost around 3 sesterces, the equivalent of a full day’s income for a laborer. Martial, however, notes that more expensive copies of books within his *Epigrams* written on high quality papyrus are available at a certain bookstore for the much higher price of five denarii, which is equal to 20 sesterces (Martial, *Epigrams* 1.117; Phillips, “Book Prices,” 36–37). The more expensive copies of books of Martial’s *Epigrams* cost roughly a week’s worth of wages

The resulting image of the Ephesian Christ-movement in Acts 19 includes a significant segment of the community being well above the subsistence level and having received some degree of education.⁸⁷ Thus, the presentation of the Christ-followers in Acts 19:17–20 allows the reader to imagine a significant portion of the Ephesian Christ-followers occupying socio-economic statuses well above the subsistence level, including the statuses of upper-level peasants, higher-level merchants and retainers, and possibly even local elites. In addition, the reference in Acts 19:31 to Paul being “friends” (φίλοι) with some Asiarchs (local Ephesian elites) portrays the character Paul as being at least a client of the Asiarchs, since “friend” was a common Greco-Roman way of referring to a number of relationships ranging from close relations between social equals to patron-client relations.⁸⁸ However, the narrative does not

for a laborer. Thus, the *collection* of multiple books would have been limited to people above the subsistence level, but not only to elites.

Acts 19:19 presents the value of the books burned in “silver pieces” (ἄργύρια), which likely refers to drachmas (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 164 Witherington, *Acts*, 582). Witherington calculates a drachma’s value as the equivalent of a laborer’s daily wage, thus making the total value of books approximately the equivalent of 50,000 days or 137 years of work for a day laborer. In Roman currency, the total value of the books burned by the Ephesian Christ-followers is roughly 150,000 sesterces. In respect to the book values that Martial provides, the total value of the books is a considerable amount. Nevertheless, books of μαγεία would not likely have been available in bookstores because such books are likely to be classed as deviant literature and, more importantly, because of the emphasis of secrecy within texts of popular rituals for performing extraordinary deeds (Hans Dieter Betz, “Secrecy in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*, eds. Hans G. Kippenberg and Guy G. Stroumsa, SHR 65 [Leiden: Brill, 1995], 153–175). Thus, the ancient reader would possibly imagine that the books burned in Acts 19:19 were acquired through private channels, thus increasing the overall value of the individual texts within the whole collection of burned books.

⁸⁷ Witherington, *Acts*, 582; cf. Phillips, “Book Prices,” 36–38; Starr, “Circulation of Texts,” Phillips argues that the existence of relatively inexpensive books (3–4 sesterces; cf. Martial, *Epigrams* 13.3.1–4) indicates that “artisans or a man [*sic*] with a little property and income did buy books” (“Books Prices,” 37); therefore, Phillips argues that the existence of these relatively inexpensive books also indicates that the artisans and other above-subsistence non-elite persons that possessed these books were also literate to some degree (contra Starr, “Circulation of Texts,” 221). The presentation of the Ephesians burning books for performing περίεργα in Acts 19:19 would suggest to the reader that a significant segment of the Christ-movement in Ephesus is not abjectly poor and lives far enough above the subsistence level to collect books. Additionally, Acts 19:19 suggests that a large segment of the Ephesian Christ-followers is literate enough to read the books that they burn.

⁸⁸ Richard Saller, “Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 1 (London: Routledge, 1989), 49–62; Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 11–15; cf. David W. J. Gill, “Acts and the Urban Élites,” in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, eds. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 110. The presentation of Paul as a “friend” of the Ephesian Asiarchs in Acts 19:30 is a bold claim that suggests that Paul is at least of high retainer status. In Greco-Roman society, φίλος and *amicus* were often used to refer politely to participants in patron-client relationships, which by

explicitly present the Asiarchs that Paul has befriended as members of the Christ-movement. Thus, Acts presents Paul being in cordial relations with members of the local elite that are at least sympathetic to the Christ-movement in Ephesus.

Not only does the narrative of the burning of the books (Acts 19:17–20) provide information that would allow an ancient reader to imagine the economic status of the Ephesian Christ-followers, but it also presents a certain ritual practice as *μαγεία*, specifically the use of books for performing *περίεργα*. As several biblical scholars and historians of religion have explained, the texts in the *PGM* likely serve as historical examples of the kinds of ritual texts, an ancient reader would have imagined the Ephesian Christ-followers to have been burning in Acts 19:19.⁸⁹ Although the majority of the texts in the *PGM* date between the third and fifth centuries CE, the earliest texts in the *PGM* date to first century CE.⁹⁰ Likely examples of popular rituals from the first century CE and early second century CE are found in *PGM* XX, XVI, LVII, LXXII, LXXXV, CXVII, and CXXII, which include instructions for healing, attracting a lover, acquiring a spirit assistant, protection from harmful forces, possibly divination, and possibly

definition involve people in varying degrees of social inequality. Thus, the presentation of Paul as a “friend” of the locally elite Asiarchs does not necessarily indicate that Paul is a social equal to the Asiarchs, but only that he is someone of a status relatively high in the *local* Ephesian society (cf. Saller, “Patronage and Friendship, 49–62; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 11–15). Nevertheless, if the reader understands Acts 19:31 to be presenting Paul as an elite in close relationships with the local governing elite of Ephesus, the presentation of Paul as an elite is very audacious considering that the expectations for local elite men would have included cultic duties in the local temples and sponsoring gladiatorial events.

While discussing the socio-economic composition of the *historical* churches of Asia Minor and Greece, Gill claims, “The very name of the Aristarchus who appears at Ephesus suggests that he comes from the old Macedonian elite.” Gill’s recognition of an old Macedonian elite family name contributes little to my *narrative-focused* reading of Acts 19. Furthermore, from a historical perspective, the appearance of an old Macedonian elite name does not indicate that this person and his family are *still* elite during the early Empire.

⁸⁹ Barrett, *Acts*, 2:913; Peter Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, FRLANT 218 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 58; van der Horst, “Great Magical Papyrus,” 174; Roy Kotansky, “Greek Exorcistic Amulets,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, eds. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 245; Porter, “Magic in Acts,” 120..

⁹⁰ *PGM* XVI, XX, CXVII, and CXXII likely date to the first century CE. *PGM* LXVII, LXXI, LXXXV likely date to the first or second centuries CE.

exorcism.⁹¹ Thus, my ancient reader is likely to understand that Acts 19:18–20 is categorizing the use of ritual texts such as those found in the earliest selections in the *PGM* as popular *μαγεία*, although the majority of the writers and the practitioners of the instructions in these early texts of the *PGM* likely did not consider these rituals to be popular *μαγεία*.⁹²

The ideological significance of the burning of the books for performing *περίεργα* is the disassociation the Christ-movement from *μαγεία*. The moral-ethical impact of the disassociation of the Christ-movement and *μαγεία* in Acts 19:17–20 is three-fold. First, the narrative appears to characterize the collection and use of popular ritual texts for exorcism and other extraordinary deeds as *popular μαγεία* and *deviant behavior* for Christ-followers.⁹³ Second, the narrative presents the Christ-movement as antagonistic toward the collection and use of texts containing instructions for popular rituals, such as exorcisms and other extraordinary acts; thus, Acts 19:17–20 functions as an attempt at neutralizing accusations that miracle-working within the Christ-movement is popular *μαγεία*. The narrative account of the burning of the books for performing *περίεργα* implicitly communicates to the reader that *legitimate* Christ-followers do not practice *μαγεία*. Third and consequently, Acts 19:17–20 serves to designate those historical Christ-followers who continue to collect and use texts containing popular ritual instructions for

⁹¹ Relieving headaches (*PGM* XX.1–4, 13–19; CXXII), inflammation (*PGM* XX.4–12), attracting a lover (*PGM* XVI, CXVII), acquiring an assisting spirit (*PGM* LVII, LXXII [?]), possibly divination (*PGM* LXXII [?]), and possibly exorcism (*PGM* LXXXV [?]). The exact goal of the rituals in LXXII and LXXXV are unclear. The instructions in LXXII and this text’s association with LVII suggest that LXXII possibly contains instructions for divination or acquiring an assisting spirit. LXXXV is possibly instructions for exorcism.

