

DEMON INVOCATIONS IN THE COPTIC MAGICAL SPELLS

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Do people worship demons ? The question arises with a number of Coptic magical texts in which the Devil, demons, or explicitly marginal spirits (such as those connected with Amente) — are invoked in some fashion. The question also arises in connection with a scholarly paradigm about « magic » that increasingly demands critical examination : that people who seek to do harm or exploit others or disrupt relationships by means of magical spells invoke evil spirits from a dark and debased counter-pantheon ; while appeals for health, protection, and success address the great gods of the central religion. Indeed, this paradigm makes the pantheon of demons fundamentally opposed to the central cult pantheon — in our case, *P-Noute*, Christ, Mary, and all the saints and martyrs¹. This paper, then, will examine the types of peripheral or chaotic spirits — « demons » — invoked in Coptic spells for aid in coercing some individual. In what ways, I ask, can we speak of a separate « demonic pantheon » suitable for magical purposes ? From what domains did Egyptian Christian ritual experts construct their systems of supernatural powers ?

A. THE CORPUS OF SPELLS : OVERVIEW

My review of the principal Coptic spell collections found fifteen Coptic spells that appealed in some way to supernatural figures whom we could reasonably classify as « demonic » rather than « angelic » or « divine » — although I plan to complicate this classification shortly. The spells fall generally under the category of *binding* — that is, to constrain some individual to do something one

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¹ E.g., BARB, « Survival of Magic Arts », esp. p. 103 ; LUCK, *Ancient Pathways*, esp. p. 211. Cf. SMITH, « Demonic Powers », p. 425-426.

wishes, especially sexually. Indeed, six of these spells aim to bind women for sexual purposes ; while others seek, for example, the separation of a couple, the punishment of perjurers, and even the *prevention* of a man's seduction of a woman by afflicting him with impotence. All these rather harsh intentions on the part of clients — and indulged by the ritual experts who keep these spells in the ready — certainly lend themselves to the scholarly paradigm that views « magic » as selfish, antisocial, and violent, a paradigm that I shall also criticize in this paper.

Who, then, are the demonic powers invoked ? Already a simple angel/demon dichotomy breaks down in my sample. While three spells invoke the Devil by name and one (Heidelberg 500) invokes two figures who « waged war with the angels and cherubim », nine spells invoke figures associated with Amente, the Underworld, and only two name traditional demons of early Christian tradition : Bersebour and Asmodeus. Already we must reckon with the fact that « invoking demons » in magical spells does not involve uniform appeals to — nor in any way « devotion to » — the realm of Satan, as church and monastic leaders imagined it². The realms of the demonic in my sample are too diverse. Nor can we equate these demons with the central gods of the old Pharaonic religion, as « pagan survivals »³. They all function coherently within a Christian cosmology dominated by *P-Noute*, Christ, and saints, yet as dangerous, oppositional spirits associated with disorderly power. In what ways, then, can we comprehend their nature as « demons » ?

B. THE DEMONOLOGY OF COPTIC SPELLS

1. Satan and Satanic Demons

Let us look first at the invocations of the Devil : *Diabolos*, *Satanas*, *Mastema*. In the three spells that specifically invoke this figure he clearly functions as a folkloric anti-hero, not the evil Prince of Deception promulgated by Church and monastic authorities⁴. In one London spell, Mastema embodies erotic passion ; and it is to the apocryphal legend of his transferring that passion through his sweat to Eve that the spell refers. Indeed, as Jacques van der Vliet has proposed, the legend itself may have arisen to sanction the preparation of a love potion — as « sweat of Mastema »⁵. It is a disorderly, dangerous passion that the Devil offers,

² Cp. Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 2 ; *Codex Theodosianus* 9.16.7 ; *ACM* 73 (p. 2 : Cyprian tries unsuccessfully to seduce Justina by « the powers of Satan » before invoking heavenly powers). Further on the late antique characterization of magic as demonic/Satanic : MAGOULIAS, « The Lives of Byzantine Saints », p. 230-246, and WORTLEY, « Some Light ».

