MAGIC IN THE APOCRYPHAL ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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Apart from some references to Jesus or the demise of magic in the Later Roman Empire, Christian texts are clearly not seen as useful or interesting sources in the recent major studies on ancient magic. This is, I dare say, a mistake, as I want to illustrate on the basis of a specific corpus of texts from the later decades of the second and the earlier decades of the third century. In those years Christians produced a series of works, the so-called Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (AAA), in which anonymous authors made the case for their versions of Christianity. On the whole, these works were discursive rather than narrative, but in their narrative parts they closely resembled the ancient novel. The corpus consists of five Acts, those of John, Paul, Peter, Andrew and Thomas. They were written in Asia Minor, the first two probably in the south west of present-day Turkey, the next two also or perhaps in northern Asia Minor, whereas the last derives from Syria, probably Edessa. The oldest is the Acts of John (AJ), which was written about 160 AD; shortly afterwards followed by the Acts of Paul (AP) and around the turn of the century by the Acts of Peter (APT) as well as the Acts of Andrew (AA); the Acts of Thomas (ATH) concluded the series around AD 230. Unfortunately, none has survived in its original version. We have only fragments (although some of a considerable length such as the AJ), translations (such as the famous confrontation of Peter and Simon Magus which survived only in a late fourth-century Latin version of the APT), and rewritten versions (such as large parts of the AA).

In addition to these five Christian 'novels' we have one more novel that deserves to be included. Around AD 230-240 an author, probably in Edessa, wrote a 'novel' with the Roman bishop Clemens as its protagonist. The 'novel' itself has been lost, but two rewritten versions survive, the Greek

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1 I use the following abbreviations for references to the fragments of Greek historians, the Greek magical papyri, and the fragments of the pupils of Aristotle: FGrH = Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker; PGM = Preisendanz, Papyri graecae magicae. All translations from magical papyri are from Betz, The Greek Magical Papyri. Wehrli² = Wehrli, Die Schule des Aristoteles.

2 See, for example, Bernand, Sorciers grecs; Graf, Magic; Gordon, 'Imagining Greek and Roman Magic'; Graf and Johnston, 'Magie'; Dickie, Magic and Magicians.
Homilies (before AD 325) and the Recognitions (somewhat later), which survived only in a Latin translation by Rufinus. Comparison of the two versions regularly allows us to reconstruct the so-called Grundschrift, the lost original of the two revised 'novels'. In many ways these rewritten versions enable us to see what the original AAA must have looked like, since the latter have often lost their discursive parts in favour of a later, more narrative approach. In fact, Gregory of Tours explicitly states in his Latin epitome of the AA that he has cut out the orations because they were not attractive enough for his readers.

In these 'novels' we frequently find reference to magic and exorcism, although, as far as we can see from the surviving parts of the AJ and AP, the theme of magic played virtually no role in these two earlier works. Can it be that the increasing measures taken by the Roman government against magic are also reflected in the prominence of the theme in the APt and AA, Acts which are to be dated later than the earlier two?

My contribution is a synthesis of my work on the 'novels' in recent years. I would like to show that this corpus (which is fairly homogeneous in time, place and genre) has been wrongly neglected by students of ancient magic, whereas, in fact, it provides valuable information on the changes and tensions occurring in the Roman Empire through the gradual rise of Christianity – even if in a limited period of time. I will therefore first look at some realities and representations of magic (§ 1), then at exorcism (§ 2), thirdly at the confrontation between Peter and Simon Magus (§ 3), and close with a few observations on the place of this episode of magic in the longue durée from Late Antiquity until the Middle Ages (§ 4).

Realities and representations of magic

Let us start with the simple question of the inventor of magic. For various, not totally transparent reasons the Greeks first ascribed the invention of magic to the Persians or, to be more precise, to a tribe of the Medes, the Magi. As they also knew that the founder of Persian religion was called Zarathustra, or in the Greek transcription Zoroaster, it is no wonder that already in the fourth century BC the pseudo-Platonic Alcibiades (155a) ascribed the origin of mageia to 'Zoroaster, the son of Horomadus'. The Roman Pliny (Natural History 30.2.3) followed this tradition in an excursus

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3 For the problems of chronology, place of composition and readership of the AAA see my 'The Novel'.
4 I have freely used, but always adapted, expanded and updated, my 'Magic'; idem, 'Aspects of the Acts'; idem, 'Man, Magic'; idem, 'La confrontation'.
on magic, for which he drew on Greek sources, about whom 'all authorities agreed'.

That is to say, all authorities except the Christians, who had their own ideas about the origin of magic. Admittedly, Christians sometimes followed pagan tradition closely by ascribing the invention of magic to humans, such as the Persian Ostanes, the Greek Typhon or the Egyptian Nectabis, whereas in other cases they followed their Jewish predecessors by ascribing the invention to the Fallen Angels. However, they also appropriated pagan tradition into their own ideas about the origin of magic. This happens in the Recognitions (1.30.2-3), where we first hear of one of Noah's grandsons as the inventor of magic, the altar for demons, and animal sacrifice. Later we learn that the inventor really is Noah's son Ham, who taught the art to his son Mestraim, 'the ancestor of the Persians', whom his contemporaries called Zoroaster. In other words, this is a combination of the proverbial Antiquity of Zoroaster, who according to Eudoxos had lived 6000 years before Plato, and the curse on Ham's son Kanaan in Genesis (9.25).

In addition to magic itself, we also hear some interesting details about magicians. In the Coptic fragment of the AA, a magician says before 'attacking' a Christian girl: 'If I have spent five and twenty years under the instruction of my master until I was trained in his skill, this is the beginning of my craft' (AAcoptic 10). The same teacher-pupil relationship perhaps underlies the episode of Exuos, an upper-class youth, who had left his parents in order to follow Andrew. When the inhabitants of Patras tried to smoke out the apostle with the help of a military cohort, their son extinguished the fire with a dish of water. The parents realised that their plan had failed and exclaimed: 'Look, our son has become a magician!' Not wholly surprisingly, they had identified the miracles performing Andrew as a master magician in the Latin epitome of the AA (AALatin 11). It is strange, though, that the text calls our magician 'young' after such a long training. Could there be an Egyptian background to this qualification, since in Apuleius's Metamorphoses the Egyptian priest and magician Zatchlas is also called a iuvenis?