⁹² Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 37.

⁹³ Cf. Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 101; Pervo, *Acts*, 479. According to Klauck, Acts 19:17–20 does not make clear whether the performance of popular rituals for extraordinary deeds and the use books of *περίεργα* among Christ-following Ephesians occurs prior to their entrance into the Christ-movement or occurs as a “lapse” into *μαγεία* after they have entered the Christ-movement. Pervo, however, mentions a third possibility, specifically that the narrative presents these practices as activities in which the Ephesian Christ-followers engaged prior to joining the Christ-movement and do not cease practicing until after the failed exorcism in Acts 19:14–16. In accordance with this third option, the performance of popular rituals for extraordinary deeds and the use of books of *περίεργα* among the Christ-following Ephesians function primarily as secret deviance that do not effectively become labeled as deviant popular *μαγεία* until after the failed exorcism, so that prior to the failed exorcism the practices are morally ambiguous activities among Christ-followers in Ephesus.

exorcism and other extraordinary acts as *deviant* Christ-followers.⁹⁴ Fourth and finally, Acts 19:17–20 underscores how up to this point, Acts has presented legitimate miracles coming only directly from the Hebrew God (Acts 19:11) and occurring only among legitimate Christ-followers (Acts 19:13–16).

Thus, the narrative draws symbolic moral-ethical boundaries for legitimate and illegitimate ritual practice in order to neutralize attempts to deviantize the Christ-followers as being involved in popular *μαγεία*. However, the narrative not only attempts to counter the deviantization of the Christ-movement, particularly its wonder-working traditions, but also deviantizes Christ-followers that employ popular ritual texts for performing extraordinary deeds by categorizing these Christ-followers as practitioners of popular *μαγεία*. Although Acts 8:4–25 and 13:4–12 provide no specific examples of the *μαγεία* performed by Simon of Samaria and Elymas, Acts 19:13–20 appears to provide two specific examples of *μαγεία*: (1) the unauthorized use of Jesus' name by those outside the Christ-movement in attempts to perform extraordinary deeds, especially exorcism (vv. 13–16) and (2) the use of popular ritual texts for exorcism and other extraordinary deeds, regardless of whether the users of such texts are Christ-followers or those outside the Christ-movement (vv. 17–20).

Acts 19:17 also narrates that the evil spirit's defeat of the sons of Sceva results in the honoring of God, whose authorized representative Paul (unlike the sons of Sceva) is successfully exorcising evil spirits through the invocation of Jesus' name. Thus, the magnification of God in

⁹⁴ Cf. Busch, *Magie in neutestamentlicher Zeit*, 159. The burning of the books for performing *περίεργα* in Acts 19:17–20 is detrimental to Busch's argument that Acts, particularly Acts 8:4–25, permit Christ-followers to perform *μαγεία* so long it is done privately. Although nothing in Acts 8:4–25 explicitly prohibits private use of such popular ritual texts, the Ephesian Christ-followers' public confession and burning of books for performing *περίεργα* in Acts 19:18–19 suggests that Acts presents all popular *μαγεία*, including private *μαγεία*, as unacceptable. Thus, all *μαγεία* is deviant behavior for Christ-followers, according to Acts' presentation of *μαγεία* and *μάγοι*. Furthermore, the religious particularism displayed by Acts in previous *μαγεία*-miracle conflicts suggests further that Acts presents both popular and proper *μαγεία* as unacceptable religious practice for Christ-followers. Thus, Acts portrays all *μαγεία*—popular, proper, private, and public—as deviant and unacceptable for Christ-followers.

v. 17 not only results in the abandonment of μαγεία among the Ephesian Christ-followers but also contributes to the development of Paul as a premier, even *exemplary*, miracle-worker. Conversely, the other Judean exorcists in Ephesus, as represented by the sons of Sceva, are inferior wonder-workers in comparison to Paul. It is important to recognize that Acts 19:13 is ambiguous as to whether any of the other Judean exorcists outside the Christ-movement were successful in their attempts to exorcise evil spirits through the invocation of Jesus' name; however, a reader may assume that since the sons of Sceva failed in their attempts to invoke Jesus' name in their exorcistic ritual, the other Judean exorcists invoking Jesus' name were probably unsuccessful in their attempts to exorcize *daimones* through Jesus' name.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the combination of the Judean exorcists' reference to Paul in their exorcistic formula and the defeat of the sons of Sceva clearly indicate that Paul is a superior wonder-worker.⁹⁶

Through a contrasting of Paul and the sons of Sceva, the reader is able to recognize crucial differences between Paul and the sons of Sceva. Unlike the shamed sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13–16, Paul in vv. 8–12 gains a significant public reputation as a highly effective wonder-worker through his successful healings and exorcisms. Since Jesus authorizes Paul to represent him (Acts 9:1–19; 13:2–3), the narrative of Acts 19:8–20 presents Paul not attempting to usurp divine power, but fulfilling his expected divinely ordained role of divinely empowered and divinely possessed prophetic witness. Thus, Paul is not coercing or illegitimately manipulating divine power; instead, as Acts 19:11 indicates, Paul is the intermediate agent of miraculously divine action, of which the primary agent is God. Thus, it is God, not Paul, who is responsible

⁹⁵ Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 564.

⁹⁶ Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 256; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 124–125.

for the miracles, and accordingly, Acts 19:17 indicates that after the defeat of the sons of Sceva, it is God who is magnified, not Paul.

II. The Development of the Miracle-Worker Character Type in Acts 19:8–20

In Acts 19:8–20, the development of the *miracle-worker* character type occurs primarily through the continuing development of Paul into an *exemplar* for the category *miracle-worker*. Acts continues to create parallels between Peter’s and Paul’s miracle-working without presenting Paul performing a miraculous act corresponding exactly to every miraculous act that Acts attributes to Peter. In particular, Paul has not yet resuscitated a dead person, although Peter has (Acts 9:36–43; cf. 20:7–12). Nevertheless, the summary statement of Paul’s work in Ephesus in Acts 19:8–12 is comparable to the description of Peter’s exemplary miracle-working in Acts 5:12–16 to the extent that the healings and exorcisms performed with handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul’s skin function in Paul’s ministry as a counterpart to the healing capabilities of Peter’s shadow in Acts 5:15. Paul at this point seems have transitioned into an exemplary miracle-worker, that is, he has become an ideal and extremely prototypical representative of the cognitive category and social identity of *miracle-worker*. Nevertheless, Paul’s reputation as a successful exorcist develops to the extent that exorcists outside the Christ-movement imitate his technique and invoke his name (Acts 19:13). However, neither is Peter the subject of such imitation nor is his name invoked by other wonder-workers. Thus, the ancient reader by the end of the fourth $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episode would likely see Paul as being an exemplary miracle-worker equal to Peter, if not already developing into an exemplary miracle-worker greater than Peter.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ For further discussion of exemplars in prototype theory, see Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate, “Exemplar and Prototype Use in Social Categorization,” *Social Cognition* 8 (1990), 243–262.