³ Cp. *ACM* 47-49, 72, 82 ; *pace* BARB, « Survival of Magic Arts », p. 104.

⁴ Cf. GUILLAUMONT & GUILLAUMONT, « Démons » ; VAN DER VLIET, « Demons » ; *id.*, « Chenouté et les démons ».

⁵ Cf. VAN DER VLIET, « Varia Magica Coptica », p. 225-228. Compare *Questions of Bartholomew* 4.58-59 (trans. SCHNEEMELCHER, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1, p. 549).

to be sure — but it is construed in familiar terms. And the same is true for the Michigan text : a « spirit whose head is in heaven, whose feet are in the abyss » should « descend to Amente and uproot all the *thoughts of the Devil about N* »⁶. The Devil here is a denizen or prisoner of Amente who harbors in himself the very erotic passion upon which the spell seeks to draw.

We come closer to the « Satanic » Devil in the second two of the spells : Satanus declares himself God, and Bachouch and Bikmn oppose the angels. Each case draws upon ancient Jewish ideas of Satan's fall or the angels' fall, recalling the Enochic *Book of the Watchers* and later texts (*1 En* 6-13 ; *Wisdom* 2:23-24). Yet what is invoked in these spells is not an evil borne of opposing heaven and hating the cosmos but *specific paradigmatic actions* : in the one case, the mutual conflict of heavenly forces ; in the other, a gesture of divine provocation : « I am also a god ! » Meant to take effect in the social world, these actions are imagined in human, even tragic terms⁷. Indeed, the Heidelberg text includes drawings of Bachouch and Bikmn that render these beings as versions of the Egyptian god Seth — a disorderly but not evil god who was still invoked in the Greek magical papyri. The overall effect of the invocation of these demons is to conjure an image of chaotic power that the ritual can direct, not cosmic evil⁸. In this respect, the fundamental context of ritual, we should note also the importance of *names* attached to Satanic demons : not simply Satanus but also Mastema and Bachuch/Bikmn. Names, especially esoteric names, offer linch-pins for the direction of supernatural forces (cp. *Testament of Solomon* ; Mk 5:7-9). Coptic liturgy seems to have been a veritable factory for the production of such esoteric names : one homily calls the angel whom God cast out of heaven, to be punished by the Four Bodiless Creatures, Saklataboth⁹.

2. Amente Demons

These last four spells are the only examples I have found of direct appeals to the Devil or diabolical beings. By far the most frequent « demons » invoked in the Coptic spells consist of underworld beings : the archons of Amente. Most of these figures are distinctive for their specific functions in Amente : **Theumatha**, who dwells in Gehenna with fiery tongs (*ACM* 79) ; **Temelouchos**, « the one who ... tortures the lawless and the liars and the perjurers » (*ACM* 92) ; the six powers of death, « who bring every sickness down upon every person » and

⁶ Ed. WORRELL, « Coptic Magical and Medical Texts », p. 185.

⁷ On wider sources for these ideas in Egyptian-Christian folklore, see ROSENSTIEHL, « La chute de l'ange », esp. p. 39-40.

⁸ GRUMACH, « On the History » ; VAN DER VLIET, « Satan's Fall », p. 414-415, 417. On Seth-involutions, see FRANKFURTER, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 112-115.

⁹ John Chrysostom (attrib.), *Encomium on the Four Bodiless Living Creatures*, Pierpont Morgan Copt. Ms. M612, p. 33, ed./tr. Craig WANSINK, in DEPUYDT (ed.), *Homiletica*, p. 524:35-36, 525:36.

remove souls from bodies (*ACM* 98)¹⁰; **Sourochchata**, who is associated with dissolving « the sinews and ligaments and joints », presumably in some underworld capacity (*ACM* 111); and **Aknator the Ethiopian**, who seems both to lead souls to Amente and to decapitate them (*ACM* 119)¹¹. The picture is of an elaborate realm of monstrous beings who serve eternally in specific roles to punish and destroy. There is also the sense that each of these monsters is bound to a *name* that can be invoked for purposes in this world.

