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From *Daimones* to Demons:
Exorcisms and Cultural Constructions of the Demonic in Late Antique Egypt

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History 485

Dr. O'Brien

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Christian conceptions of demonic forces and possession in Late Antique Egypt were heavily shaped by pre-existing Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish traditions. The syncretic nature of Christianization facilitated an integration of local traditions with new beliefs. A process of demonization occurred as pre-existing views of *daimones* from the Underworld were transformed from morally ambiguous beings into inherently evil figures. Demons and exorcism rituals served important anthropological functions as they revealed the underlying social conflicts that arose as Christianity spread and changed earlier traditions. This study focuses on magical texts, amulets, and early Christian literature to analyze the effects of Christianization on Egyptian cultural practices and beliefs regarding demons and possession. Demonic entities came to symbolize the cultural “Other,” while exorcisms acted as a ritual performance of these deep-seated tensions and became a form of ritual power over the “Other.”

Magical spells and exorcistic texts dealing with supernatural beings and possession from Egypt in Late Antiquity demonstrate the unique processes of cultural exchange that occurred as Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire. Christian traditions and ideas that emerged in this period became intertwined with pre-existing local beliefs. The adoption of Christian beliefs drastically changed the Egyptian cultural landscape after Christianity’s rapid spread throughout the Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions, which began in the early first century CE.

Christianity’s syncretic nature in this preliminary state allowed aspects of non-Christian religious traditions to integrate into Christian traditions. This proved to be vital in its growth from the late Roman Era into Late Antiquity as a process of mediation occurred between familiar traditions and new customs. Local beliefs played an active role in shaping Christian perceptions of magical practices, particularly surrounding supernatural beings and exorcisms, as new cultural traditions emerged. To analyze the process of syncretism inherent in early Christianity, magical texts and Christian literature containing references to demons, demonic possession, and exorcisms will be utilized to demonstrate the syncretic nature of early Christianity. These texts also reveal the ways by which pre-existing “pagan” beliefs were both used and altered by early Christians to perform magic. Additionally, the role of demons and exorcism rituals in Late Antique society will be

examined to illustrate their use by early Christians as tools for the promotion of Christian power. Narrative sources that discuss the lives of exorcists and the practices involved in performing exorcisms will also be utilized to further analyze Christian conceptions of demons and the role that demonic possession played in Late Antique Egyptian society.

Ideas about the afterlife and otherworldly beings preoccupied the minds of ancient Egyptians for centuries, and exorcistic texts from Late Antiquity reveal that these ideas did not simply disappear with the introduction of Christianity. Exorcistic rituals reveal the process of cultural exchange that occurred between Christian and pre-Christian religious traditions, and also exposes the underlying conflicts and stress within Late Antique Egyptian society. The role that demonic possession and exorcisms played within Egyptian society is crucial to consider when examining the syncretism between Christianity and pre-existing religions because it provides a unique perspective into evolving Egyptian cosmologies. Ancient Egyptians placed an immense importance on the Afterlife, which carried on into the world of Late Antiquity and was subject to the broader patterns of cultural evolution that occurred in this period.¹ This study will utilize anthropological frameworks to analyze ritual performances of exorcisms within their local contexts, specifically focusing on symbolic approaches to examine elements of culture embedded within magical texts. This will inform on the impact of syncretism specifically related to the cultural spaces that demonic beings inhabited in early Christian spheres.