As a neutralizing response to any deviantizing accusations that Paul and other Christ-following miracle-workers are popular μάγοι, Acts 19:8–20 attempts to differentiate Paul from other presumed popular μάγοι through an adaptation of the neutralization techniques of *claim of relative acceptability* and *appeal to higher loyalties*.⁹⁸ Acts 19:8–20 presents Paul’s wonder-working as acceptable by contrasting him to the sons of Sceva, who are charlatanistic frauds. Moreover, according to Acts 19:11, Paul’s miracle-working is not popular μαγεία because God actually performs the miracles through Paul. Thus, Paul’s wonder-working is legitimate, not deviant, because he is a legitimate human intermediary of a higher authority, namely Jesus Christ the son (υἱός) and servant (παῖς) of God.⁹⁹

Within the narrative world of Acts, the defeat of the sons of Sceva and the burning of the books for performing περίεργα effectively leave Paul standing as the only legitimate wonder-worker at the end of Acts 19:8–20. This reinforces the characterization of miracle-workers as Judean men with recognized leadership roles in the Christ-movement, a characterization consistently developed so far through Acts. As the only legitimate miracle-worker left at the end of Acts 19:8–20, the character Paul functions as an exemplary miracle-worker in his own right.

Through the development of Paul into an exemplar for miracle-workers, the narrative helps to establish prototypical qualities of a miracle-worker. In prototype theory, which cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch first developed and which I discussed in ch. 4, a prototype is an abstracted conception of the most typical or most characteristic subordinate member of a

⁹⁸ For discussions of deviance neutralization techniques, see Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 57–65; Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, “Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency,” *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957), 664–670.

⁹⁹ υἱός: Acts 9:20; cf. Luke 1:32; 3:22; 10:22; 22:70. παῖς: Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30. Cf. Acts 9:15, which presents Jesus identifying Paul as his “chosen vessel.”

cognitive category.¹⁰⁰ For example, red delicious apples may function as the prototype for the basic category of apple. All other types of apples (granny smith, fuji, golden delicious) are placed in the category of apple because each demonstrates enough characteristics similar to the red delicious. As the most typical subordinate category, a prototype is the most typical representative of a more basic category. However, as I also discussed in ch. 4, Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate explain that, particularly in the social categorization of humans, an *exemplar* is the most illustrative single instance of a category, or at least one of the most illustrative instances of a category. An exemplar is a consummate example of the category.¹⁰¹

By the end of the fourth $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episode (Acts 19:8–20), Acts has developed the character Paul into a model for and a means of evaluating miracle-working characters that the reader may encounter in other texts and traditions. Moreover, if the reader were to encounter any actual person that claimed to be or was recognized as a wonder-worker, the Paul of Acts would function as a model for the reader to evaluate this wonder-worker. Similarly, the Paul of Acts would likely function as an ideal representative of the social identity of miracle-worker that an actual self-identified *miracle-worker* may use as a model for his or her own miracle-working behavior.

Although Acts develops Paul into an exemplar for Christ-following miracle-workers, the reader of Acts would not assume that all other miracle-working characters and actual historical miracle-workers are as prototypical as the Paul of Acts; instead, in order for a reader to categorize a wonder-worker as a legitimate *miracle-worker*, the wonder-worker should possess a

¹⁰⁰ Eleanor Rosch, "Classification of Real-World Objects," in *Thinking: Readings in Cognitive Science*, eds. P. N. Johnson-Laird and P. C. Wason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 213; Eleanor Rosch, "Principles of Categorization," in *Cognition and Categorization*, eds. Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978), 37; Eleanor Rosch, "Prototype Classification and Logical Classification: The Two Systems," in *New Trends in Conceptual Representation: Challenges to Piaget's Theory?* ed. Ellin Kofsky Scholnick, The Jean Piaget Symposium Series (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1983), 81.

¹⁰¹ Smith and Zarate, "Exemplar and Prototype Use," 243–262.

substantial number of the qualities of a prototypical miracle-worker as demonstrated by the exemplary characters Peter and Paul. Thus, the miracle-worker character type, as demonstrated first through Peter and then through Paul, comes to function as an ideal social identity for miracle-workers. Wonder-workers who possess several of the qualities that Acts attributes to Peter or Paul as wonder-workers would be categorized as miracle-workers; however, those wonder-workers who possess few of the qualities demonstrated by the exemplars Peter or Paul and the *miracle-worker* social identity created through the characters Peter and Paul would be classified as popular μάγοι.

Acts 19:8–20, in particular, adds several elements to the *miracle-worker* character type and social identity (Table 9.1). First, the miracle-worker is an intermediary of divine power. Second, since the miracle-worker is an intermediary of divine power, the primary agent causing the miracles is God. Third, the miracle-worker is superior to wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement, whom Acts casts as popular μάγοι. Fourth, miracle-working occurs within the context of a social relationship between the miracle-worker and Jesus Christ, who authorizes the miracle-worker to access divine power. Fifth, the extraordinary deeds of a miracle-worker brings public honor to Jesus Christ and the Hebrew God. Sixth, a miracle-worker does not utilize written collections of popular rituals for effecting extraordinary deeds, since Acts presents the use of such books as a form of popular μαγεία.

Table 9.1 Characteristics of Miracle-Workers in Acts 19:8–20

1. A miracle-worker is an intermediary of divine power.
2. The Hebrew God is the primary agent that causes and is responsible for a miracle-worker's wonders.
3. A miracle-worker is superior to wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement, who are popular μάγοι.
4. Miracle-working occurs within the context of a social relationship between the miracle-worker and Jesus Christ, who authorizes the miracle-worker to access divine power.
5. A miracle-worker's miracles bring public honor to Jesus Christ and the Hebrew God.
6. A miracle-worker does not utilize written collections of popular rituals for effecting extraordinary deeds, which are a form of popular μαγεία.