The other Amente-demons are invoked with respect to their authority in the underworld: **Louchme**, with his « fiery throne » (*ACM* 116); **Dimelouchos**, who presides over Judgment (*ACM* 82); and **Tartarouchos**, who is « a god also » (*ACM* 75)¹². All these « demons », then, are figures of liminal authority — masters of that monstrous land of the dead — with the capacity to be called upon, to carry their disruptive powers out of that world, where they belong, into a world where they don't belong, to accomplish specific tasks.

As authorities over Amente, these spirits serve also the maintenance of justice in the cosmos — in the sense of the just punishment of the wicked. Given the disruption and brutality they seem to pose to our world, it might be strange to imagine — still in the Byzantine period — that Amente-demons could represent a kind of justice. But this function is underlined in the Berlin text invoking Temelouchos: revenge is sought against perjurers in this world by appeal to the being who destroys perjurers in Amente. Amente demons in many ways thus represent a greater justice, if a more dangerous and uncontrollable one.

This idea is actually illustrated quite vividly in the mural of Hell found in an ancient church in Tebtunis. The mural portrays the Amente-archons Abbaton, Aftemeluchos, and a « Dekan who chews souls » in the grotesque process of punishing sinners¹³. It is also illustrated in the story of the sorcerer Astratolē embedded in the *Martyrdom of Ss. Shenoufe and his Brethren*. Seeking to learn more about the underworld, he descends there by his « magician's art ». But « the demons [*n-daimōn*] surrounded him, and some of them said, 'Let us behead him!' Others said, 'Let us flay him alive!' Others said, 'Let us remove his nails!' In short, they were contemplating giving him great punishments.» When he cannot save himself by appeal to heavenly powers, Astratolē invokes Christ — a

¹⁰ Cf. Coptic Apocalypse of Bartholomew, ed. LACAU, « Fragments d'apocryphes coptes », p. 45-46, where they are called Dekans, and B.M. Ms. Or. 6804, f. 1, ed. BUDGE, *Coptic Apocrypha*, 1-2, trans. p. 180-181, 218.

¹¹ Illustration in VYCICHL, *s.v.* « Magic », in *CE* vol. 5, p. 1501. Ethiopia as demonic locator: AUFRÈRE, « L'Égypte traditionnelle », p. 86-87, and BRAKKE, « Ethiopian Demons ».

¹² Temelouchos (*ACM* 92), Dimelouchos (*ACM* 82), and Aftemelouchos of the Tebtunis wall-painting (below) are all etymologically cognate and widely attested as underworld arch in Coptic texts: cf. ROSENSTIEHL, « Tartarouchos-Temelouchos ».

¹³ WALTERS, « Christian Paintings from Tebtunis », p. 200-204.

clear warning to listeners about which powers can rescue and which can do harm¹⁴. In the later Coptic *Discourse on Abbaton*, of course, Abbaton emerges as a monstrous metamorphosis of the loyal angel Muriel : now sporting seventy heads, long tusks, and scythe-like fingers, Abbaton is « established » in the cosmos to terrify souls out of their bodies at the time of death¹⁵.

Many texts indeed underline the danger of Amente spirits in similar terms of monstrous appearance : for example, the serpentine faces of the « Six Powers of Death » according to the *Coptic Book of Bartholomew*¹⁶. The Amente spirits are violent, bloodthirsty, and not to be trifled with — hence they are labelled *daimōn* in some texts. Yet in disciplining the sorcerer they ultimately maintain the preservation of order and boundaries in the cosmos. We would then classify Amente spirits as « demonic » only for their function as monstrous denizens of the underworld, not by association with Satan or opposition to God. They function like — and indeed inherit many aspects of — the punishing angels of Jewish apocalyptic visions, who can also present horrific appearances : « Their faces were like a leopard, their tusks being outside their mouth [like] the wild boars. Their eyes were mixed with blood. Their hair was loose like the hair of women, and fiery scourges were in their hands¹⁷. »