Christianity's ability to gain a foothold in Egypt was heavily dependent on the nature of the familiar ancient Egyptian religion that continued to be practiced throughout the Graeco-Roman era. Even as Hellenistic religious traditions were introduced and in competition with pre-existing Egyptian beliefs, Egyptian priests were able to find ways to maintain their

¹ Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 11.

authority and continue practicing the old traditions.² Before the introduction of Christianity, many of the developments that occurred within traditional religious practices throughout the Graeco-Roman period can be attributed to the political and economic changes that arose during the Ptolemaic Dynasty (305-30 BCE). By the third and fourth centuries CE, local Egyptian religious infrastructure was continuing to decline due to pressures from Roman administration.³ Peter Brown posits that there was a noticeable decline in pagan beliefs that began in the third century CE, with an even more pronounced reduction of paganism after the conversion of Constantine in 312 CE.⁴ This weakened the power of traditional Egyptian religious authorities, while allowing Christian power to rise as it conflicted with pre-existing paganism. Models that are in favor of a simple decline of paganism, in which pre-existing traditions gradually fell out of use, understate the complexity of Late Antique Egyptian cultural developments. Native Egyptian religious customs that had existed since the Pharaonic era did not simply disappear after the introduction of Christianity; rather, it evolved and took on different forms. David Frankfurter is careful to note that traditional cult worship continued amongst various groups across Egypt well into the Roman period, which is evident in temple inscriptions and records, as well as writings from Roman historians such as Ammianus Marcellinus.⁵ Models in favor of a gradual decline of paganism fail to consider how the process of Christianization was a complicated exchange with negotiation between the old and the new that relied on syncretism.

Scholars studying the process of Christianization of Egypt in Late Antiquity generally approach the topic in terms of social and cultural history by examining the religious and cultural

² David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 9.

³ Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, 15.

⁴ Peter Brown, "Christianization and Religious Conflict," *The Cambridge Ancient History* 13 (1998), 632-664.

⁵ Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, 18-19.

contexts in which these ancient practices were performed. Theological and anthropological frameworks used to interpret and analyze ancient rituals and magic are significant in understanding how ancient Egyptians viewed the physical and supernatural worlds, as their worldviews were intertwined with spiritual and religious belief systems. Early foundational works that are focused on the study of ancient exorcisms and demonology, such as Brown's "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," utilize social historical approaches based in symbolic anthropological paradigms.⁶ Symbolic anthropology is particularly useful for understanding ancient rituals in terms of the symbols that these ritual practices consisted of. Symbols embedded within ritual practices and magical texts act as vehicles of meaning for underlying cultural and religious values, and Victor Turner notes that symbols are "essentially involved in social process."⁷ The notion of ritual symbols as factors involved in social action and cohesion is instrumental in situating ritual performances within their social contexts to further analyze their cultural significance.⁸ This allows for the interpretation of exorcisms as performances of social and cultural values in Late Antique society, as well as the tensions surrounding the religious reforms. Mary Douglas' work with religion, ritual practices, and symbolism provides a solid foundational approach which can be applied to the study of ancient exorcisms and demons, especially in regards to ancient cosmologies as they are represented in the symbols produced by the culture.⁹ Brown cites Douglas' work and notes its relevance to Late Antique historians, and Frankfurter makes use of symbolic anthropological theories as well.

⁶ Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101.

⁷ Victor Witter Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 47.

⁸ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 47-48.

⁹ Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 151-152.

Section 1: Conceptualizing Demons and Evil

The process of cultural exchange inherent in the Christianization of Egypt can be viewed through exorcistic rituals and conceptions of supernatural beings commonly referred to as “demons.” Selections of magical texts and protection amulets from the Greek magical papyri specifically involving demonic beings and exorcisms are essential to this study as they make use of beliefs and practices with both Christian and pagan influences. This offers a new perspective of the process of acculturation that occurred between Christian and pre-existing religious traditions, which was essential to Christianity’s expansion. The Greek magical papyri consist of magical texts that were compiled by scholars after they resurfaced from various places across Egypt in the eighteenth century due to the antiquities trade.¹⁰ While the exact dates for specific texts are not precise, they still provide a great amount of information about the overall process of Christianization between the second through the sixth centuries CE. Narrative sources from Late Antiquity, such as Athanasius’ *Life of Anthony*, Besa’s *Life of Shenoute*, and texts associated with the life of Abba Moses of Abydos, will also be examined as they demonstrate exorcistic practices and conceptions of demons, as well as how these practices were relevant to the cultural context of Roman-Egyptian society. Early Christian sources, particularly the New Testament, are also crucial as they provide a theological basis for later exorcism rituals.