III. Plotting the Wonder-Working Characters in Acts 19:8–20 onto the Model (Figure 9.2)

I must plot two individual characters and two groups of characters from Acts 19:8–20 onto the model for categorizing wonder-workers (see Figure 9.2). The two individual characters are Peter and Paul, and the two groups of characters are the sons of Sceva and the Ephesian Christ-followers that are using books for performing περίεργα. Peter remains in the model as an exemplar of Christ-following miracle-workers, and Paul joins him as an exemplary miracle-worker. However, I plot Peter first (that is, vertically higher) in the *Exemplar* box for two reasons. First, narratively, Paul as a miracle-worker is still primarily modeled after Peter to the extent that the description of the healings and exorcisms performed by means of handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul's skin (Acts 19:12) functions as an approximate parallel to the healings by means of Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15). Second, Paul has not yet resuscitated a dead

person, a miracle that Peter has already performed (Acts 9:36–42; cf. Acts 20:7–12). However, Acts seems to be developing Paul into a miracle-worker superior to Peter as evidenced by the imitation of Paul’s exorcistic practice and invocation of Paul’s name by Judean exorcists outside the Christ-movement (Acts 19:13). Next, I plot the sons of Sceva on the right (μάγοι) half of the model because Acts implicitly portrays them as popular μάγοι. However, I do not place the sons of Sceva as far to the right as I have placed either Simon of Samaria prior to his entrance into the Christ-movement or Elymas because Acts’ characterization of the sons of Sceva as popular μάγοι is not as explicit as Acts’ characterizations of Simon and Elymas as popular μάγοι.

Lastly, I plot the Ephesian Christ-followers that use books for performing περίεργα onto the model. Prior to the failed exorcism of the sons of Sceva, the moral status of Christ-followers’ use of books for performing περίεργα is undefined. Thus, those Christ-followers that use such books do not function as deviant Christ-followers, and I plot them on the left (miracle-worker) half of the model slightly to the left of the center line. The public burning of the books after the defeat of the sons of Sceva signals to the reader of this narrative that the use of books for performing περίεργα is no longer morally ambivalent behavior, or at least morally suspect behavior; instead, after the burning of the books, the use of such books is clearly identified as morally deviant behavior. Thus, the ancient reader is likely to imagine that Paul and the Ephesian Christ-following community would treat any Christ-followers that might continue to use books for performing περίεργα after the burning of the books in Acts 19:19 as deviant Christ-followers. Therefore, I plot any imagined use of such books after the burning of the books with a dashed circle on the right (μάγοι) half of the model slightly to the right of the center line, and I represent the change in status for those who continue to use the books for performing περίεργα with a dashed line. Furthermore, since a reader can imagine that these deviants would likely

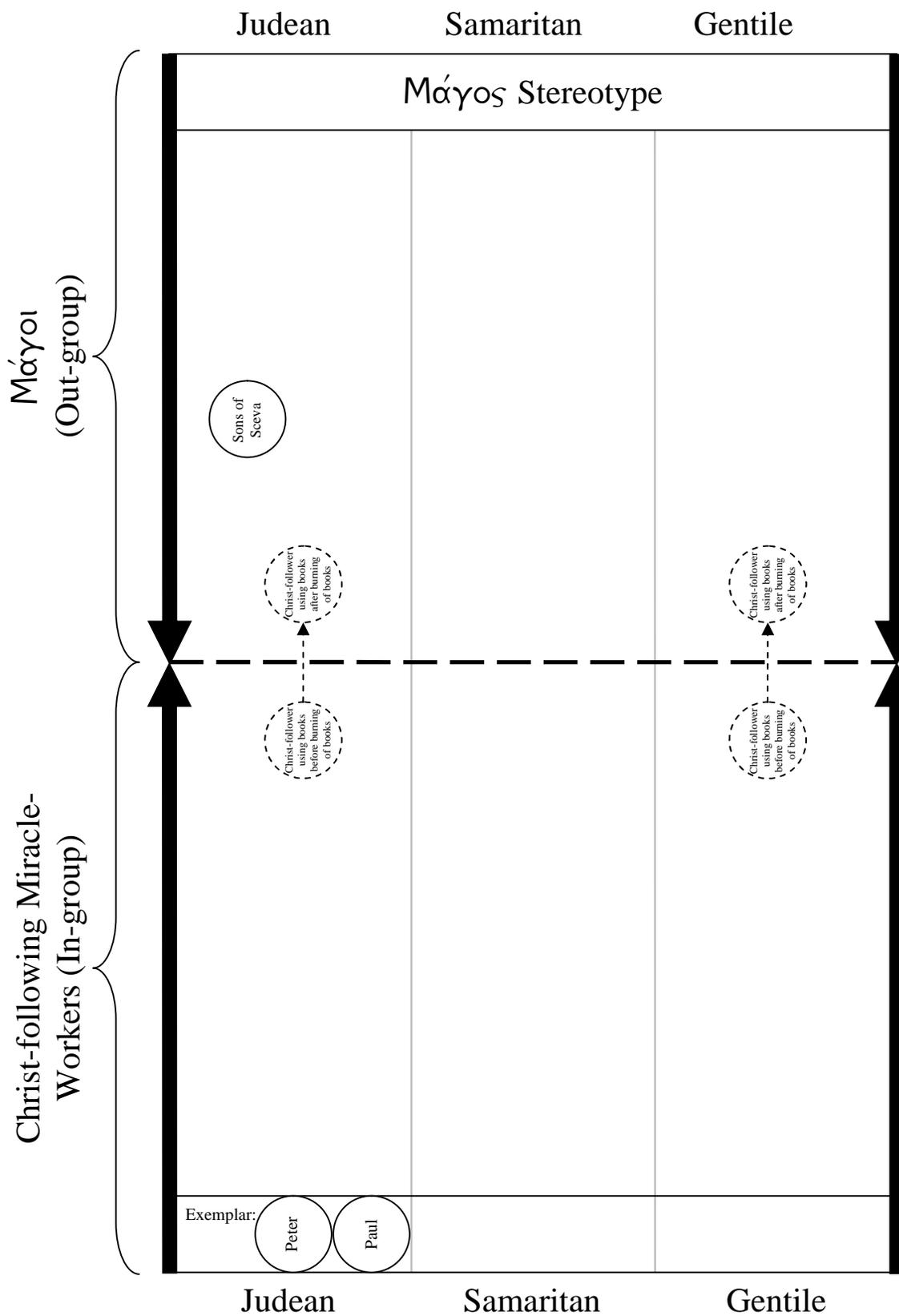


Figure 9.2 Model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts 19:8–20.

practice in relative secrecy, it may be better to speak of the behavior of using books for performing περίεργα, not the users of such books, experiencing a change in moral status. Lastly, I must note that I have only plotted the Christ-followers who use books for performing περίεργα in the ethnic categories of *Judean* and *Gentile*, since Acts 19 presents these as the two ethnic groups that comprise the Ephesian Christ-following community.