3. Unaffiliated Demons

The three demons that are neither Devil nor Amente demon — **Bersebour**, **Asmodeus**, and **Keuentios Patilos**, seem no more Satanic than the others. Asmodeus, of course, is an ancient and well-known chief-demon from early Judaism (Tobit 3:8 ; *Testament of Solomon* 5). The name Bersebour probably derives from Baalzebul, a well-known Semitic local god and part of learned demonology from ancient times¹⁸. The legend of « one who has fallen from his invisible chariot and been cast into outer darkness » (*ACM* 87) may point again to the Devil : some mythical downfall that would *incline* a figure to come and resolve a crisis in our world¹⁹.

¹⁴ Pierpont Morgan Codex M583, f. 119^v I, ed. REYMOND & BARNS, *Four Martyrdoms*, p. 102-3, trans. p. 203. Cf. VON LIEVEN, « Faust in Ägypten ? ».

¹⁵ « Discourse on Abbatōn by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria » (B.M. ms. Or. 7025), ed. BUDGE, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, p. 241-243.

¹⁶ *Coptic Book of Bartholomew* (B.M. Or. 6804, f. 1b) : ΠΙΤΕCΜΟΤ ΝΖΕΝΚΟΛΛΗΚΗΝ ΕΟΛΚ, ed. BUDGE, *Coptic Apocrypha*, p. 2 ; cp. *ACM* 98.

¹⁷ *Apoc. Zeph.* 4.3-4 , ed. STEINDORFF, *Apokalypse des Elias*, p. 40-42, tr. O. WINTERMUTE, in CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:511 (cp. Eremiel « who is over the abyss » : « His teeth were outside his mouth like a bear ... His body was like the serpent's », 6.8). Cf. *1 Enoch* 56 and more generally HIMMELFARB, *Tours of Hell*, p. 120-121, 148-149, and BAUCKHAM, « The Conflict of Justice and Mercy ».

¹⁸ *Testament of Solomon* 3, 6 ; Mk 3:22 ; Q/Lk 11:14-23.

¹⁹ Ed. CRUM, « La magie copte » p. 541 ; cf. VANDER VLIET, « Satan's Fall », p. 411.

In general, we might say that these are all familiar beings : monstrous in function, liminal in habitat, and even sometimes called « Devil », yet imagined as part of the cosmos and capable of being harnessed by name.

C. THE INVOCATION OF PERIPHERAL POWERS

But why invoke such monstrous powers in the first place, whether devil, demon, or Amente archon ? What connection is there between the disruptive functions of these spells and the nature of the beings invoked ? Under what circumstances do people appeal to demons ?

It is important to note that there is no general correlation between binding spells for erotic or malicious goals and the demonic character of the beings invoked. On the contrary, one need only peruse the chief collections of Coptic magical texts to see that *most* curses and binding spells appeal to *P-Noute*, Christ, and archangels. « Mary who bore Jesus, you must bring [the victim] away by means of an ulcerous tumor », demands one spell (ACM 101) ; « May (the) curse (of) *P-Noute* descend upon Alo and her entire household », demands one Apa Victor in another (ACM 104) ; a third appeals to the holy martyrs to rain havoc and pestilence on « Joor and his wife » (ACM 108). The Coptic erotic spell of Cyprian of Antioch (ACM 73) is introduced with a story about the *inadequacy* of Satanic powers to conquer the heart of one Justina, leading Cyprian to invoke instead « the Father of the aeons, the Lord of every lordship » in order to bind her to his desires.

P-Noute, Christ, and the rest of the Egyptian Christian pantheon are adjured in these spells as arbiters of justice called in to resolve crises with proper vengeance and authority. But these beings function, according to the classification proposed by the anthropologist I.M. Lewis, as *central morality spirits* : that is, divine figures whom the dominant religious system promotes as guardians of social and political order and public ritual²⁰. What might be the distinctive contexts for invoking what Lewis calls *peripheral spirits*, and the Church called demons and the Devil ?

