

WHY SILENCE?

REFLECTIONS ON PAUL AND JESUS SILENCING
DEMONISED PEOPLE IN LUKE-ACTS

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1

WHERE WE'RE GOING

- Setting the scene
- Surveying the scholarship
- Studying the sources
- Circling back to Luke and Acts
- Summary and conclusion

2

SETTING THE SCENE

- Acts 16:16-18
 - the slave girl
 - ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα ‘having a python spirit’ v 16
—πύθων a NT *hapax legomenon*
 - μαντεύομαι v 16—NT *hapax legomenon*
 - what she says about Paul and his co-workers, and their message v 17
οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας
 - Paul’s response—why he acts, and why he waits v 18
 - Luke’s understanding of the slave girl and her silencing

3

SETTING THE SCENE

- Luke 4:31-37 (cf. Mark 1:21-28)
 - ἔχων πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου ‘having a spirit of an unclean demon’ v 33
 - what the demon says about Jesus v 34
ἔα, τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ;...οἶδά σε τίς εἶ, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.
 - is the demon asking or stating? ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς v 34
 - Jesus’ response v 35
 - ἐπετίμησεν ‘he rebuked’
 - φημῶθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ‘be silent and come out of him’

4

SURVEYING THE SCHOLARSHIP: ACTS 16:16-18

- the ‘python spirit’ seeking to lead new believers away—Chrysostom
 - πνεῦμα πύθωνα linked to Apollo oracle at Delphi—Richter Reimer
 - πύθων = serpent guarding Delphic oracle, killed by Apollo
- suppression of female voice—Matthews (and Spencer)
 - promise of female prophets in 2:18 not fulfilled—except Philip’s daughters 21:9, and they do not speak; so slave girl’s voice is μαντεύομαι v 16
 - slave girl as ‘a prophet/missionary of the greatest of the oracular Gods who is compelled to identify Paul and his companions as the slaves of the one true “Most High God”’ (Matthews, 90)
 - role as παιδίσκη ‘slave girl’, ‘Pythian prophet’, and woman contrasts with Luke’s view that only men prophesy

5

SURVEYING THE SCHOLARSHIP: ACTS 16:16-18

- the girl is not demonised—Kauppi
 - only fits two of Bultmann’s seven criteria for demonisation
- τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; as a ‘defence mechanism’ against Jesus—Twelftree, Bauernfeind
 - 2 Sam 19:16-23 David asking Abishai not to interfere with his plans
 - 1 Kgs 17:18 as an attempt to ‘ward off’ Elijah
 - cf. Philo, *Deus* 138 ‘And every mind that is going to become a widow [with respect to evils] and empty of evils, says to the prophet, “Man of God! Have you come to me to remind me of my iniquity and of my sin?”’ (my translation)
 - Fitzmyer: 1 Kgs 17:18 does not involve a demon, so this is not an ‘apotropaic incantation’

6

SURVEYING THE SCHOLARSHIP: ACTS 16:16-18

- historicity?
 - Haenchen
 - story not tied rationally to literary context
 - nobody can be indicted for driving out a demon vv 19-24
 - people would not arrest and seek to harm a powerful exorcist
 - but Luke derives the material ultimately from eyewitness testimony
 - Twelftree
 - ‘we’ passage indicates source and explains Lukan style
 - Paul is portrayed in an uncomplimentary way as διαπονηθείς ‘annoyed’
 - some details are not typical Lukan or early Christian phrasing
 - δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου not picked up by early churches
 - inarticular ὁδὸν σωτηρίας—contrast ἡ ὁδός... 9:2; 18:25, etc.