IV. The Development of the Miracle-Worker Character Type in Acts 20–28

Although Acts 19 contains the final μαγεία-miracle conflict, several further episodes in Acts present Paul performing miracles. Indeed, the development of Paul the miracle-worker is not complete until the final chapter of Acts. The first miracle that Acts attributes to Paul after his stay in Ephesus occurs in Acts 20:7–12. While Paul teaches in the middle of the night in an upper room at Troas, a young man named Eutychus dozes off and falls out of a third story window to his death. Paul goes down, falls upon Eutychus, and embraces him. These actions are similar to the way that Elijah and Elisha place themselves over and embrace the dead young men that they resuscitate (1 Kgs 17:17–24 [3 Kgdms 17:17–24 LXX]; 2 Kgs 4:32–37 [4 Kgdms 4:32–37 LXX]).¹⁰² Thus, Acts 20:7–12 continues to cast Paul’s miracle-working as prophetic behavior. Although Paul’s subsequent claim that life (ψυχή) is still in Eutychus might cause the reader to understand the proclamation of Eutychus’ death as a mistaken conclusion that Paul corrects, two reasons exist for reading Acts 20:9 as presenting Eutychus as actually dead. First, the narrative neither indicates that Eutychus only *seemed* dead nor tells the reader that the observers mistakenly assumed he was dead; instead, the narrative very tersely proclaims in a matter-of-fact manner that Eutychus “was lifted up dead” (ἤρθη νεκρός). Second, only Eutychus’ death will provide the character Paul a miracle equivalent to Peter’s resuscitation of

¹⁰² Bock, *Acts*, 620; Haenchen, *Acts*, 585; Johnson, *Acts*, 356; Pervo, *Acts*, 512–513.

the deceased Tabitha in Acts 9:36–43. Thus, the best reading is to understand that Eutychus actually dies from the fall. The full significance of Paul’s resuscitation of Eutychus is that Paul now has performed a miracle similar to every miracle performed by Peter. Thus, by the time that Acts 20:7–12 has portrayed Paul successfully resuscitating Eutychus, the reader should have no doubt that Paul has developed into an exemplar for miracle-workers that is at least fully equal, if not superior, to the miracle-worker exemplar Peter.

In preparation for Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, Acts 21:8–14 presents two sets of prophetic characters. Acts 21:8–9 has Paul enter the house of Philip the evangelist, thus bringing together the initial protagonist from the first *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes and the primary protagonist from the other three *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes. Of special interest to my study of the development of miracle-workers in Acts is the reference to Philip’s four virgin daughters that prophesy in Acts 21:9. In this episode, Acts finally presents female Christ-followers prophesying in fulfillment of Peter’s adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18. However, the narrative attributes no prophetic direct speech to Philip’s daughters; instead, immediately after Acts 21:9 introduces these female prophets, vv. 10–14 recall the male prophet Agabus to whom the narrative attributes prophetic direct speech and prophetic symbolic actions predicting Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem. Thus, just when the narrative sets up an opportunity for prophetic direct speech from female prophets, the narrative switches back to a male prophet and attributes the prediction of Paul’s arrest to the male prophet, not to the female prophets. This switch from Philip’s daughters to Agabus removes any room in Acts for direct speech from female prophets, despite the indication in Acts 2:17–18 that the pouring out of God’s Holy Spirit upon the Christ-followers beginning on Pentecost would result in both men and women prophesying. By the conclusion of Acts 28, the reader has encountered neither prophetic direct

speech from female Christ-followers nor miracles performed by female characters, thus solidifying the characterization of the prototypical miracle-worker as a man.

Although the presentation of Peter's miracle-working activity ends with his resuscitation of the dead (Acts 9:36–43), Acts attributes additional miracles to Paul after he resuscitates Eutychus (Acts 20:7–12). First, Acts 28:3–6 tells how Paul, who is shipwrecked on Malta, suffers no harm after a venomous snake bites him. In response to news of Paul's survival of the snake bite, a local elite named Publius hosts Paul at his home for three days. While at Publius' home, Paul heals Publius' father of fever and dysentery, a miracle that results in the rest of the sick on Malta being brought to Paul for healings. The narrative presents the people of Malta acting with appropriate gratitude toward Paul the miracle-worker by providing him honor and supplies for his journey (Acts 28:7–9). This episode not only continues Acts' portrayal of Paul as a miracle-worker but also continues Acts' presentation of Paul as someone that is able to function easily within and is accepted within, if not a member of, the elite circles of Greco-Roman society.¹⁰³

Paul's survival of the venomous snakebite provides a miracle for which Acts provides no parallel miracle for Peter. Together Paul's survival of the snakebite and his miraculous healings on Malta also extend Paul's miracle-working activity beyond his resuscitation of the dead, something that Acts' presentation of Peter's miracle-working does not do. Thus, Acts' presentation of Paul's miracles on Malta (Acts 28:3–10) solidifies Acts' development of Paul into an exemplary miracle-worker superior to Peter.

Acts 28:23–31, the final episode in Acts, presents Paul as a prophetic preacher and teacher testifying to Jesus Christ in Rome, in an apparent fulfillment of Jesus' instructions to the

¹⁰³ Cf. Todd C. Penner, "Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation, and the Rhetoric of the Polis," *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, eds. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, SBLSymS 20 (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 65–104.

apostles in Acts 1:8 to carry the testimony about Jesus to the ends of the earth. However, this closing section of Acts ascribes no miracle-working activity to Paul; instead, when Acts ends, Paul is portrayed as a preacher and teacher under house arrest. Thus, the closing episode of Acts strengthens my identification of the prototypical miracle-worker in Acts as primarily a prophetic witness to Christ to the extent that I identify the primary social identity of a miracle-worker in Acts to be *prophetic witness* to Jesus Christ.

Through development of the *miracle-worker* social identity, Acts presents to its reader a particular symbolic moral universe that distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate wonder-workers and wonder-working. As I conclude this study in the next chapter, I will summarize my analysis of the four $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes and will discuss how Acts' development of the *miracle-worker* social identity and its corresponding symbolic universe could participate in the historical social discourse regarding the legitimacy of Christ-follower wonder-working traditions and wonder-workers.

CHAPTER 10
CONCLUSION
THE LEGITIMATION OF MIRACLE-WORKING IN ACTS

The central issue that this study has examined is the socio-rhetorical function of the presentation of wonder-working characters in the four $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts (8:4–25; 13:4–12; 16:16–20; 19:8–20). In particular, I have argued that the contrasting presentations of miracle-working characters and $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -working characters develop a *miracle-worker* character type that differentiates Christ-following miracle-workers from popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$. As examples of the ancient *miracle discourse* identified by Kimberly B. Stratton, the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes counter any historical accusations that Christ-following wonder-workers are popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$ and Christ-follower wonder-working is popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ by casting the wonder-working protagonists of these four episodes as legitimate miracle-workers and the antagonists as popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$.¹ In addition, the *miracle-worker* character type functions as a social identity for legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers with the result that a distinction develops between legitimate Christ-following miracle-workers and illegitimate popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$ within the Christ-movement. Furthermore, I have also argued that the *primary* function of the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflicts in Acts is not to warn Christ-following readers to refrain from participating in popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ because Greco-Roman popular $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is a socially constructed concept of deviance. Since the $\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ -miracle conflict episodes draw upon standard generic Greco-Roman stereotypes for popular $\mu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\iota$, the primary function of these episodes is not moral instruction for Christ-

¹ Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, & Stereotype in the Ancient World*, Gender, Theory, & Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 107–141.

following readers; instead, these episodes ultimately contribute to the larger Christ-follower social identity, particularly in regard to wonder-working.