To understand how demons were conceptualized in Egypt during the period of Christianization, it is necessary to examine their ancient origins and shift over time from the Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman eras through Late Antiquity. Ancient demonology is best understood through anthropological approaches that consider the cultural function of demons in society. Scholarship that focuses on the topic of ancient demons tends to use theories presented

¹⁰ Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xli-xlii.

by Mary Douglas, such as Smith's article, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," and Peter Brown's article, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity." Smith's work was premised on the idea that demons serve as "classificatory markers," which define boundaries within larger social systems and are then used to reinforce cultural values.¹¹ This is significant to the study of demons in Late Antique Egyptian culture as narratives about demons and the magical spells referencing them represent deeply ingrained values within Egyptian society, which become especially apparent through conflict between the demon and the person. The demon in Christianity, as a symbol and social construction of old pagan traditions, is integral to the exorcism ritual as the exorcist combats it, thereby symbolically representing the conflict between Christians and pagans. The underlying social tensions within Late Antique society were manifested through ritual exorcisms, through which attempts were made to manipulate demons and gain control over these pagan-influenced supernatural beings through performances of magic.¹² Demons in the context of Late Antiquity were used as tools to reinforce a distinction between the Christian and the "Other." The "Other," in this case, referred to the non-Christian pagans. Anthropological approaches to the notions of demons and the cultural "Other" will be crucial in determining historical conceptualizations of demonic beings. While demons were most certainly viewed by Egyptians as tangible beings with physical powers and qualities, their inherent and underlying cultural significance can not be understated.

In order to fully comprehend the role of demons in ancient society and how it impacted cosmologies, it is necessary to understand how Egyptians conceptualized evil. In ancient Egypt,

¹¹ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," In *Band 16/1. Teilband Religion* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1978), 425-439.

¹² Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 151-152.

the distinction between good and evil was based on a notion of cosmic balance and stability.¹³ Jan Assmann notes a passage from Iamblichus, a Neoplatonic philosopher and author from the late third century CE, which states, “Everything remains stable and ever new, because the course of the sun has never been halted; everything remains perfect and complete, because the mysteries in Abydos have never been uncovered.” Evil was conceptualized as chaos and disruption to the natural order. Iconography associated with evil tended to also be connected to the gods of chaos and evil: Typhon and Seth. The conflict between Seth (evil) and Osiris (good) was a struggle for cosmic balance that kept the world in order, and in Egyptian mythology this constituted a “necessary evil.” The personification of absolute cosmic evil was represented by Apopis, usually depicted as a watersnake or dragon, although by Late Antiquity Seth and Apopis were combined into one (similar to the conjoining of Osiris and Re). Evil was connected with death and the Underworld, which was manifested throughout magical practices and in spells that associated death with personified forms of evil. This notion was later appropriated into Christian contexts that focused on the relationships between evil and death as one characterized by the “deadly (mortal) sin,” emphasizing the ability of sin to prevent a person from reaching paradise or a happy afterlife which Egyptians also shared.¹⁴ Moralizing death and equating sin with punishment after judgment in both Christian and Egyptian mythological contexts gave rise to a conceptual connection between evil and the punishing forces in the afterlife.

Because of the highly syncretic nature of Christianity which incorporated practices from earlier religions, understanding characteristics and conceptualizations of demons from ancient

¹³ Jan Assmann, *Of Gods and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 33. The information presented in this paragraph regarding ancient Egyptian mythology was taken from Assmann’s book.

¹⁴ Assmann, *Of Gods and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*, 37. For further discussion of the similarities between Christian and Egyptian ideas of sin, which are found in religious texts such as the *Bible* and the *Book of the Dead*, see Assmann 37-39.