The passage is also an interesting testimony to the ancient belief that magic could only be learnt after many years of instruction. In the Recognitions (1.5) Clemens planned to travel to Egypt to become instructed by local priests and to hire a magician to perform necromancy. Both Celsus and the Talmud

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5 Humans: Tertullian, De anima 57.1. Angels: Tertullian, De cultu feminarum 1.2.1, 2.10.2-3.
6 For the importance of this episode for the study of ancient magic, see the excellent analysis by Stramaglia, 'Aspetti'.
7 For ancient necromancy, see most recently Dickie, Magic and Magicians, pp. 237-239; Ogden, Greek Necromancy; Bremmer, Rise and Fall, pp. 71-86.
reproached Jesus of having learned magic in Egypt; Bishop Cyprian (Confessiones 12) had been ten years with the Memphitic priests training to become a magician, and Lucian’s lover of lies (Lovers of Lies 34-6) had even spent twenty-three years in subterranean chambers of Memphis where Isis had trained him to become a magician. Our author, then, evokes the picture of a magician who is so well trained that he can hardly be defeated by the apostle in a confrontation. Egypt was notorious as a country with a long priestly tradition of magic not only in Greek and Roman culture but also in Jewish circles, since according to the Talmud nine-tenths of the world’s witchcraft had descended on Egypt.

The young magician did not speak himself, but, according to the apostle, it was the demon Semmath, who had entered him. This demon was presumably related to the demon Sammoth in one of the Leiden magical papyri (PGM XII.79). Magicians were traditionally believed to be accompanied by a demon that helped them perform their magic, the so-called parhedros. According to Irenaeus, the heretic Marcus Magus had such a ‘demonic assistant (daimona parhedron), through whom he himself seems to prophesy and through whom he rouses to prophecy those women whom he thinks worthy of participating in the grace’. As the assistant was indispensable, he is sometimes even mentioned right at the beginning of a ritual, such as in a Berlin magical papyrus: ‘A [daemon comes] as an assistant who will reveal everything to you clearly and will be your [companion and] will eat and sleep with you’ (PGM I.1-3). The idea of a parhedros also occurs in the Recognitions (2.13.1-2, cf. Homilies 2.26), where a former pupil of Simon Magus relates that the heretic, in answer to the question as to how things arte magica effici, answered that he evoked the soul of a pure child that had died a violent death, a so-called biaiothanatos. This soul, as Simon explains, ‘I have forced to assist me and it is through it that everything takes place that I order’. The biaiothanatos is a stock character in magic, but to my knowledge not normally employed as parhedros.

How did magicians stay alive? The question may seem odd, but do we know anything about the ways they supported themselves? The answer seems obvious: they took money for their services. It is also obvious that people did not like this, given that in descriptions of magicians the fact is often stressed in

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8 Origen, Contra Celsum 1.28, 38, 46; Talmud, bSanh 107b; Arnobius, Adversus nationes 1.43; Kollmann, Jesus, pp. 179-181.
a negative way. Thus, in Apuleius's Metamorphoses (2.28) the Egyptian Zatchlas is prepared to perform a necromancy grandi praemio and the baker's wife persuades 'an old hag' (veteratricem quandam feminam) to bring back her husband multisique...munenbus (9.29); in Lucian's Lovers of Lies (14) the Hyperborean magician even requires 20 minae, with 4 in advance (sic), for a necromancy and an erotic spell. It is against this background that we must read the observation in the ATh (20) that the fiends of the king first think that the apostle is a magician because of his healings and exorcisms, but the fact that he asks no reward is clearly a decisive argument against this idea. Similarly, Siphor stresses that 'he (Thomas) did not ask for reward, but demands faith and holiness' (104). The same attitude is found in the AJ, where the apostle answers a request by a father for an exorcism of his two sons by saying: 'My physician takes no reward in money, but when he heals for nothing he reaps the souls of those who are healed in exchange for the diseases' (56). The 'free treatment' is one of the clear contrasts worked out by the Christians in their efforts to distinguish themselves from pagan magicians (§ 4).  

How did people on the popular level react to magic? In an interesting discussion of the growth of the repression of magic, Richard Gordon paid some attention to popular attitudes as exemplified in the ancient novel. He points out that in Apuleius (Metamorphoses 1.10) people plan to stone a witch, and in Heliodorus (8.9) a woman accused of being a witch and a poisoner are burnt alive. For such lynching the AAA also supply some examples. In the AP, in reaction to the complaints of Thecla’s fiancé, the crowd shouts of Paul: 'Away with the magician! For he has corrupted all our wives' (15). And when Paul has appeared before the governor in court, the crowd shouts: 'He is a sorcerer! Away with him!' and Thecla's mother calls out 'Burn the lawless one!' (20). In the APt the fickle multitude of Rome also intends to burn Peter after Simon Magus seemed to be the better magician. They immediately start to look for wood and kindling, but when Peter has triumphed they call out 'let Simon be burnt instead of Peter' (28). As burning is also mentioned as a punishment by a third-century legal source ([Paul], Sententiae 5.23.17: ipsi autem magi vivi exuruntur), one may wonder whether that law did not codify typical crowd behaviour.  

Finally, the Pseudo-Clementines contain an interesting notice about the persecution of magicians, which is also neglected by Gordon. In the Recognit-
tions (10.55.3) the centurion Cornelius, a figure lifted from the canonical Acts of the Apostles (10.1), relates that the emperor has given an order to find all magicians in Rome and the provinces and put them to death. Cornelius therefore suggests that people tell Simon Magus that he has been sent to arrest him and have him punished. In a similar passage in the Homilies (20.4-6), Caesar has killed many magicians but not given a general order that they all be arrested. Unfortunately, the passage is absent from the Arabic epitome of the Recognitions, which is based on the original, but lost Greek version of the Recognitions. Apparently, the notice was taken from the later Homilies, as we somehow would suspect, since the persecution of magicians accelerates after the Roman government became Christian. The imperial persecution described in the Homilies, then, may well be inspired by the increasing repression of magic as becoming visible in Late Antiquity.  

