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Peter G. Bolt
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JESUS' DEFEAT OF DEATH

Persuading Mark's early readers

Peter Bolt explores the impact of Mark's Gospel on its early readers in the first-century Graeco-Roman world. His book focuses upon the thirteen characters in Mark who come to Jesus for healing or exorcism and, using analytical tools of narrative and reader-response criticism, explores their crucial role in the communication of the Gospel. Bolt suggests that early readers of Mark would be persuaded that Jesus' dealings with the suppliants show him casting back the shadow of death and that this in itself is preparatory for Jesus' final defeat of death in resurrection. Enlisting a variety of ancient literary and non-literary sources in an attempt to illuminate this first-century world, this book gives special attention to illness, magic and the Roman imperial system. This is a new approach to Mark which attempts to break the impasse between narrative and historical studies and will appeal to scholars and students alike.

PETER G. BOLT is Head of New Testament at Moore Theological College, Sydney. He has edited (with M.D. Thompson) and contributed to *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission* (2000).

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To my wife, Barbara, who, for better and for worse,
shares my life under the shadow of death, my fellow
heir in our Lord's gracious gift of life; and to our
four daughters, Grace, Jana, Sara and Alice, who are
kissed each night with the thought that tomorrow
they might rise again.

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PREFACE

This book attempts to understand the potential impact of Mark's Gospel upon its early Graeco-Roman readers.

It focuses upon the role of the healing/exorcism accounts in this communicative process. These scenes forge a link with Mark's flesh-and-blood readers by:

- (1) strongly aligning the 'implied readers' with the suppliants in the scenes;
- (2) enabling the 'flesh-and-blood' readers to recognise their own world in the circumstances of the suppliants and to 'become' the implied readers;
- (3) thus drawing the flesh-and-blood readers into the story-world which seeks to move them by its message about Jesus and the coming kingdom.

To appreciate the impact of these stories on early readers, the book attempts to recover relevant aspects of the pre-understanding which Graeco-Roman readers could be expected to bring to their reading of Mark. This requires a special focus on ancient perceptions of sickness and death, as well as due attention to magic, which could be either cause or cure of the afflictions.

When read from this reconstructed perspective, the healing/exorcism scenes show Jesus dealing with death.

These scenes are read within Mark's wider framework of the expectation of the kingdom of God, to be inaugurated by the resurrection of the dead.

Portrayed as a king who brings life to those under the shadow of death, Jesus would be seen as an alternative to the deified rulers familiar to the Roman world. He had no apotheosis which removed him from death, but he truly died. His emptied tomb therefore speaks of a genuine resurrection which inaugurated the kingdom of God, and which provides genuine hope for those who continue to live under the shadow of death.

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Mark's Gospel had the potential to make an impact upon the early readers' sense of mortality. Jesus had defeated death.

I trust that this small offering towards a greater understanding of Mark's message might help others better appreciate the wonder of this 'gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'.

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I am also grateful for feedback on parts of my argument, during both the writing of the thesis and the preparation of this book. My thanks go to the participants in the King's College London New Testament Postgraduate Seminar and in the Tyndale House Study Groups (New Testament and Theology); Prof. David Jordan; Prof. Roy Kotansky; John Hoskin; Darryl Palmer; Bruce Winter; and Prof. Edwin Judge. Comments made by my two examiners, Dr Richard Burridge and Prof. Morna Hooker, the Cambridge University Press reader, and the editor of the Monograph Series, Prof. Richard Bauckham, have also been greatly appreciated. Special thanks must also go to my good friend David Thurston and to Melody Machin for undertaking the gruelling task of compiling the initial indexes for this book.

NOTE ON THE RENDERING OF PAPHYROLOGICAL/INSCRIPTIONAL TEXTS

I have rendered texts as they appear in the edited versions. It should be noted that the magical texts often have unusual spelling and the accentuation is not always supplied by the editors. The following guide to the standard sigla, taken from P.W. Pestman, M. David and B.A. van Groningen, *The New Papyrological Primer* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), should be noted, although the practice of some editors varies.

[]	lacuna
<>	omission in the original
()	resolution of a symbol or abbreviation
[ca. 3]	approximately 3 letters are missing
ca. 3	traces of approximately 3 letters survive
. (subscript dot)	uncertain letter. (This needs to be distinguished from the subscript dot used in transliterations, which does not indicate uncertainty.)
	edge of text
[?]	where, in irregularly spaced material (such as in lead tablets), it is impossible to know whether to assume a lost letter. This sign is introduced by D.R. Jordan, 'Southwest Corner Agora', 213.
σ, ς, c	I have retained the type of sigma used by the editors of the various pieces.

If the symbol | is not used in translations, the beginning of lines is often indicated by capitalisation. I have also followed this fairly standard practice when citing poetic literary texts.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations, in both text and bibliography, generally conform to the practice of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, and to either the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* or H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ⁹1940). The following abbreviations are used in quotations of primary sources. I have referred to text numbers in collections of primary sources in **bold**, and page numbers in normal type. [TLG] following a work indicates that the source was accessed solely through the TLG computer database. I have also occasionally used a preceding ? to indicate that a translation or interpretation is either debated or possible.

- ACBM C. Bonner, 'Amulets Chiefly in the British Museum', *Hesperia* 20 (1951), 301–45.
- AG W.R. Paton, *The Greek Anthology*: vol. II (LCL; London and Cambridge, Mass.: W. Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1917, repr. 1970); vol. V (LCL; Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press and W. Heinemann, 1918, repr. 1979).
- AMB J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985).
- ANET J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, ³1969).
- AnonLond H. Diels (ed.), *Anonymi Londinensis ex Aristotelis Iatricis Menoniis et aliis medicis eclogae* (Supplementum Aristotelicum iii pars i; Berlin: Reimer, 1893) [TLG].