1. *The Bricolage of the Ritual Expert*

First of all, we must recognize a performative context for such invocations. Each spell represents, fundamentally, the creative, *ad hoc* constructions of tradition — the *bricolages* — of a ritual expert, probably a monk or church scribe. He composes the invocation, the gestures, and the ingredients to convey efficacy through the combined features of **tradition** — that these are ancient names and

²⁰ LEWIS, *Ecstatic Religion*, p. 27-30, 63-64.

figures ; **authority** — that these are recognizable names and figures associated with power, perhaps with the church and its liturgical lore ; and **pertinence** — that the words spoken, the substances used, the whole « theatre » of ritual binding, pertains intrinsically to the experience of the client. The whole process of collecting and editing master spells and presiding over their performance involves this kind of creative synthesis, in which the choice and articulation of spirits comprise the key component.

Indeed, the importance of this performative dimension of ritual *bricolages* emerges especially in the use of ingredients. In many spells, the ingredients, the ritual materials, form the basis for designating spirits : a potion becomes Mastema's passionate sweat (ACM 78) ; a bit of oil or iron might become opportunities for invoking other liminal beings in *historiolae* — magical narratives (cf. ACM 82)²¹. These exigencies of ritual performance, as well as the ritual expert's own creative preferences, go far in explaining the choice of peripheral rather than central morality spirits to motivate these spells. In contrast, it is quite difficult to find a systematic, cosmological rationale for why « demons » should be specified rather than angels. Many *historiolae* bear out this observation : the Strasbourg text invents a spirit « who has fallen from his invisible chariot and has been cast into the outer darkness » (ACM 87) — thus for this ritual *bricoleur* a spirit proper to the endeavor of striking a man with impotence. The critical element here, indeed, is not the *historiola* but the name — Keuentios Patilos Kous Makous — which completes the invocation. So also in the Coptic Museum papyrus that invokes Aknator the Ethiopian (ACM 119) : This spell, for gaining various powers, draws a verbal and an *iconic* picture of this peripheral spirit, associating him not just with a barbarian land — Ethiopia — but also with Amente. A wild spirit is constructed and filled out for ritual purposes.

Other spells display similar creativity with *historiolae*, combining names with mythical landscapes and stories : Elouch, Belouch, and Barbarouch under a mountain peak in Amente (ACM 116) ; and Bakhoukh and Bikmn, the angels who fell from heaven, in a spell that draws on Jewish apocalyptic legend for its aura of tradition (Heid. 500/1). So the choice of appealing to peripheral spirits — those associated with Amente, the Devil, or learned demonological tradition — can be understood largely in the context of the inclinations of particular ritual experts, who will present themselves as variously learned in esoteric names and cosmology — and variously adept at « filling out » the characters of peripheral spirits²².

²¹ Cf. FRANKFURTER, « Narrating Power ».

²² See FRANKFURTER, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 257-261, and « Dynamics of Ritual Expertise ».

2. *The Appeal of Peripheral Spirits*

But among clients there may also be an inclination towards invoking peripheral, rather than central morality, spirits in some circumstances, even with the knowledge that official religious leaders repudiate these spirits. What are the contexts in which people might do this? We can learn much about these ritual situations from early modern European inquisition records, which offer voluminous evidence for local magic and ritual expertise in sixteenth-to-eighteenth-century Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Brazil.

First of all, we learn that the situations that impel people to seek binding spells, especially of a sexual nature, can be quite desperate: mothers in fear of losing their husbands to other women, for example, or fathers in fear of losing their daughters to unapproved suitors — not the stereotype of men trying selfishly to steal others' wives²³. These ritual situations are enmeshed in real social and domestic crises. Thus, while ritual experts may usually invoke central morality spirits out of the conviction that Christ and Mary will bring justice to an unjust situation²⁴, there are many occasions when appeal to a peripheral spirit, from the realm of repudiated beings like Mastema or Asmodeus, will match the desperation of the crisis.