Exorcism

Any reader of the AAA, especially the Acts of Andrew, will be struck by the multitude of references to demons and exorcism. Exorcism as we know it from the New Testament did not occur in Greece and Rome, but the word 'exorcism' and the techniques of the practice are clearly of Jewish origin. This origin may be surprising to some, but magic was a flourishing business in the Palestine of Jesus’ days. The Jewish origin was probably also the reason that non-Jewish exorcists expelled demons with the formula 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob'. In this respect, it seems significant that when Lucian wants to represent an exorcist in his Lovers of Lies (16), he introduces 'the Syrian from Palestine’. We cannot discuss in detail all the relevant passages concerning exorcism, but we can certainly pose several questions: Where are the demons and what do they look like? How do they affect the possessed? How do the apostles approach them and how do they react? How does the victim of demonic possession respond to his exorcism? In what kind of context does exorcism take place? And what is the reaction of the public? Investigation into ancient exorcism has rarely transcended the stage of collecting the facts,
but we must always take into account that exorcism is a ritual scenario that takes place between the exorcist, the person possessed, the demon(s) and the public. Any analysis that neglects one of these aspects presents us only with an inadequate view of this ancient ritual.  

Let us start with the demons. These often do not belong to a specific magician but seem to be independent beings who sometimes lurk in specific places. It is rather striking for us moderns to find them regularly in the baths, a belief abundantly illustrated by the *AA*. When the apostle Andrew comes near Sinope, he heals the son of Cratinus, who had been ‘struck’ (see below) by a demon when frequenting the women’s bath (*AA*Latin 5). Subsequently, in Patras he resurrected the wife of the pro-consul Lesbios, Callista, who, whilst taking a bath together with her steward, had been ‘struck’ by a demon (*AA*Latin 23). Finally, in Corinth he exorcised both an old man and a youth whom he had met in the baths (*AA*Latin 27). Gregory’s narration supplies no more information about the last case, but in the earlier ones we can easily recognise the underlying pagan, Jewish and Christian objection to mixed bathing.  

The demons manifested themselves in rather different ways. The demon that had struck the proconsul’s wife and her steward is just called a daemon *teterrimus*, but those who beat up Lesbios were ‘Aethiopians’, pitch-black men, a favourite manifestation of ancient demons (*AA*Latin 22). Demons could even appear as animals. In Nicaea seven demons lived in tombs along the road (*AA*Latin 5, 7), another place fit for demons. Their number, seven, is typical of groups of demons in the New Testament. When the apostle arrived in the city, the Nicaeans approached him with olive branches in the Greek way.

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22 For the name Lesbios, see Berges and Nollé, *Die Inschriften*, vol. 1, p. 251, who also accept the possibility of the literary meaning (refening to Sappho and Alcaeus) as postulated by me for the AA in Bremner, ‘Man, Magic’, p. 16.

23 For mixed bathing see Martial 7.35, 11.75; Juvenal 6.422-3; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos* 3.5.32; Schollgen, ‘*Balnea mixta*’; Hilhorst, ‘Erotic Elements’, p. 196; Eliav, ‘The Roman Bath’.


of supplication. The apostle gave in to their entreaties and ordered the demons to show themselves. At that very moment they appeared as dogs, a fine illustration of the ambivalent standing of the dog among Jews and Greeks.\footnote{Loth, ‘Hund’.}

How did the demons affect their victims? As the above mentioned examples show, some victims felt ‘\textit{struck}’, ‘beaten’ or ‘whipped’ by the demons. We do not find this belief in the New Testament, but just as the wife of the proconsul and her steward were \textit{percussi} by a demon (\textit{AAlatin 23}), so \textit{Stratocles’s} servant Alcmanes was \textit{ab impulso daemonis percussus} (2; \textit{AAlatin 34}). Indeed, the explanation of illness or possession as the result of being hit was very widespread and regularly occurs in the magical papyri, where, for example, in a recipe for a love spell the advice is to ‘glue it to the dry vaulted vapour room of a bath, and you will marvel. But watch yourself so that you are not hit’.\footnote{Teeth: Jerome, \textit{Vita Hilarionis} 12.10. Laughter: Bremrner, ‘Aspects of the Acts’, p. 11; Philostratus, \textit{Life of Apollonius} 4.20.} A variant of beating was hitting with a ‘lash’, a belief perhaps reflected in Lesbios’s feeling of being ‘whipped’ by ‘Ethiopians’ (\textit{AAlatin 22}).

From the Middle Ages until virtually our own times, people who display socially unacceptable \textit{behaviour} and extreme signs of motor disorder, often with contortions and dislocations, were considered to be possessed. It is no different in the \textit{AAA}. The old man in the bath (above) trembled (\textit{AAlatin 27}). Some servants of \textit{Antiphanes} were ‘grinding their teeth ... and insanely laughing’ (\textit{AAlatin 29}).\footnote{Teeth: Jerome, \textit{Vita Hilarionis} 12.10. Laughter: Bremrner, ‘Aspects of the Acts’, p. 11; Philostratus, \textit{Life of Apollonius} 4.20.} In the \textit{ATH} (62–4) possessed women are even ‘gnashing their teeth and dashing their heads on the ground’; moreover, the demons ‘throw them down wherever they find them, and strip them naked’. In fact, lying on the ground must have been typical. The son of \textit{Cratinus} had gone mad and fallen on the ground in \textit{front} of the apostle (\textit{AA 5}).\footnote{See also the exorcism in \textit{Recognitions} 4.7.2.} In the Coptic \textit{fragment} the soldier fell on the ground and started to foam at the mouth (\textit{AAoptic 9}), just like \textit{Stratocles’s} servant Alcmanes, who was moreover ‘utterly convulsed’ and sitting on a dung heap (\textit{AA 2–3}; \textit{AAlatin 34}), not a very \textit{dignified} position. One may at least ask to what extent these possessions, or their descriptions, were dependent on the New Testament where, for example, in \textit{Mark} a dumb spirit ‘convulsed ’his’ boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth’ (9.18, 20).\footnote{Note also the descriptions in Lucian, \textit{Lovers of Lies} 16; \textit{Testamentum Salomonis} 12.2, 17.3, 18.21; \textit{Talmud, bGittim} 70a.}