7

SURVEYING THE SCHOLARSHIP: LUKE 4:33-37

- many scholars/commentators do not discuss why Jesus silences the demon
- Cyril of Alexandria’s commentary on Luke, *Hom. 12*, on v 41
οὐκ εἶα αὐτὰ λαλεῖν ‘he did not allow them to speak’
 - the demons were seeking to usurp the apostolic office
 - the demons spoke the mystery of Christ with an impure tongue
 - light cannot be revealed by darkness

8

SURVEYING THE SCHOLARSHIP: LUKE 4:33-37

- modern proposals
 - the demon's cries as an attempt to control or resist Jesus by incantation—Grundmann, Otto Betz, Green, Twelftree, Bock, Marshall
 - loud cries by demons a means of resisting an exorcist
 - cries by demons in synoptics using 'magical incantations' to resist Jesus
 - Jesus rejected demonic testimony—Caird, Bock, Edwards
 - Jesus did not want his ministry to be misunderstood—Caird, Green, Liefeld
 - only certain kinds of self-proclamation appropriate to the Messiah—Liefeld, drawing on Richard Longenecker
 - ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς as statement—Nolland

9

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Features in Luke 4:33-37
 - cries by demons as seeking to control Jesus by incantation
 - rebuke as 'commanding word' (Kee, Fitzmyer)
 - silencing as term from exorcistic sources
- Features in Acts 16:16-18
 - the slave girl speaks the truth and is interested in the 'way of salvation' which Paul announces—Spencer
 - Paul responds to the 'nagging' of the slave girl—Spencer
 - the slave girl 'fits the Pentecostal mold of Acts 2.18', but her (female) voice is suppressed—Spencer

10

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- τὰ γὰρ καλούμενα δαιμόνια, ταῦτα δὲ πονηρῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων πνεύματα τοῖς ζῶσιν εἰσδύμενα καὶ κτείνοντα τοὺς βοηθείας μὴ τυγχάνοντας
'For those called demons, these are the spirits of wicked men who enter the living and kill them unless [the living] obtain help'
Josephus, *J.W.* 7.6.3 §185, my translation

For [Luke], as for contemporaneous Judaism, **the demons stood in the service of the devil, and in opposition to God and his angels.** They bring injury and destruction, but Luke does not reflect either on their origin or their dominion. For him, the most important aspect is the oppression that they bring upon human beings. (Bovon, *Luke*, on 4:33)

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- belief that the messianic age would bring the demise of Satan's rule
 - Isa 24:21-22 'On that day **the LORD will punish the host of heaven in heaven,** and on earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.'
(NSRV)
 - John 12:31 νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου **ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω**
'Now the ruler of this world **will be driven out**' (NSRV)
 - Rev 20
 - thousand year imprisonment of 'the devil and Satan' vv 1-3
 - the devil, Death and Hades thrown into the lake of fire vv 10, 14

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- belief that the messianic age would bring the demise of Satan's rule
 - *Jub. 23:29* 'And all of their days they will be complete and live in peace and rejoicing and **there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy**, because all of their days will be days of blessing and healing.' (Charlesworth)
 - *Jub. 50:5* 'And jubilees will pass until Israel is purified from all the sin of fornication, and defilement, and uncleanness, and sin and error. And they will dwell in confidence in all the land. **And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one)**. And the land will be purified from that time and forever.' (Charlesworth)
 - *As. Mos. 10:1* 'Then his kingdom will appear throughout his whole creation. **Then the devil will have an end**. Yea, sorrow will be led away with him.' (Charlesworth)

13

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- belief that the messianic age would bring the demise of Satan's rule
 - *1 En. 55:4* [said by the Lord of Spirits] 'Kings, potentates, dwellers upon the earth: You would have to see my Elect One, how he sits in the throne of glory and **judges Azaz'el and all his company, and his army**, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits!' (Charlesworth)
 - *1 En. 69:27-29* '(Then) there came to them a great joy. And they blessed, glorified, and extolled (the Lord) on account of the fact that the name of that (Son of) Man was revealed to them. He shall never pass away or perish from before the face of the earth. But **those who have led the world astray shall be bound with chains; and their ruinous congregation shall be imprisoned**; all their deeds shall vanish from before the face of the earth. **Thenceforth nothing that is corruptible shall be found**; for that Son of Man has appeared and has seated himself upon the throne of his glory; and **all evil shall disappear from before his face**; he shall go and tell to that Son of Man, and he shall be strong before the Lord of the Spirits. Here ends the third parable of Enoch.' (Charlesworth)