Pharaonic Egyptian perspectives are essential to discussions of Late Antique demons. The issue of the demon in ancient Egyptian theology is complicated because the ancient Egyptians did not have terminology or iconography that clearly distinguished deities from demons. However, scribal writing habits, such as writing the names of harmful beings in red ink, indicate that they certainly recognized, and could distinguish between, malevolent and benevolent beings.¹⁵

Demons in the ancient Egyptian sense could either cause chaos and disorder or protect and guard sacred spaces. The lack of clear distinction in ancient Egyptian terminology is similar to Platonic *daimones*, which was used to describe both good and evil supernatural beings without distinguishing between the two.¹⁶ Ancient Egyptian malevolent beings who had the power to cause harm and disorder, possess humans and haunt homes, and even cause plague and illness, were most often referred to as “slaughterers,” “messengers,” and “wanderers.”¹⁷ These beings align closely with early Christian demons in the Graeco-Roman era, and Pharaonic-era symbolism appears throughout Late Antique magical papyri to indicate demons. Frankfurter is careful to note, however, that the use and mention of demons in Late Antique spells that are evocative of the Pharaonic-era pantheon of demons do not suggest a pagan survival as they can not be perfectly equated with the Pharaonic pantheon, even if they appear to be similar.¹⁸ Instead, the pre-existing traditions and ancient Egyptian beliefs associated with demons were acculturated into early Christian contexts to fit a uniquely Christian theology.

The continuity of ancient Egyptian beliefs of the afterlife and supernatural entities that survived well into the Roman period further allowed for the integration of new Christian religious beliefs, culminating in a uniquely Coptic tradition. This is evident in the imagery from

¹⁵ Rita Lucarelli, “Demons (Benevolent and Malevolent),” *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* 1, no. 1 (2010), 116.

¹⁶ Lucarelli, 2010, 2.

¹⁷ Lucarelli, 2010, 3-4.

¹⁸ David Frankfurter, “Demon Invocations in the Coptic Magical Spells,” 1-2.

the *Book of the Dead* that was embedded in early Christian texts.¹⁹ Similarities in iconography and symbols used in native ancient Egyptian religious texts and artwork that were also present in early Christian texts offer further insight into the syncretic nature of early Christianity. For example, the *Pistis Sophia* makes references to Amente demons²⁰ and animal-headed guardians, which also appear throughout the *Book of the Dead* as deities of the Underworld.²¹ The *Hypostasis of the Archons*, a Gnostic text which survives as a Coptic translation of an originally Greek text, uses the terms Chaos and Tartaros to describe the Underworld. The text states that an angel bound Ialdabaoth, casting him down to “Tartaros, at the bottom of the abyss.”²² Tartaros was a particularly horrible region in Chaos, a term for the Underworld. The ancient Egyptian equivalent for Chaos that was specifically utilized in this text, as noted by Roger Bullard’s translation, is *nwn* (or *nun*). *Nwn* refers to the primeval waters out of which the creator-god Atum rose,²³ and was also used for the world of the dead.²⁴ A spell in the *PGM I* mentions Chaos as a place where demons dwell while making several references to the archangels Michael and Gabriel, further implicating the influence of ancient Egyptian mythology alongside Christian theology.²⁵ These texts reveal the influence that Egyptian mythological accounts of creation and

¹⁹ Rita Lucarelli, “The “Vignettes” of the Greek Magical Papyri. Visual Elements of the Pharaonic Magical Tradition and the Use of Bildzauber in the PGM,” in *The Iconography of Magic Images of Power and the Power of Images in Ancient and Late Antique Magic*, ed. by Raquel Martin Hernandez, (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2022), 1-14.

²⁰ The term Amente refers to the Egyptian Underworld in the *Book of the Dead*, and was appropriated by early Christians to refer to hell.