It could be even worse. The Nicaean canine demons killed the son of old parents (\textit{AAlatin 7}), just as a demon killed the proconsul’s wife and her \textit{stew-}

\footnote{\textit{PGM} XXXVI.76; see also \textit{PGM} VII.282; \textit{Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos} 3.14; Eitrem, \textit{Notes}, pp. 36–37. For the widespread background of this belief see also Honko, \textit{Krankheitsprojekte}.}


\footnote{See also the exorcism in \textit{Recognitions} 4.7.2.}

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ard (AAlatin 23), and strangled the son of a Thessalonian (AAlatin 14). In the latter case one may well wonder whether the narrative here does not exaggerate the feeling of suffocation that is attested for some possessed people. Exaggeration certainly plays a role in the earlier scenes, and this raises a problem to which we will return immediately, viz. to what extent these scenes were stock descriptions rather than representations of reality.

How did the apostle react to the demonic powers? Whereas he had taken the initiative in addressing the Nicaean canine demons, it usually was the other way round. For example, in Philippi a youth cried out: 'What is there between you and me, Andrew? Have you come to chase us from our proper place?' (AAlatin 17). Virtually the same approach takes place in a Corinthian bath, when a youth addresses Andrew with: 'What is there between you and me? Have you come here to unsettle us from our place?' (AAlatin 27). In the ATh an incubus-like demon 'with a very loud voice said in the hearing of all: "What have we to do with thee, apostle of the Most High?"' (44-5) These initiatives are clearly influenced by the New Testament, where the Gadarene demoniacs address Jesus first with the words: 'What have we to do with you, son of God?' (Matthew 8.29, cf. Mark 1.24, 5.7, Luke 8.28), and they are thus not likely to be authentic: but in Megara all the demons cried out in unison (unius vocis impetu): 'Why do you chase us here, holy Andrew?' (AAlatin 29), which makes a more convincing impression. The demonic initiative is probably to be explained from the public arena in which the confrontation takes place. Before the community can accept that the possessed persons are healed, it has to be convinced that the demons have actually left. So the demons have to make themselves manifest before they can be properly expelled.

Not all demons co-operated, however, and in the magical papyri a magician therefore says: 'I conjure you, every daemonic spirit, to tell whatever sort you may be, because I conjure you by the seal which Solomon placed on the tongue of Jeremiah, and he told'.32 For those who persisted in keeping silent, the papyri supply an effective recipe: 'If you say the Name to a demoniac while putting sulfur and asphalt to his nose, the demon will speak at once and go away'.33

Normal people might have been frightened by the sudden outburst of the demons, but an apostle was of course not so easily impressed. In the case of the possessed house of Antiphanes, Andrew reacted as if there were nothing

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31 For the Old Testament background of the formula (I Kings 17.18) see Bachli, 'Was habe ich mit Dir'; Guillemette, 'Mc 1.24 est-il une formule?'.
32 PGM IV.3037-41; see also Lucian, Lovers of Lies, 16; Theophilus, Autolycus 2.8; ATh 74; Testamentum Salomonis 5.2ff, 13.2. For Solomon, see also Sarah Iles Johnston's contribution to this volume.
33 PGMXIII.242-4; note also Josephus, Antiquities 8.47.
strange about the situation *(nimis de his admirans: AAlatin 29)*. Similarly, after having been invoked by Maximilla in order to heal Alcmanes who was 'foaming at the mouth', he entered 'smiling' *(AA 3)*. The reader is left in no doubt that our hero will *confront* the 'villain' and convincingly despatch him. But how does he do it?

At first it may seem surprising how unimpressive the actual exorcism sometimes is. In the case of Alcmanes, the apostle just invokes God in a prayer in the characteristic participle style of prayer: 'O God, who does not hearken to the magicians ... grant now that my request be speedily fulfilled before all these in the slave of Stratocles, putting to flight the demon whom his kinsmen could not drive out' *(AA 5; AAlatin 34)*. In the Coptic *fragment*, he addresses the soldier as follows: 'It is now *fully* time for you to come out *from* this young *man*, that he may gird himself for the heavenly palace' *(AAcoptic 14)*. It is rather striking that in these and other cases the demons are not exorcised in the name of Jesus, whereas we have many testimonies that this was common practice among Christians, as both Justin and Origen indicate. This striking absence is clearly one more sign of the less orthodox character of these *AAA*. And when it does happen, as in the *APt* (11), where Peter exorcises *in nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi* we may well suspect an orthodox intrusion in this late translation *(§ 3)*.

In other cases the apostle seems to be less quiet. To the son of Cratinus he speaks *increpans:* 'Go away *(discede)* from the servant of God, you enemy of the human race' *(AAlatin 5)*, and the same verb is used when he expels the demons *from* the old man and the youth in the swimming pool *(AAlatin 27)*. This approach was probably more like real practice, since both Jesus and Apollonius of Tyana, too, were sometimes agitated while exorcising demons and rebuked them. Also the order *(discede)* will have been part of traditional Jewish exorcism, since the comparable Greek command *exelthe* is a recurrent term in New Testament exorcism stories and occurs in the magical papyri, but is absent from pagan exorcisms.