Moreover, we often find *chief* peripheral spirits — the masters of spirits of death, chaos, and affliction — invoked to protect in dire situations. This is a cross-cultural pattern: witness Kālī and Garuda in South Asia, Bhairava and other dangerous protector deities in Himalayan religions, and Santa Muerte and San Simon in contemporary Mexico²⁵, but even more in Egypt: Seth, Bastet, Taweret, and in the Roman period Petbe and Toutou²⁶. Indeed, Petbe, a regional god well-known to Shenoute of Atripe, is invoked in just this capacity in one spell; but the ritual expert makes him chief in Amente (*ACM* 118)²⁷. All these

²³ Cf. BULLARD, « Hide and Secrete »; O'NEIL, « Magical Healing »; SÁNCHEZ ORTEGA, « Sorcery and Eroticism »; and SOUZA, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross*, ch. 5.

²⁴ E.g., the following « notice » posted on the door of Pope John Paul II Bookstore, Hamtramck, Michigan (USA), as of 8 Aug. 1990: « This establishment has been placed / under the care and protection of / ... / the Blessed Virgin Mary / ... / Any person or group* / who hinders or harms / in any way whatsoever / indirectly or directly / intended or accomplished / by word or by deed / the person or property of anyone / in any way associated with / (no matter how remotely) / an establishment dedicated thus / invokes therefore 'THE CURSE OF GOD' / upon him/her/itself, /... / Since the curse is self-inflicted / by the doer of the deed, / it can only be undone by / the guilty one who is to blame. / NO ONE — such as a relative, friend, saint, / or Christ himself — may intervene on their behalf. »

²⁵ Cf. LINROTHER & WATT, *Demonic Divine*; NASH, « Judas Transformed »; THOMPSON, « On Mexico's Mean Streets ».

²⁶ FRANKFURTER, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 111-120.

²⁷ Shenoute, Discourses 4: *Not Because a Fox Barks; The Lord Thundered*. See VAN DER VLIET, « Spätantikes Heidentum », p. 112-114; AUFRÈRE, « L'Égypte traditionnelle », p. 69-72; FRANKFURTER, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 116-119.

beings begin as archons of the periphery, associated with hordes of afflicting demons ; but they are invoked out of desperation to lend their supreme powers, or rather their authority *over* chaotic powers, to our benefit.

But there is another context for popular invocation of the Devil, we learn from the European and Latin American cases, and that is the fact that he exists as part of the Christian cosmos. Despite ecclesiastical attempts to « edit out », to marginalize and repudiate, so-called « demons » and the Devil, the lay recipients of this dualistic universe find themselves with effectively *two* potent cosmic moieties : the central morality spirits under God and the peripheral spirits, associated with the Devil and demons. Church authorities insist that proper power comes from the center only ; but layfolk and ritual experts behold a range of beings, some peripheral and some central, but all of whom present types of supernatural potency. Living in the landscape, one is forced to negotiate with this full range, not simply avoid those deemed demonic.

Indeed, in some cases the very demonization of spirits traditionally associated with certain places, or festivals, or natural events (like the Nile surge), has had the effect of preserving them as potent beings. Hence devils and demons are often viewed with a sort of ancestral familiarity²⁸. If we are most familiar with this tendency to domesticate the Devil in Europe and Latin America, we can see it also in the Coptic spells' constructions of the Devil as an embodiment of passion.

Overall, a range of peripheral spirits that church leaders might view as evil and contrary to cosmic order, villagers view *on a continuum with* the central morality spirits, as complementary powers. Just as Christ may be invoked to seduce the girl next door, the Devil may be invoked to resolve a lawsuit²⁹.

3. *Peripheral Amente Spirits in the Egyptian Imagination*

It is likely that Amente-demons had a particular utility in late antique Egypt as an especially articulated realm of peripheral spirits. One notices, first of all, that the Coptic spells keep Amente-demons distinct from the Devil (ACM 82). They are rarely labelled « demons » — and then only to highlight their peripheral nature (ACM 79). But more generally, between Coptic magical texts and Coptic apocryphal texts, one does get the impression of an elaborate, if fluid, mortuary pantheon in late antique Egypt³⁰. And the idea of such a mortuary pantheon would have provided a source not only for apocalyptic narratives and wall-paintings, but also for ritual experts' *bricolages* of peripheral spirits. Of course,

²⁸ Cf. CERVANTES, *The Devil in the New World*, p. 46-53 ; MEYER, *Translating the Devil*, p. 83-111 ; FRANKFURTER, « Syncretism and the Holy Man », p. 351-364.