In ch. 1, I introduced the four *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes as examples of miracle discourse, and I proposed the use of a social-scientific critical approach for studying these four episodes. Chapters 2–3 contained respectively a review of major modern social-scientific theories of magic and a review of significant recent studies of Greco-Roman *μαγεία* and *μάγοι* by historians of religion and biblical scholars. In ch. 4, I developed a social-scientific-critical approach to the *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes that draws primarily from modern social-scientific studies of magic, the symbolic interactionist approach to social deviance, and prototype theory. In ch. 5, I explained how the first seven chapters of Acts provide the initial and most extensive contribution to the miracle-worker character sketch by presenting Christ-following miracle-workers as primarily Judean men who are possessed by the Holy Spirit and are recognized leaders within the Christ-movement. Chapters 6–9 contained my analyses of the four *μαγεία*-miracle conflict episodes. In these analyses, I argued that each of these episodes contributes to the development of the *miracle-worker* character type primarily through the presentation of the legitimate *miracle-worker* as a social category distinctly different from the deviant category of *popular μάγος*, despite apparent similarities between the two social types. In addition, I demonstrated that the *miracle-worker* character type develops primarily through Acts' presentations of the two miracle-worker exemplars Peter and Paul, between whom Paul eventually develops into the superior miracle-worker. I ended ch. 9 by introducing how the miracle-worker character type comes to function as an ideal social identity for legitimate miracle-workers. Finally, in ch. 10, I will focus on the function of the *miracle-worker* character type as a contribution to ancient Christ-follower miracle discourse not only by addressing

outsider accusations that the Christ-following wonder-workers are popular μάγοι but also by drawing the boundaries for legitimate miracle-workers and miracle-working within the Christ-movement.

During the course of my study, I have shown that Acts presents most of the Christ-following wonder-workers in the four μαγεία-miracle conflicts as legitimate *miracle-workers* and all of the wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement as *popular μάγοι*. However, I have also observed that Acts presents some Christ-following characters as workers of popular μαγεία, specifically Simon of Samaria after he joins the Christ-movement (8:9–24) and the Ephesian Christ-followers that perform περίεργα (19:17–20). Thus, it is not sufficient to claim simply that Acts presents *all* wonder-workers outside the Christ-movement as popular μάγοι and *all* Christ-following wonder-workers as legitimate miracle-workers; instead, Acts also distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate wonder-workers within the Christ-movement.

In examining the four μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, I have argued that the protagonists Philip, Peter, John, and Paul function as examples of prototypical legitimate miracle-workers. Furthermore, Peter and Paul come to function as exemplars of the *miracle-worker* character type, since Acts presents them as ideal and extremely prototypical representatives of the cognitive category *miracle-worker*.² Through the course of my study, I have compiled characteristics of prototypical miracle-workers in Acts. The following table (Table 10.1) is a composite character sketch listing all the characteristics of a *prototypical* miracle-worker in Acts. The only two characters who exhibit all of these characteristics are the exemplars Peter and Paul, from whose characterizations, I have drawn the majority of the *miracle-worker* character sketch. As exemplars of miracle-workers, the characters Peter and Paul

² For further discussion of *exemplars*, see Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate, “Exemplar and Prototype Use in Social Categorization,” *Social Cognition* 8 (1990), 243–262.

function as the *ideal* standards by which a sympathetic reader of Acts may evaluate the legitimacy of not only wonder-working characters within oral and written accounts but also actual historical wonder-workers the reader may encounter.³

Table 10.1 Characteristics of a prototypical miracle-worker in Acts

1. Is a Christ-follower.
2. Is a Judean.
3. Is a man.
4. Is selected (not self-appointed) to a leadership position in the Christ-movement, especially as an apostle.
5. Provides social and/or moral-ethical leadership for the church.
6. Is respected by the local Christ-followers, and sometimes by the general populace as a result, not as a goal, of the prototypical miracle-worker's magico-religious activity.
7. Faces opposition, particularly from Judean leaders, but likely to have more amicable relations with Roman political leaders.
8. Endures physical punishment as the result of both official judicial sentences and unofficial violence (flogging, stoning).
9. Employs neutralization techniques (particularly *appeal to higher loyalties* and *condemning the condemners*) to counter the deviantization of the Christ-movement.
10. Experiences altered states of consciousness (evidenced by charismatic *xenoglossia*, visions, etc.), especially possession trance and possibly shamanistic soul journeys.
11. Is divinely possessed by the Holy Spirit.
12. Is controlled by the Holy Spirit, not vice versa.

³ Cf. Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in Early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorizing in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 15, 25.

13. Bestows the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands *only if the particular miracle-worker is an apostle*.
14. Prophesies, including preaching prophetically.
15. Provides witness to Jesus Christ and salvation in Jesus' name.
16. Performs miracles as an aspect of the role of *prophetic witness* to Jesus Christ.
17. Prophesies and works miracles in fulfillment of prophecy.
18. Serves as a prototype for the category *prophetic witness*. The primary social identity of the prototypical miracle-worker is prophetic witness to Jesus Christ. Nearly all miracle-workers are prophetic witnesses to Christ, but not all prophetic witnesses to Jesus Christ are miracle-workers.
19. Is a true prophet, since the prototypical miracle-worker is a prophetic witness to Jesus Christ. However, prophetic characters that do not witness to Jesus Christ are false prophets.
20. Leads a magico-religious career that parallels or imitates Jesus' magico-religious career.
21. Invokes Jesus' name during miracle-working and prophesying.
22. Does not utilize written collections of popular rituals for effecting extraordinary deeds; instead, the use of such books is a form of $\mu\alpha\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\iota\alpha$.
23. Periodically engages in itinerancy while fulfilling the role of prophetic witness.
24. Is an intermediary of divine power. The Hebrew God is the primary agent that causes and is responsible for the prototypical miracle-workers' wonders.
25. Possesses delegated authority to perform miracles. Miracle-working occurs within the context of a social relationship between the miracle-worker and Jesus Christ, who authorizes the miracle-worker to access divine power.

26. Belongs to the only category of legitimate wonder-workers, namely the category of *miracle-worker*.
27. Is not a μάγος and does not perform μαγεία.
28. Is superior to popular μάγοι.
29. Opposes selfishness and self-glorification. Thus, the prototypical miracle-worker is not greedy and does not accept payment for miracles. The miracle-worker performs miracles in service to God and other people and in order to bring public honor to Jesus Christ and the Hebrew God.

The *miracle-worker* character sketch provides the ancient reader a means for distinguishing between legitimate miracle-workers and popular μάγοι; however, the classification of wonder-workers as miracle-workers and popular μάγοι is not a simple *either-or* determination; instead, the reader(s) or observer(s) must determine whether the wonder-worker in question has enough in common with the prototypical miracle-workers in Acts to warrant categorizing and labeling the wonder-worker in question as a miracle-worker and his or her wonder-working as miracle-working.