Faced with the *supernatural* power of the apostle, what could a demon do? In the already mentioned exorcism in the A J (57) the demons *immediately*

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34 For the participle style see Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, pp. 166-168.
35 Justin, *Dialogue with Tryphon* 35; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.67, 2.33, 3.24, 28.
37 *Mark* 1.25, 5.8, 9.25; *Acts* 16.18; compare also *APt* 11 *(exi)*; *Ath* 73, 74 and 77; Cyprian, *Epistula* 69.15; *PGM* IV.1227, 1242-4, 3007ff and V.158; Thraede, 'Exorcismus', p. 52; Jordan and Kotansky, 'A Salomonic Exorcism', p. 55ff.
38 As is observed by Kollmann, *Jesus und die Christen*, p. 202.
came out from them’, just as in the Recognitions (4.7.2) they leave ‘immediately’. In the Coptic fragment of the AA (AAcoptic 14) the demon quietly leaves the young soldier on the order of Andrew and assures him that ‘I have never destroyed a limb of his’. In the case of Alcmanes, the demon uses the term ‘fleeing’: ‘I flee, servant and man of God, I flee not only from this slave, but also from this whole city’ (5) – the terminology of actual exorcistic formulae. That was not enough for Andrew. He showed the extent of his power by ordering the demon to stay away from wherever the Christians were.

Not all demons were so placid, however. The demon of Cratinus’s son left multo clamitans (AAlatin 5), and a soldier even died when the demon left him (AAlatin 18). The last example looks like a narrative exaggeration of a traditional theme in exorcism: the demon’s dramatisation of his departure by an act of physical violence. In the Apt (11) a leaving demon kicks a statue of the emperor to pieces and in the Ath (46), when a demon departed, ‘lire and smoke were seen there, and all who stood by there were astounded’. The theme is already present in Mark, where evil spirits leave amid loud shouting (1.26, 9.20) or even destroy a herd of swine (5.13). It seems likely that a certain illusionist performance in this respect must have been part of the contemporary exorcist’s trade.

Naturally, not only did the demon have to demonstrate his departure, but the exorcised persons also had to show that they had been healed. So Alcmanes rose from the floor and sat down with Andrew ‘sound in mind and tranquil and talking normally’ (5). Once again these aspects have to be seen against the public character of the ritual. It is only when everybody has noticed the expulsion of the demon and the recovery of the possessed can he function again in the community.

The last actor in this scenario to be considered is the public. During resurrections crowds are always prominently present and acclaim the apostle with traditional formulae such as: Magnus art Deus Christus, quem praedicat servus eius Andreas (AAlatin 7), Non est similis tibi, Domine (AAlatin 24) or Non est similis deo Andreeae (AAlatin 13), the latter exclamation typically being uttered in the theatre. But what about exorcisms? The great Gibbon,
who called exorcism 'the awful ceremony', thought that the ritual was performed in front of many spectators and so led to the 'conviction of infidels'.\(^{44}\) And indeed, it is true that in the time of the European religious wars, exorcism often had been the arena in which Catholics and Protestants had tried to establish the superiority of their faith.\(^{45}\) In the AA, however, and other early Christian literature, we notice nothing of this crowd activity. On the contrary, Christian and pagan authors alike stress that the Christians exorcised in a manner as simple as possible. Apparently, Christians wanted at all costs to avoid the dangerous accusation of being magicians, and thus they practised exorcism without the usual hocus pocus of traditional magicians.

**The confrontation between the apostle Peter and Simon Magus**

In the canonical Acts (8.5-25) it is told that in Samaria a magician named Simon tried to buy the magical powers from the apostles, who indignantly rejected his request.\(^{46}\) The episode made Simon into the prototypical magician, used by the Christians as a kind of bogeyman,\(^{47}\) and as such he also features in the APT. Towards the end of the fourth century this 'novel' was translated by the Manichaeans in North Africa into Latin, together with the other major AAA,\(^{48}\) but only a few fragments of this translation have survived, the largest of which describes the confrontation between the apostle Peter and Simon Magus. The confrontation was very popular in the Middle Ages and in the time of the Reformation, when the victory by Peter was often cited as an example of how people of authority could directly confront magicians and defeat them.\(^{49}\)

The APT starts with the call of Peter to Rome after Simon Magus has succeeded in disturbing the Roman congregation. At that time Simon Magus resided in Aricia (4). The reason for this particular place is not explained, but it can hardly be separated from the fact that Aricia had a famous sanctuary of the

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\(^{44}\) Gibbon, *The History*, vol. 2, p. 28ff.


\(^{46}\) For an excellent discussion see Heintz, *Simon "Le Magicien"*.


goddess Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon and later of magic. In Rome, Simon promises to fly and indeed in a somewhat peculiar way he knows to evoke the idea of a flight. In modern stereotypes of witches, flying is of course one of their most famous powers, but this is only a relatively late development, not attested before AD 1428. Was it different in Antiquity? The Norwegian papyrologist Sam Eitrem interpreted the invitation of the devil to Christ to jump down from the temple (Matthew 4.6) as an invitation to fly, but that seems somewhat far-fetched, although he does mention Simon Magus in this connection. The first reliable testimony is a mid second-century papyrus with an enumeration of the powers of the magician: ‘... it will stand still; if I order the moon, it will descend; if I wish to prevent the day, night will linger on for me; and again, if we demand the day, the light will not depart; if I wish to sail the sea, I have no need of a ship; if I wish to move through the air, I shall become weightless’.