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- AthAg D.R. Jordan, 'Defixiones from a Well Near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora,' *Hesperia* 54 (1985), 205–55.
- AthAg**IL72** D.R. Jordan, 'A Curse Tablet from a Well in the Athenian Agora,' *ZPE* 19 (1975), 245–8.
- Braund D.C. Braund, *Augustus to Nero. A Sourcebook on Roman History 31 BC–AD 68* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).
- Carlini A. Carlini et al. (eds), *Papiri letterari greci* (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 1978).
- Carthage D.R. Jordan, 'New Defixiones from Carthage,' in J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *The Circus and a Byzantine Cemetery at Carthage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 117–34.
- Cartlidge D.R. Cartlidge and D.L. Dungan (eds), *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994 (1980)).
- CIL* T. Mommsen et al., *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin: Reimer, 1862–1963).
- CLE* F. Bücheler, *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1897, repr. 1921).
- Diels-Kranz H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zurich and Berlin: Weidmann, 1964).
- DT* *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1904).
- DTA* R. Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* (IG III²; Berlin: Reimer, 1897). Reprinted in A.N. Oikonomides, *Inscriptiones Atticae: supplementum inscriptionum Atticarum I* (Chicago: Ares, 1976).
- EJ V. Ehrenberg and A.H.M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).
- Epig.Gr.* G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca ex lapidibus conlecta* (Berlin: Reimer, 1878).
- E-W R.H. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1992).
- Farber W. Farber, 'MANNAM LUŠPUR ANA ENKIDU: Some New Thoughts about an Old Motif,' *JNES* 49 (1990), 299–321.
- FGr H* F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923–58).

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- Fox W.S. Fox, 'An Infernal Postal Service', *Art and Archeology* 1 (1914), 205–7.
- Gager J. Gager (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- GM F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).
- GMPT H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ²1986).
- Grant F.C. Grant (ed.), *Ancient Roman Religion* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957).
- IG A. Kirchoff et al., *Inscriptiones Graecae I–XV* (Berlin: Reimer, 1923→).
- IKyme H. Engelmann, *Die Inschriften von Kyme* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976).
- ILS H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (Zurich: Wiedemann, 1974 (1892–1916)).
- Isbell C.D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (SBLDS 17; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975).
- Kock T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta II Novae Comoediae Fragmenta pars I* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884).
- Kotansky R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets. The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).
- L&R.I N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization. I: The Republic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).
- L&R.II N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization. Sourcebook II: The Empire* (New York: Harper, 1966).
- Lattimore R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1942).
- LKA E. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Berlin, 1953).
- LSCG F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris: De Boccard, 1969).
- LSJ H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ⁹1940).
- LSSupp F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques, Supplément* (Paris: De Boccard, 1962).

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- McCullough W.S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).
- MES C. Bonner, 'A Miscellany of Engraved Stones,' *Hesperia* 23 (1954), 138–57.
- MGP D.R. Jordan, 'Magica Graeca Parvula,' *ZPE* 100 (1994), 321–35.
- Migne *PG* J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1857–87).
- Migne *PL* J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina* (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1906–8, repr. 1968).
- Montgomery J.A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1913).
- NewDocs* *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (7 vols; G.H.R. Horsley, vols. I–V, S.R. Llewelyn, vols. VI–VII, eds; Sydney: Macquarie University AHDR Centre, 1981–94).
- OGIS* W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–5).
- Page D.L. Page, *Select Papyri III Literary Papyri, Poetry* (LCL; London and Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1941, repr. 1970).
- PDM* Demotic spells in H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ²1986).
- Peek, *GG* W. Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960).
- Peek, *GV* W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften I* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955).
- P.Giss* O. Eger, E. Kornemann and P.M. Meyer, *Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1910–12).
- PGM* K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs (eds), *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–74).
- P. Tebt.* B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *The Tebtunis Papyri vol. II* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1907, repr. 1970).

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- Ramsay W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* Vol. I, Part II: *West and West-Central Phrygia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897).
- RG *Res Gestae divi Augusti*. Text: EJ1; Translation: Sherk26, Braund1, L&R. II.2.
- SB *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten* (successively published by F. Preisigke, F. Bilabel, E. Kiessling, H.-A. Rupprecht; 1915→).
- Scurlock J.A. Scurlock, *Magical Means of Dealing With Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia* (unpublished PhD dissertation; University of Chicago, 1988).
- SEG J.J. Houdius et al. (eds), *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1923).
- SGD D.R. Jordan, 'A Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora,' *GRBS* 26 (1985b), 151–97.
- Sherk R.K. Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- SMA C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor and London: University of Michigan Press and Oxford University Press, 1950).
- Small. E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).
- SuppMag R. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum* (*Papyrologica Coloniensia* 16; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–2).
- TGF A. Nauck, *Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964 (21889)), Supp. B. Snell (1964)
- Thompson R.C. Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, which attack Mankind. I: Evil Spirits. II: "Fever Sickness" and "Headache", etc.* (London: Luzac, 1903 and 1904).
- Most of the tablets can be abbreviated without confusion; however, it is necessary to distinguish the following:

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1.III	Volume 1, tablet III
am.III	Volume 2, tablet III, Ašakki maršûti series
ṭ.III	Volume 2, tablet III, Ṭīī series
X	Volume 1, tablet X
“X”	Volume 2, tablet “X”
am.IX	Volume 2, tablet IX, Ašakki maršûti series
ṭ.IX	Volume 2, tablet IX, Ṭīī series
ṭ.VIII	Volume 2, tablet VIII, Ṭīī series
lk.VIII	Volume 2, tablet VIII, Luḫ-ka series

TOTP

J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983 and 1985).