²⁹ Cf. SCOTT, « Protest and Profanation », p. 22-25.

³⁰ PIANKOFF, « La descente aux enfers » ; DUNAND, « Pratiques et croyances funéraires » ; MONTSERRAT, « Burial Practices ».

as Jan Zandee argued (perhaps too strenuously), one cannot infer a smooth transition of mortuary beliefs from Pharaonic Egypt. And yet, the well-defined range of Coptic Amente-spirits obviously continued many ideas from earlier Egyptian tradition, especially regarding the punishments that take place in Amente³¹. More important than putative « pagan survivals », however, is the broader sense, among ritual experts and their clients, **a**) that there existed a class of monstrous, bloodthirsty spirits belonging functionally *and topographically* to the periphery ; **b**) that this realm — Amente — had a system of roles and hierarchy ; **c**) that this realm actually contributed to cosmic order ; and **d**) that by this knowledge of the names and features of these beings, the ritual expert could call upon them. In this mode, grounded always in ritual applications (including liturgical and graphic expressions), Christian ritual experts were able to maintain this class of spirits from earlier Egyptian tradition and to keep them familiar — a resource for ritual invocation.

D. CONCLUSION

In the end, the « demons » invoked in Egyptian-Christian spells amount neither to demon « worship » nor to an engagement with demons or the Devil as evil beings. Instead, we find a range of peripheral spirits, named, placed, and « narrated » according to the exigencies of the ritual situation. Some have heritages in Egyptian mortuary mythology, some in early apocalyptic texts, but many more, like the Devil-Mastema, coalesce out of the rich field of tradition and esoteric lore that ritual experts in late antique Egypt maintained and drew upon — those monks and shrine attendants who purveyed oils and amulets and diverse « blessings »³². Indeed, we might conclude that, among the local Christianities of late antique Egypt, *all* spirits were potentially ambivalent, capable of harming or protecting, of being influenced by holy names and spells, and of shifting between liturgical and personal roles. This field of tradition and lore, which spread between monastery, festival, and ritual-professionals' environments, only distantly reflected the stark dualism of Shenoute and church fathers, with its predacious cosmic Satan and exorcistic holy men³³. Rather, the spirits of the periphery — the punishers of Amente, the demons of biblical lore, and especially the masters

³¹ ZANDEE, *Death as an Enemy*, p. 147-173, 200-226, 328-330. In what seems an intermediary stage in the transmission of such Amente spirits, the 2nd/3rd-century *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* (NHC VI, 6) instructs that the teachings contained therein should be carved in stone and placed in a shrine with « eight guardians [*phylax*] ... the males on the right are frog-faced, and the females on the left are cat-faced » (68.4-10).

³² Cf. Shenoute, Acephalous Work 14, (Paris 129¹² 66 + DS p. 59), ed. ORLANDI, *Shenute: Contra Origenistas*, p. 18-21, trans. in VALANTASIS (ed.), *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, ch. 41 ; and FRANKFURTER, « Syncretism and the Holy Man », p. 371-381.

³³ Cf. TIMBIE, « Dualism and the Concept of Orthodoxy ».

of the peripheral zones — spirits who being justice and revenge, passion and binding — serve altogether as imaginative paradigms for the resolution of real-world crises. They are figures one can ritually invoke and harness with the help of a learned expert.

APPENDIX : THE CORPUS OF DEMON INVOCATIONS

Abbreviations : ACM = Marvin MEYER & Richard SMITH (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic. Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco 1994).
 Kropp = Angelicus M. KROPP, *Ausegewählte koptische Zaubertexte*, vol. 2 (Brussels 1931).