The magician in Lucian’s Lovers of Lies can perform resurrections (below) and also fly. As the Peripatetic Cleodemus tells us, ‘I saw him soar through the air in broad daylight and walk on water and go through fire lightly’ (13). Cleodemus adds that he even wore Hyperborean shoes, which confirmed his Northern origin. One may wonder whether this flying magician had to come from the North, since another famous miracle worker from Antiquity who was credited with flying on an arrow, Abaris, also came from the Hyperborean—. More or less contemporaneously is the example from Apuleius, although it is somewhat different from Simon Magus. The slave girl friend of the first-person raconteur Lucius tells him that her mistress ‘intended to feather herself as a bird and fly away’. To this end the witch took off her clothes and anointed herself from ‘the tips of her toenails to the top of her hair. After a long, secret (!) conversation with her lamp she began to shake her limbs in a quivering tremor’. Eventually, she turns into an owl. ‘So she let out a plaintive screech and began testing herself by jumping off the ground a little

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50 See Bremmer, ‘James Georg Frazer’.
51 Ginzburg, ‘Deciphering’, p. 124. For flying witches in Europe, see most recently Pécs, ‘Feenflug und Hexenflug’; Henningsen, ‘Der Hexenflug’; Tschacher, ‘Der Flug durch die Luft’.
53 For this famous magical trick, see most recently Gordon, ‘Imagining Greek and Roman Magic’, pp. 223-224.
55 See Heraclides Ponticus fr. 51c Wehrli2 for the first mention of the flying Abaris. Earlier sources only mention that he carried the arrow in his hand, cf. Bremmer, Rise and Fall, p. 33.
at the time. Soon she soared aloft and flew out of the house on full wing.\textsuperscript{56} The transformation of a witch into a bird already occurs in Ovid and seems to be an older motif.\textsuperscript{57} However, it is not as powerful a feat as flying in human form. Apparently the claims of modem magicians surpassed those of the witches of old.

In the Recognitions (2.9, varied in 3.47, 57) flying is part of a list of magical feats Simon Magus claims to be able to perform, such as being able to disappear and reappear, pass through mountains, untie himself when tightly bound, make statues come alive and throw himself unhurt into a fire. Finally, flying occurs in the magical papyri, where a demon parhedros, ‘the only lord of the air’, will help his magician ‘to carry you [into] the air, and again hurl you into the billows of the sea’s current and into the waves of the sea’;\textsuperscript{58,59} incidentally, it is interesting to note that similar powers were also attributed to late antique monks, since the Egyptian Paternouthios was reputed to have moved through the air.\textsuperscript{59}

With his feat Simon managed to rouse the necessary opposition to Paul who was called a ‘sorcerer’ and ‘deceiver’ (4: magus, planus; § 1).\textsuperscript{60} In order to counter this bad influence Peter travelled to Rome and challenged Simon in the house of the senator Marcellus, a great benefactor of the Christians (8). The passage is an interesting, albeit fictitious, testimony to the presence of magicians in the houses of the Greco-Roman elite.\textsuperscript{61} Here Simon is chased away by a dog (9). After this first triumph Peter resurrects a dried fish (13). A fish is a somewhat curious object of apostolic attention, but from a literary point of view this first resurrection whets the appetite of the reader, whose curiosity is now raised as to what further miracles Peter will perform.\textsuperscript{62} Subsequently Simon is struck dumb by an infant (15); in other words, he has been defeated by categories he should have easily defeated himself if he had possessed any real powers. Moreover, Peter also mentions that in Palestine Simon had attempted to deceive an honest woman, Eubola, with magic incantations, magico carmine, but, after being prevented by Peter from doing so, he had disappeared from Palestine (17). From a narrative point of view, this

\textsuperscript{56} Apuleius, Metamorphoses 3.21, transl. Hanson; note also 2.20, 22.
\textsuperscript{57} Ovid, Amores 1.8.13-4, Fasti 6.141-2, Metamorphoses 15.356-60 (Hyperborean males and Scythian women); Petronius 63; Festus 414L; Pfister, ‘Wasser- und Feuertaufe’, p. 271ff.
\textsuperscript{58} PGM I.119-120, 129.
\textsuperscript{59} Historia monachorum X.20.
\textsuperscript{60} For the designation planus, from Greek planos, ‘wanderer, impostor, sorcerer’, see Dickie, Magic and Magicians, pp. 75,225.
\textsuperscript{61} Many examples in Dickie, Magic and Magicians, pp. 193-201.
\textsuperscript{62} This does not exclude the possibility that the fish also refers to the resurrection of Christ, as argued by Norelli, ‘Sur les Actes de Pierre’, pp. 230-231.
scene, which is related in great detail, helps to raise the expectations of the reader that Peter will also succeed in defeating Simon in the decisive confrontation. It also indicates that from a moral point of view Simon does not score very high.

The negative manner in which Simon is depicted in the *APt* has recently been well studied from various perspectives. We may perhaps add one detail which has not yet received the attention it deserves. When Simon comes on stage for the very first time, 'he spoke to the people voce gracili' (4), and the low quality of his voice is also remarked upon by the speaking dog, who mentions Simon's *vocem tuam infirmem et infutilem* (12). In the first centuries of the Christian era, the voice played an important role in the self-fashioning of the sophists. Accordingly, physiognomists paid much attention to the quality of the voice. Adamantius tells us the *kosmos* male speaks with a 'heavy' voice (2.49) and the so-called Anonymous Latin Physiognomist points out that the voice of a timid man is *mollis* (91). Simon's voice, then, is one more indication to the reader that Peter's opponent is not only dishonest, he is not even a 'real' man at all!

The 'shoot-out' between the apostle Peter and Simon Magus takes place on the Forum Romanum, the heart of the capital, in front of the cream of Roman society, *senatores et praefecti et officia* (23). The place is interesting, since today we think of the magician as performing in private. However, in the first centuries of our era this certainly was not the case. In that period, magic was openly performed in theaters, crossroads, temple precincts and public squares. It is only towards the end of Antiquity that theurgists and magicians started to opt for secrecy.

At the Forum Peter challenges Simon to do something which he will undo. The prefect of the city, who wants to look impartial, gives one of his slaves to Simon to be killed and, presumably, resurrected. Simon speaks into the slave's ear and he dies. We are not told what he said, so we must presume that he whispered as befitted a magician (25). Similarly, the Jewish author Artapanus tells how by whispering into his ear Moses caused the Pharaoh to fall mute on the ground, only to be later revived again. In the famous fourth-cen-

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63 See Luttikhuizen, 'Simon Magus'; Czachesz, 'Who is Deviant?'.
64 See Gleason, *Making Men*; Rousselle, *Contamission spirituelle*, pp. 87-114 ('Parole et inspiration. Le travail de la voix dans le monde romain').
67 Artapanus *FGrH 726 F 3* (= Clemens, *Stromateis* 1.154.2; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27). For Moses and magic, see Gager, 'Moses the Magician'; Bloch,
In the fifth-century *Actus Silvestri* (II.1035-7), the magician Zambri (= Jambres) even kills an ox by whispering the name of God into its ear, as the author probably knew the *AP*, the scene may well have been inspired by our *Acts*. In fact, examples of whispering formulae into the ears of children used as mediums are still well-attested in Greek and Jewish texts in early modern times.