The creation of the miracle-worker social identity through the presentation of the prototypical miracle-workers Philip, Peter, and Paul should not lead readers of Acts to think that all legitimate miracle-workers are exactly like the protagonists of the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes. Instead, according to Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory, constituents within a particular cognitive category will exhibit varying degrees of prototypicality.⁴ The appearance or absence of certain prototypical characteristics is likely to carry more weight than others. Numerous small elements within the text of Acts indicate to the reader which characteristics are most essential

⁴ Eleanor Rosch, "Principles of Categorization," in *Cognition and Categorization*, eds. Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978), 40.

and which are least essential to a legitimate miracle-worker. For example, *being a Christ-follower* seems to be the most important and completely non-negotiable characteristic for numerous reasons. The only legitimate miracle-workers in Acts are Christ-followers. In order for a miracle-worker to be divinely possessed and legitimately access the power of God through Jesus Christ, the miracle-worker must be a Christ-follower, or else the particular wonder-worker is falsely accessing the power God in the same way the charlatanistic Sons of Sceva attempt to access the power of God through the invocation of Jesus' name (Acts 19:13–16). However, Peter's adaptation of Joel 3:1–2 (2:28–29 ET) in Acts 2:17–18, which indicates that both male and female Christ-followers will be divinely possessed and will prophesy, provides the possibility for legitimate, albeit *atypical*, miracle-working women in the Christ-movement.⁵ Similarly, the one time miracle of Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9:17–19), whom Acts does not present engaging in the *career* of an itinerant prophetic witness to Jesus Christ, suggests the possibility that legitimate miracle-working may not always be the activity of itinerants, those engaged in careers as prophetic witnesses, or those engaged in miracle-working careers.⁶

The possibility of variety within the category of *miracle-worker* suggests that other external factors aside from the degree to which the wonder-worker resembles the *miracle-worker*

⁵ Cf. Mary Rose D'Angelo, "(Re)presentations of Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts," in *Women & Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 186; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View," *JBL* 109 (1990), 453; F. Scott Spencer, "Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts," *BibInt* 7 (1999), 136, 150–151; Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford University Press Scholarship Online e-book, 29; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 130–134.

⁶ In this chapter, I use the word *career* in the same sense as it is used by symbolic interactionists that study deviance. *Career* in this area of study does not refer to paid professional vocations, but to sets of contingent habitual behavior clustered around a master social status (see Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* [New York: Free, 1973], 24–25, 101–102; Francis T. Cullen, *Rethinking Crime and Deviance Theory: The Emergence of a Structuring Tradition* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983], 123–124; Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963], 32–40; Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967], 51; Robert Prus and Scott Grills, *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003], 32, 65–66, 76–77, 80–81, 101–102, 117–118, 168–169, 185).

character type will come into play when a reader encounters an actual wonder-worker or a wonder-working character in another text or verbal account.⁷ These additional factors would include the reader's intra-group loyalties, the extent to which the reader adopts the symbolic universe within Acts, the association of the wonder-worker with other deviant or exemplary behaviors, the wonder-worker's and reader's pre-existing statuses within the Christ-movement, the perceived level of external opposition toward the reader's own in-group, and so forth.

In the five previous chapters of my study, I have plotted characters that Acts associates with wonder-working onto a model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts. Figure 10.1 combines all of the plotted models in the previous chapters of my study into a single composite model for categorizing wonder-workers in Acts (see Figure 10.1).

In the symbolic universe created within Acts, the categorization of a wonder-working character on the right half of the model places the character not only into the category of popular *μάγος* but also outside the boundaries of the Christ-movement. Consequently, I plot some Christ-followers on the right (*μάγοι*) half of the model: the hypothetical unrepentant Simon of Samaria and the hypothetical Ephesian Christ-followers that continue to use books for performing *περίεργα* after the defeat of the sons of Sceva. Thus, Acts presents a symbolic social universe in which popular *μαγεία* is seriously deviant behavior and all workers of *μαγεία* are outside the boundaries of the "legitimate" Christ-movement.

Throughout this study I have depended on Stratton's identification and study of *miracle discourse* during the first three centuries of the Christ-movement. The *basic* elements of this discourse consist of a writer's or speaker's characterization of wonder-workers in his or her in-group as miracle-workers and the characterization of wonder-workers outside his or own in-

⁷ Cf. Rosch, "Principles of Categorization," 40.

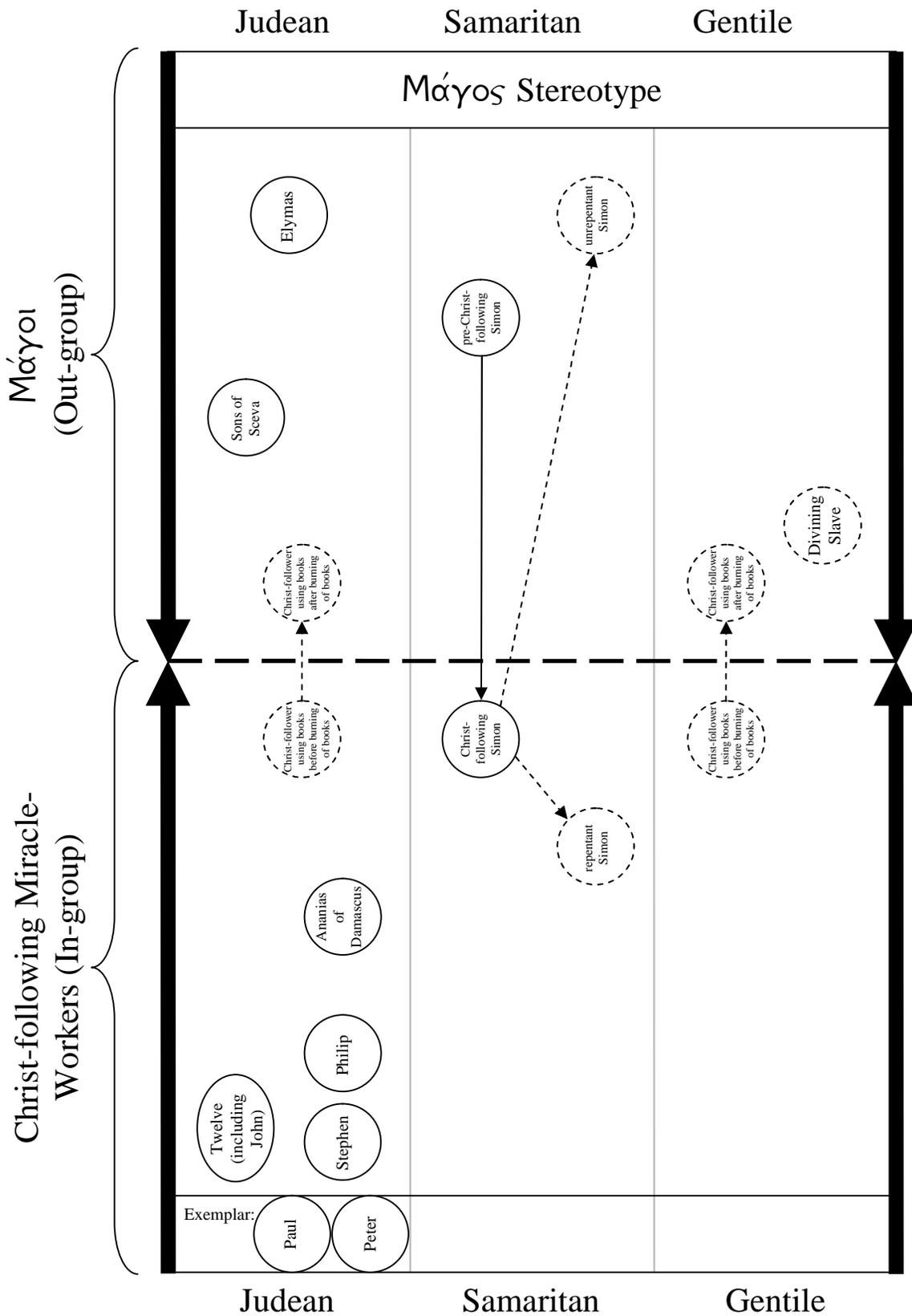


Figure 10.1 Model categorizing wonder-workers in Acts.