A. *Invocations of the Devil (and anti-angels)*

ACM 82 [Michigan 4932f]	to bind ♀	I want you to descend to Amente and uproot all thoughts of the Devil about N, child of N, and make my love be in her [heart] and hers in mine.
ACM 78 [London Hay 10376]	to bind ♀	For this passion is what Mastema proclaimed [...] He threw it down into the source of the four rivers. He [washed ?] in it, so that the children of humankind should [drink] from it and be filled with the Devil's passion . N, child of N drank from it (and) has been filled with the Devil's passion.
Kropp IX [Berlin 8320]	to bind ♀	« Satanas the Devil it is who struck his staff on the ground before the Living God, saying I am also a God »,
Heidelberg 500/1	to separate couple	Bakhoukh and Bikmn , two mighty ones, strong in their power, who contended and waged war with the angels and the cherubim so that they were cast out of heaven – similarly promise today the strife and war which occurred in their midst ... shall occur in the midst of NN and NN and you shall give them shouting and war and strife and separation – quickly ! – between NN <and NN> ! No peace whatever shall exist between them till eternity ... O great guardians, separate !

B. *Invocations to Underworld Demons*

ACM 116 [Berlin 8322]	to gain power	[I have gone] down to Amente and have found Louchme ... [on his ?] fiery throne ... [Michael] said to me, [Go] to the West, under this mountain ... down to Elouch, Belouch, & Barbarouch ,
ACM 75 [Berlin 8314]	to bind ♀	I shall go down into Amente and bring up Tartarouchos , and say, You are a god also. Accept my wish...

ACM 82 [Mich 4932f]	to bind ♀	I [invoke] you, the one whose head is in heaven, whose feet are in the abyss, ... No, my lord, do not hand me over to Dimelouchos who (presides) over judgment. Instead, I want you to descend to Amente and uproot all thoughts of the Devil about N, child of N, and make my love be in her [heart] and hers in mine.
ACM 98 [Cairo bone-texts A/B]	to kill man	Kouchos, Trochos, Aphonos, Pespokops, and Plemos, and Ouliat. These are (the names of) the six powers of death , these who bring every soul out from every body. You shall go to Aaron son of Tkouikira...
ACM 92 [Berlin 10587]	punish perjurers	Temelouchos ... the one who is over the ... punishments ... [Raphael to order] Temeluchos [to] quickly afflict [victim] with what a demon deserves, and with error, trouble, and madness.
ACM 119 [Coptic Museum 4959]	for power	I invoke you today, Aknator the Ethiopian. I have inquired whether the offering of heaven is at the foot of the earth, whether he was bringing in those who are ... in the Amentes... « [I will] decapitate him and I will cut off his head. I will even trample upon it with my feet, because I perform your heart's desire... »
ACM 111 [Berlin 8321]	bind / punish	... I invoke you (sing.) today, Sourochchata. You (pl.) ... who dissolve the sinews and the ligaments and the joints, you are to dissolve the sinews of N for all time.
ACM 119 [coll. Lange]	spirit's general aid	Petbe who is in the abyss ... I drag you up to ask you ... you whose front part looks [like] a lion, whose rear part looks like a bear, whose head is fixed in heaven, whose feet are fixed on earth... the one with the head of bronze, the one with the teeth of iron.
ACM 79 [London Hay 10414]	to bind ♀	a demon whose name is Theumatha, whose head is in the abyss, whose feet are in Amente, the Gehenna of fire. He took fiery tongs...

C. Invocations to Miscellaneous Demons

ACM 74 [Yale 1791]	to bind ♀	... I adjure the great power of Bersebour , the king of the demons...
ACM 106 [Yale 1800]	cause illness	[addressed to angels ; at end :] Asmodeus the Demon
ACM 87 [Strasbourg 135]	to bind ♂ [impotency]	Keuentios Patilos Kous Makous , the one who has fallen from his invisible chariot [Harma ?] and has been cast into darkness : Bind, fasten the flesh of Shinte son of Tanheu...

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