Our curiosity about the reaction of Peter is momentarily left unsatisfied, since at the very moment of the slave’s death a widow intervenes and asks Peter to resurrect her only son, who has just died (25). From a narrative point of view, the widow’s interruption raises the suspense, since, for a moment, we are left wondering whether Peter will perform more than one resurrection. However, the impatient prefect adds urgency to his case by mentioning that the slave just killed is also a favourite of the emperor (26). It is interesting that Peter does not resurrect the slave himself but asks the prefect to do it for him by holding the slave’s right hand. This the prefect does and the slave regains his life. Still, this was only a slave, and it is perhaps significant that the author lets the *praefectus urbi* resurrect a slave, whereas he reserves the resurrection of a free man for the apostle. An indirect resurrection is a typical trait of the *AAA*. Three times John empowers a person for a resurrection (*AJ* 24, 47, 82-3), Paul does it once (*AP* 26), as does Thomas (*ATh* 53-4). This indirect resurrection seems to be a typically Christian feature, which demonstrates the great power of the apostles.

After this indirect resurrection, the apostle immediately resurrects the son of the widow as if not wanting to leave any doubt about his own capacities. In addition, he also carefully imitates Christ, whose words to the paralytic he uses when addressing the widow’s son: ‘rise up and walk’ (27). However, it is only the third resurrection that will be the scene for the great confrontation – not about a slave, not about the son of a widow, but about the son of a senator.

Immediately after the first two resurrections, when the crowd is still present in the Forum, the mother of a young senator arrives and asks Peter to resurrect her son who is being taken to his grave in a typically Roman funeral procession. Peter then challenges Simon to resurrect the boy and asks the Roman audience to believe that he is a *magus* if he is unable to do so. Simon

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68 *PGM* IV.909-10; note also Heliodoms, *Aethiopica* 6.14, 21; *Testamentum Salomonis* 18.21; *PGM* XIII.248.
70 Bammel, *Judaica*, p. 82ff.
72 Thomas, ‘Revivifying Resurrection’, p. 76.
accepts the challenge and 'went to the dead man's head, and stooped down three times and stood up three times and showed the people that (the dead man) had raised his head and was moving, opening his eyes and bowing towards Simon'. Impressed by this feat the Roman populace wants to burn Peter (§ 2), but the apostle points to the only partial success of Simon and ironically asks the boy to get up if he is alive and to remove the wrappings from his chin and call for his mother. These words are enough for the prefect to push Simon away with his own hands. Peter resurrects the boy by a mere touch, and Simon withdraws in shame (28).

Resurrection is attested for ancient magicians as well as Christians. Our first example is the sophist Favorinus (ca. AD 85-155), who lived during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. His embittered opponent Polemon tells us that

'he was a charlatan in the magic arts. He induced people to believe that he could confer life and death, and because of this enticed men and women to gather round him in crowds. He made men believe that he could compel women to pursue men the way men pursue women, using a hidden voice to make himself credible. He was a master of evil doing, and made a practice of collecting lethal poisons which he secretly offered for sale'.

Clearly, Favorinus was accused of poisoning, performing love magic and of being able to kill people, as Simon did, and to revive them. Unfortunately, we do not hear anything about how he did these things, but for Polemon it was apparently not unusual that a magician claimed to have mastered the art of reviving people.

Resurrection also features shortly in the enumeration of the powers of a Hyperborean magician in Lucian's Lovers of Lies (13), whose feats comprise 'sending Cupids after people, conjuring up demons, calling mouldy corpses to life, making Hecate herself appear in plain sight, and pulling down the moon'. This man is clearly a master magician, since the others only resurrect recently deceased persons, not those mouldering in their graves. In fact, already in the Gospel of John (1 1.39) the sister of Lazarus doubts the possibility of resurrecting her brother, 'for he has been dead four days'. Resurrection must have been a theme of interest in Lucian's time, since in his Alexander or the False Prophet he also relates that Alexander's Oracle had sent out 'missionaries' to spread the fame of the Oracle by including in its memorable feats that 'it had

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73 For the Christian origin of the 'mere touch', see Lalleman, 'Healing'.
74 Polemo, De physiognomia, pp. 160-164, ed. Forster, transl. Gleason, Making Men, p. 7. For Polemo's work, see Holford-Strevens, 'On the Sources'.
75 This resurrection is also quoted in a fifth/sixth-century Coptic healing amulet as proof of Christ's healing powers, cf. PGM 11.227.
reincarnated some who had already died' (24). In fact, in his *Peregrinus*, Lucian observes regarding the Christians that 'the poor creatures have convinced themselves that they will be completely immortal and live for all time' (13). Here Lucian is almost certainly referring to the resurrection.

We are better informed about Apollonius of Tyana. In his biography (4.45), *Philostratus* relates that a girl had died just in the hour of her marriage, a typically melodramatic touch. When she was carried to her grave, the bridegroom followed the bier and 'the whole of Rome was mourning with him, for the maiden belonged to a family of consular rank'. *Philostratus* has transferred here to Rome the typical mourning scenes for prominent members of Greek society, which are so well attested for the period in inscriptions and the ancient novel. Apollonius stops the bier and 'merely touching her and saying something secretly (whispering?) over her, woke up the maiden from her apparent death; and the girl spoke out loud, and returned to her father's house'. We see here a resurrection very similar to that of Peter, but Apollonius cannot do it by a mere touch. He has to use some kind of magic formula.