14

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- belief that the messianic age would bring the demise of Satan's rule
 - IQS 4:18b-21 'In his mysterious insight and glorious wisdom God has countenanced an era in which perversity triumphs, but at the time appointed for visitation He shall destroy such forever. Then shall truth come forth in victory upon the earth. Sullied by wicked ways while perversity rules, at the time of the appointed judgment truth shall be decreed. By His truth God shall then purify all human deeds, and refine some of humanity **so as to extinguish every perverse spirit from the inward parts of the flesh, cleansing from every wicked deed by a holy spirit.**' (Wise, Abegg & Cook); cf. IQM
 - *T.Sim.* 6.6; *T.Lev.* 18.12-13; *T.Zeb.* 9.8-9; *T.Dan* 5.11
 - may contain Christian interpolations, but testify to presence of this belief (Green)

15

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Deliverance/exorcism most typically involved
 - invocation of a greater power
 - identification of the power invoked
 - formula or incantation
 - protection afterwards, e.g. by amulet
 - (sometimes) medicines
 - And he [God] told one of us [spirits/angels] to teach Noah all of their healing because he knew that they would not walk uprightly and would not strive righteously. And we acted in accord with all of his words. All of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment, but a tenth of them we let remain so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth. **And the healing of all their illnesses together with their seductions we told Noah so that he might heal by means of herbs of the earth. And Noah wrote everything in a book just as we taught him according to every kind of healing.** And the evil spirits were restrained from following the sons of Noah. (*Jub.* 10.9-13, Charlesworth)

16

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Other exorcists
 - Eleazar (Josephus, *Ant.* 8:45-49)—incantations used attributed to Solomon
 - Tobit 8:1-3 'When they had finished eating and drinking they wanted to retire; so they took the young man and brought him into the bedroom. Then **Tobias remembered the words of Raphael**, and he took the fish's liver and heart out of the bag where he had them and put them on the embers of the incense. **The odour of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt.** But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot.' (NRSV)
 - Apollonius in Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.*
 - 3.38-39 Sixteen year old boy 'possessed by a devil' for two years delivered through a letter written by 'the sage'
 - 4.44-45 Apollonius interrogated about his exorcistic methods

17

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Other exorcists
 - I Sam 16 as re-told by Josephus, *Ant.* 6:166-69, 209-11
 - Jonathan calls on his father Saul to preserve David because, 'when the evil spirit and the demons settled upon you, **he drove them out**, granting your soul peace from them' (6:211 Begg, Brill ed.)

18

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Other exorcists

- Qumran

- IQM 14.8b-10 'Throughout all our generations You have made Your mercies wondrous for the rem[nant of the people] during the dominion of Belial. With all the mysteries of his hatred they have not lead us astray from Your covenant. His spirits of destruction You have driven [away from us, and when the me]n of his dominion [condemned themselves,] You have preserved the lives of Your redeemed.' (Wise, Abegg & Cook)

STUDYING THE SOURCES

- Other exorcists

- Qumran

- IQM 14.8b-10

- 4Q560 (= 4QExorcism ar) '1.1 [...] and heart and kidn[eyes ...] 2 [...] to the one in labour with (the) birth-pain(s) of those in labor, a **demonic illness** [...] 3 [...] the male poison entered into the flesh, and the female poison 4 [...] who] (will) create iniquity and sin, fire and chill, and fire of heart 5 [...] ca]me during sleep (or into the tooth) a crushing male idol, and a crushing female idol who destroys that 6 [...] wic]ked, **the evil eye** [...] 7 [...]...before h[im ...] 2.3 and they bl[ess ...] before Him and sa[ying ...] 5 and **I, O spirit, am adjuring** [...] 6 **I adjure you, O e[vil] spirit** [...] 7 on the earth, in the clouds [...] 8 [...]' (Wise, Abegg & Cook)