group as deviant, popular μάγοι.⁸ The apparent existence of miracle discourse in Acts suggests that when Acts was written (80–135 CE), critics of the Christ-movement were already labeling Christ-following wonder-workers as popular μάγοι and Christ-following wonder-working as μαγεία, although the earliest *extant* examples of such accusations come from second century writings.⁹

Since Acts not only relegates all wonder-workers and wonder-working outside the Christ-movement to the realm of popular μαγεία but also indicates that some wonder-workers and wonder-working within the Christ-movement belong to the realm of μαγεία, the μαγεία-miracle conflicts suggest that historical conflicts over wonder-working in the Christ-movement and Christ-follower tradition at the time of Acts' composition (80–135 CE) were not only a matter of answering external opposition but also involved in-group conflict. Therefore, Acts not only draws boundaries between the Christ-movement and those not associated with the Christ-movement but also draws boundaries between rival Christ-following persons and factions to the extent that those labeled magico-religious deviants within the Christ-movement are placed in the same magico-religious category as magico-religious rivals not associated with the Christ-movement. Specifically, they are both categorized as popular μάγοι.¹⁰

⁸ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 107–141; cf. Harold Remus, “Magic or Miracle??: Some Second-Century Instances,” *SecCent* 2 (1982), 127–156; Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*, Patristic Monograph Series 10 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983), 67–72; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 214–219.

⁹ Cf. Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 241–242; Graham N. Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth: A Magician and a False Prophet Who Deceived God’s People,” *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ; Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1994), 166; e.g., Justin, *1 Apol.* 30; Justin, *Dial.* 69.7; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6.1–28, 28.15–22, 38.1–26, 68.1–45, 71.10–13; 2.9.73–82, 14.1–16, 16.31–41, 48.1–49; 3.1.20–28, 36.26–39; 6.14.18–29, 41.1–29; 7.4.14–26; 8.9.23–30; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.17; 23.1–9; 35.12.

¹⁰ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 23; cf. Kai T. Erikson, “Notes on the Sociology of Deviance,” in *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*, ed. Howard S. Becker (New York: Free Press, 1964), 13. In the second and third centuries CE, Christ-follower writers often labeled leaders of rival Christ-following sub-groups as popular μάγοι (e.g., Clement of

As likely responses to accusations of μαγεία against Christ-follower wonder-working and wonder-workers, the four μαγεία-miracle conflicts engage two primary modes for adapting to deviantization. First, Acts appears to employ *evasion* by using the deviance neutralization techniques of *claim of relative acceptability* and *appeal to higher loyalties*.¹¹ By presenting the deviant μαγεία-working antagonists of the μαγεία-miracle conflicts as foils to the protagonists, Acts portrays the protagonists as legitimate, divinely authorized intermediaries of divine power.¹² Second, Acts also appears to employ the mode of *redefinition* by presenting the protagonists as legitimate miracle-workers, although some of the protagonists' wonder-working is similar to popular μαγεία (invocation of Jesus' name, healing with Peter's shadow, healing with clothing that touched Paul).¹³ The redefinition of Christ-follower wonder-working as miracle-working results largely from Acts' evasive neutralization of accusations of popular μαγεία.

Despite my identification of the evasive neutralization and redefinition of accusations of popular μαγεία in the μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, Acts is not primarily an *apologetic* text; instead, I agree with Philip Francis Esler that Acts is a *legitimation* of the Christ-movement for a primarily Christ-following audience.¹⁴ According to Esler, "The integrative purpose and function

Alexandria, *Instructor* 3.4.3–4; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.7.1, 9.1, 19.5, 20.1–2, 39.1–3; 7.32.5; 9.14.2–3; 10.29.3 [6.2, 4, 14, 15, 34; 7.20; 9.9; 10.25 ANF]; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.13.1–7, 14.1; 1.15.6; 1.23.1–5; 1.24.5, 7; 1.25.3–5; 2.preface.1; 2.31.2–3; 2.32.3; Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 26.1–8; 56.1–4; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.57.39–40; Tertullian, *Against the Valentiniens* 4.2; Tertullian, *Prescript. against Heretics* 43.1).

¹¹ Cf. Florent Heintz, *Simon "le magicien": Actes 8, 5-25 et l'accusation de magie contre les prophètes thaumaturges dans l'antiquité*, CahRB 39 (Paris: Gabalda, 1997), 47–48. For further discussion of *evasion*, see Joseph W. Rogers and M. D. Buffalo, "Fighting Back: Nine Modes of Adaptation to a Deviant Label," *Social Problems* 22 (1974), 110–111. For further discussion of neutralization techniques, see Stuart Henry, *Social Deviance*, Polity Short Introductions (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 59–65; Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957), 664–670.

¹² Cf. Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labelling and Deviance Theory," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 109, 118, 120.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 118–119. For further discussion of *redefinition*, see Rogers and Buffalo, "Fighting Back," 113.

¹⁴ Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*, SNTSMS 57 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16–23, 205–219; cf. Nachman Ben-

of legitimation is most clearly seen in . . . the ‘symbolic universe’ fashioned for a new social order by its legitimators.”¹⁵ In regards to the legitimating function of the discourses of magic and miracle, Stratton claims, “The concept of magic operates as part of larger legitimizing narratives—in [Jean-François] Lyotard’s terminology, *metanarratives*. It holds the place of and designates that which is being marginalized and delegitimated.”¹⁶ Part of Acts’ legitimating explanation and justification of the Christ-movement is its identification of “legitimate” wonder-working in Acts through the development of a *miracle-worker* character type and social identity. In the case of Acts’ four μαγεία-miracle conflict episodes, Acts defines the symbolic boundaries of legitimate miracle-working in a way that relegates all wonder-workers (both outside and within the Christ-movement) that do not sufficiently resemble the prototypical miracle-worker in that particular μαγεία-miracle conflict episode to the deviant realm of popular μαγεία.¹⁷ In regard to any apologetic aspect of Acts’ miracle discourse, the readers of Acts are ultimately responsible for employing Acts’ *miracle-worker* social identity in order to address directly actual accusations of μαγεία directed against the historical Christ-movement.

Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance: Moral Panics, Drug Abuse, Deviant Science, and Reversed Stigmatization*, SUNY Series in Deviance and Social Control (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), Netlibrary e-book, 65–66; Robert A. Scott, “A Proposed Framework for Analyzing Deviance as Property of Social Order,” in *Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance*, eds. Robert A. Scott and Jack D. Douglas (New York: Basic, 1972), 19; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 397–398.

¹⁵ Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 18; cf. Rogers and Buffalo, “Fighting Back,” 103.

¹⁶ Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 178; cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiii–xv, 34, 37.

¹⁷ Cf. Erikson, “Notes on Deviance,” 13; Pat Lauderdale, “Deviance and Moral Boundaries,” *American Sociological Review* 41 (1976), 661–675; Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, 99–105, 114–116; Twelftree, *In Name of Jesus*, 238–247, 249–254.

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