Resurrection also occurs in the magical papyri. In the so-called Eighth Book of Moses, which became incorporated in a fourth-century papyrus, we find the following instruction for a magician who wants to resurrect a dead body: 'I conjure you, spirit coming in air, enter, inspire, empower, resurrect by the power of the eternal god, this body; and let it walk about in this place, for I am he who acts with the power of Thayth, the holy god. Say the Name' (PGM XIII.279-82).

The most interesting parallel, however, comes from Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* (2.27-30), a scene which is a mixture of resurrection and necromancy. Once again we are faced with a funeral procession, once again a member of a leading family, but this time a young man. His maternal uncle accuses his wife of having poisoned him and has employed the already mentioned Egyptian prophet Zatchlas (§ 1), who 'has contracted with me for a great price to bring my nephew's spirit back from the dead for a brief time and reanimate his body as it was before his death'. The prophet 'placed a certain little herb on the corpse's mouth and another on its chest. Then he turned to the east and silently...

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76 For this fascinating treatise, see most recently Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*.
77 I follow V. Schmidt, 'Lukian'.
78 Van Bremen, *The Limits*, pp. 156-163, where this example has to be added; note also the funerals in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.6, 9.30, which may well depend on Apuleius's Greek model, which was probably written around AD 170 in southern Asia Minor, cf. Bremmer, 'The Novel and the Acts', pp. 168-171.
79 For the scene, see also Koskenniemi, *Apollonius*, pp. 193-198; Bowersock, *Fiction*, p. 109ff. For Apollonius and resurrection, note also the often overlooked mention in *Historia Augusta*, *Vita Aureliani* 24.3.8.
80 For the development, see Smith, *Studies*, pp. 217-226.
invoked the rising power of the majestic Sun' (2.28). As is often argued, the herb on the mouth perhaps evokes the well-known Egyptian ritual of the opening of the mouth, but the herb is typical of Greco-Roman magic, as is the silent prayer. His ritual preparations have effect and the young man duly reveals his wife to be the murderer. However, the young man stresses that he returns only ad momentariae vitae officia (2.29). Apparently, magic can bring about only a temporary resurrection not lasting life. A clever magician could probably effect such resurrections by conjuring tricks and ventriloquism. In fact, there is often only a fine dividing line between ancient magicians and modem-day illusionists.

Considering that pagan resurrections become visible only in the second century, Christian influence seems most probable. It is noteworthy that in the Christian Middle Ages resurrection had virtually disappeared from the magicians' handbooks: it was now only the Antichrist who would perform such an impressive miracle.

After his earlier failure Simon tries to make up by letting the lame walk, the blind see, and dead people move, if only for a short time (!). When Peter follows him and every time exposes his feats for the trickery they are, he finally promises that he will fly up to his Father (31). The next day Simon indeed was carried up into the air, and everyone saw him all over Rome, passing over its temples and its hills. It is only after a prayer by Peter to Christ that he falls down and breaks his leg; after an unsuccessful operation he dies shortly after (32).

It is time to draw some conclusions. Firstly, our survey has demonstrated that the AAA are an important, if wrongly neglected, source for ancient magic. It is indeed striking how many details the authors know to relate, just like their pagan contemporaries Lucian and Apuleius. In modem times magic is normally connected with secrecy, but, as we noted, this was different in Antiquity where magicians preferred publicity. The names of Lucian and Apuleius also show that the AAA typically belong to the later second and the beginning of the third centuries, when magic apparently was of the greatest interest to the pub-

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"Fischer-Elfert, Die Vision.


83 For ancient ventriloquism, see most recently Katz and Volk, "Mere bellies"; Dickie, Magic and Magicians, p. 238ff. For a modern parallel, see L. E. Schmidt, 'From Demon Possession to Magic Show'.

84 Lucken, Antichrist, pp. 63-65; Caciola, 'Wraiths', pp. 41-44; Kieckhefer, Forbidden Rites, pp. 61-64.
lic, from high to low. During the Christian empire, magic was marginalised and driven underground, although, of course, it never disappeared.

Secondly, this great pagan interest shows that the Christians were confronted with the problem of how to differentiate themselves with their miracles from their pagan competitors. That is why our sources stress that the apostles perform their miracles without any hocus pocus and often in modest company. That is also why in the AA magicians are shown up in a bad light and proved to be ineffective (AA 4), and why accusations of magic are immediately refuted (AA Latin 18: Martyrium prius 3-4). On the other hand, even the pagan saint Apollonius of Tyana still has to whisper some words to be effective, just as the Egyptian prophet has to use herbs and a silent, i.e. magical, prayer to the Sun. Moreover, Christian miracles are performed for the improvement of life and soul. That is why Peter enters into a confrontation over the resurrection but does not attempt to impress the Romans by demonstrating that he can also fly. To do so would have been to lower himself to the performance of a trick and thus to equate himself to a magician. Between resurrecting and flying there is an important qualitative difference.

Thirdly, it is typical of the AAA that the confrontation takes place mainly on a narrative level, but virtually never on the level of intellectual argument. The case for the Christian miracles is argued only once with an appeal to the fulfilment by prophecy (APt 23-4), whereas this is a stock argument in the Christian apologists.

Finally, in the short period between the birth of Christianity and the arrival of Constantine and the Christian Empire magic and miracle were strong competitors for attention. After their rise to power the Christians could eliminate the 'competition'. That is why later Christian literature does not demonstrate the same interest in magic as the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.

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85 For magic in Apuleius, see most recently Fauth, 'Magie und Mysterium'.
86 It is interesting to note that also Manichaeism strongly opposed magic, see Mirecki, 'Manichaean Allusions'.
87 For example, Maguire, Byzantine Magic.
88 Thee, Julius Africanus, passim; Remus, Pagan-Christian Conflict, pp. 52-72; Kelhoffner, Miracle and Mission.
89 For information and comments on the various versions I would like to thank Ton Hilhorst and Sarah Johnston. Michael Maas thoughtfully corrected my English.