STUDYING THE SOURCES: INCANTATION

- claim that the demon is seeking to control Jesus by using his name(s) Luke 4:34
 - τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί;
 - in Greek generally, it implies ‘we have nothing to do with each other’
 - does it have a particular sense in biblical use?
 - Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηéné
 - not a significant ‘title’ for early Christians—use in Acts only in Jewish settings
 - οἶδα ‘I know’ cf. PGM VIII:6-7 Lord Hermes invoked with several ‘I know’ clauses
 - ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ
 - semitic usage marking belonging to God’s sphere—including of humans, e.g. Aaron is τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου ‘the holy one of the Lord’ Ps 105:16 LXX
 - of Jesus 4x Luke-Acts; 2x John; 1x Rev

21

STUDYING THE SOURCES: ‘REBUKE’

- ἐπετίμησεν Luke 4:35
 - taking control of a demon by a commanding word—Kee & Fitzmyer
 - translation of Hebrew גַּלְגַּל *gā’ar* as ἐπιτιμάω common in LXX e.g. Zech 3:2 (of Satan); Pss 67:31 (MT 68:31; of beasts); 105:9 (MT 106:9; of the Red Sea)
 - גַּלְגַּל used in IQM 14.9ff for ‘the act of bringing the evil spirits into subjection and routing them’ (Kee)
 - Aramaic equivalent used in IQapGen 20:28-29 of deliverance from the evil spirit which afflicts Pharaoh and his household
 - thus treat גַּלְגַּל/ἐπιτιμάω as ‘a technical term for the commanding word, uttered by God or by his spokesman, by which evil powers are brought into submission, and the way is thereby prepared for the establishment of God’s righteous rule in the world’ (Kee)
 - ἐπιτιμάω not found in PGM, exorcism stories re Apollonius, or Greek papyri
 - Fitzmyer proposes translation ‘charged’

22

STUDYING THE SOURCES: 'REBUKE'

- ἐπετίμησεν Luke 4:35
 - taking control of a demon by a commanding word—Kee & Fitzmyer
 - Twelftree criticises Kee's argument
 - not clear in IQM how Belial is driven out—whether by רגל or not
 - exorcism ≠ defeat of Satan in DSS
 - רגל has a range of meaning (as Kee acknowledges)
 - DSS use most probably means 'rebuke in order to expel' (Twelftree)

23

STUDYING THE SOURCES: SILENCING

- PGM lacks instruction to be silent in deliverance/exorcism
- P.Oslo 161-62 most cited as evidence for silencing demons
 - Remember to prevent the wrath of a person...muzzle [φιμωσάται] the mouths which speak against me...!
- Moulton & Milligan 672 φιμόω
 - P.Lond. 121.567 δεῦρό μοι...καὶ **φίμωσον** ὑπόταξον. καταδούλωσον τὸν δεῖνα 'Come to me...and **silence** [and] subject. Enslave such a one'
 - P.Lond. 121.396 **φιμωτικὸν** καὶ ὑποτακτικὸν γενναῖον καὶ κάτοχος 'muzzling and bringing into subjection excellent and inhibiting [one]'
 - but (as MM note) P.Lond. 121 is 3rd century AD

24

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Luke 4:31-37
 - silence is not always a good thing—19:40
ἐὰν οὗτοι **σιωπήσουσιν**, οἱ λίθοι κράξουσιν
'if they **were silent**, the stones would cry out'
 - key 'silence' words not found in relation to demonised people in NT
σιγάω, ἡσυχάζω and ἐπιστομίζω
 - τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; not necessarily part of an incantation—1 Kgs 17:18

25

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Luke 4:31-37
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 - τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; not necessarily part of an incantation—1 Kgs 17:18
 - Jesus as ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ v 34
—messianic bearer of the Spirit; Luke 1:31-35; 3:21-22, etc.
 - there is more to Jesus and his ministry than this; he must suffer, die and rise
 - φιμώθητι 'be muzzled', cf. Deut 25:4 LXX
Οὐ **φιμώσεις** βοῦν ἀλοῶντα 'You shall not **muzzle** a threshing ox' (NETS)
 - ἐπιτιμάω used for both demon and fever vv 35, 39

26

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα

- highly likely to be allusion to Apollo cult at Delphi

- Jewish sources which know this cult are generally hostile to it

- her words are deeply ambiguous in first-century Philippi
—and thus also to Luke's Graeco-Roman readers (Trebilco)

- δοῦλοι

- is she comparing them to herself? She had κυρίοι

- ambiguity: not the same kind of slavery at all

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- her words are deeply ambiguous in first-century Philippi
—and thus also to Luke's Graeco-Roman readers (Trebilco)

- τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου

- pagan use for Ζεὺς ὑψίστος and θεός ὑψίστος, sometimes identified with supreme deity of local cult (e.g. Syria, Lydia, Egypt)

- Jewish use in LXX only for YHWH as ὁ ὑψίστος or ὁ θεός ὁ ὑψίστος or κύριος ὁ ὑψίστος

- Jewish texts when Jews speak with pagans and vice versa
ὁ θεός ὁ ὑψίστος *Jos. Asen.* 17.5; cf. Philo, *Leg.* 3.82; *Legat.* 278

- use by Jews declined as Graeco-Roman period went on—suggests that this was to avoid 'syncretistic misinterpretation' of the phrase

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- her words are deeply ambiguous in first-century Philippi
—and thus also to Luke's Graeco-Roman readers (Trebilco)

- τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου

- a Lukan term for God 7x Luke-Acts; 1x each Mark, Hebrews

- ὑψίστος in passages with

- strongly Jewish contexts, where it is ὑψίστος or ὁ ὑψίστος

- or Gentile settings, where it is ὁ θεός ὁ ὑψίστος

- thus an ambiguous term to pagans; it would not automatically say, 'YHWH'

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- her words are deeply ambiguous in first-century Philippi
—and thus also to Luke's Graeco-Roman readers (Trebilco)

- ὁδὸν σωτηρίας

- lack of an article on either word

- note earlier point on inarticulate ὁδός

- σωτηρία a broadly used term in antiquity: wholeness, health, deliverance, preservation, etc.

- thus this is also an ambiguous term in first-century Philippi and among Luke's Graeco-Roman audience

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- Paul's reaction

- διαπονηθείς cf. 4:2 'the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, **much annoyed** [διαπονούμενοι] because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead.' (NRSV)
 - provoked (L&N) distressed (NIDNTTE) very angry (EDNT)
 - ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—as other healings and exorcisms in Acts

31

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18

- why does Paul silence her?

- not because her description is accurate
 - not because she was a nuisance
—note what Paul was prepared to suffer for the gospel 2 Cor 11:22-33
 - to avoid serious potential misunderstanding of the gospel
 - no necessary reason for demonic words to be accurate if they seek to lead people away from the gospel

- why does Paul wait?

- dilemma of the potential confusion versus the possibility of trouble for Paul and his companions

32

CIRCLING BACK TO LUKE AND ACTS

- Acts 16:16-18
 - Luke's understanding
 - the nature of the 'spirit'
 - the slave girl's disappearance from the narrative
 - this is common to people who are healed or delivered
 - the narrative is no more about the slave girl than it is about Paul (Gaventa)
—it is about the *missio Dei* going forward

33

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- the instruction to be silent is **distinctive** of these stories within the NT
- it appears commanding silence is a distinctive feature of
 - the ministry of Jesus
 - and his followers
 - in the first century
- the silence commanded is designed
 - to avoid misunderstanding
 - of Jesus' mission
 - of the gospel message
 - to avoid premature disclosure of Jesus' identity (in Luke)

34

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Acts and More

<http://stevewalton.info>