²¹ Schmidt, Carl, and Violet. MacDermot. *Pistis Sophia*. Leiden: Brill, 1978. 317-19.

²² *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, trans. by Roger Aubrey Bullard, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter and Co., 1970), 143:10-13.

²³ Gordon H. Johnston, “Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165 (April-June 2008): 179.

²⁴ Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons: The Coptic Text with Translation and Commentary*, 54.

²⁵ *PGM I*. 262-347. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

the afterlife had on early forms of Christianity, which is tied to conceptions of demons of the Underworld and evil beings in Late Antique thought.

The presence of Pharaonic-era demons in amulets, charms, and spells written on papyri demonstrates the unique cultural phenomenon of syncretism in Late Antique Egypt as supernatural beings that were connected to native traditions with roots in ancient Egyptian and other Mediterranean theologies took on Christian qualities, or were used alongside Christian traditions in a way that highlighted their malicious intent. A spell from the Greek magical papyri titled, “To Which the God Gives Attention” describes demons as being “evil beings of Hades,” situating demons in Late Antique thought as inherently harmful beings.²⁶ The specific reference to Hades in this text also indicates the function of demons in the underworld and the afterlife, suggesting that their role was premised on familiar ideas from the pre-existing Greek and Egyptian religions about the afterlife. Egyptian mythology detailed in important ancient funerary texts, such as the *Book of the Dead* or the *Book of Outlasting Eternity*, can provide the necessary context for understanding Egyptian views about life after death that were present in Egypt since the age of the Pharaohs.²⁷ Mortuary texts, much like the ones that had been in use since the Old Kingdom, were created and used well into the Roman period. The mortuary texts from the Roman period performed the same functions that had been in practice for thousands of years, which is evident in both their content as well as their deposition within the archaeological record. For example, the Codex Panopolitanus²⁸ was found buried with deceased individuals from the

²⁶ PGM XIII. 760-821. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

²⁷ Nicola Denzey Lewis, “Death On The Nile: Egyptian Codices, Gnosticism, And Early Christian Books Of The Dead,” in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaeism and Other Ancient Literature*, ed. by April DeConick, Gregory Shaw, and John D. Turner, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 161-166.

²⁸ The Codex Panopolitanus is a Greek translation of 1 Enoch, an ancient Hebrew apocalyptic text dating to 300-200 BCE, and is also referred to as the *Book of Watchers*. For more about the

2nd century CE, with these texts being strategically placed in the coffin so as to provide the dead with the instructions necessary to proceed into the Afterlife.²⁹ The Roman-era mortuary text found in a similar archaeological context to Pharaonic-era texts shows a continuity of ideas about the Afterlife and the Underworld that blended with Christian ideas. There are also thematic and theological similarities between Origen's writings in the *Contra Celsum* and an excerpt from the ancient Egyptian *Papyrus of Ani*, both of which provide the formulae for the first greeting that was supposed to be spoken to the first celestial power after death.³⁰ Other Christian texts, such as the "Three Steles of Seth," contain allusions to earlier Egyptian mythological beings. The "Three Steles of Seth" make multiple references to the "Hidden One," which could be a translation of the Egyptian god Amun.³¹

Coptic magical spells call upon Amente demons, which were spirits of the underworld with the authority to inflict punishments that were present in ancient mortuary texts such as the *Book of the Dead*.³² In the *Pistis Sophia*, Amente demons appear to have been influenced by pre-Christian Egyptian supernatural beings and mythological texts. In Book III of the *Pistis Sophia*, Jesus warns of the dangers of Amente and recounts the many animal-headed demons in the twelve chambers of hell awaiting those who sin.³³ Some of these animal-headed demons include archons³⁴ with crocodile, cat, dog, serpent, and vulture faces (amongst other animals)

Codex Panopolitanus and its history, see Elena Dugen, "Enochic Biography and the Manuscript History of 1 Enoch: The Codex Panopolitanus Book of the Watchers," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 140, no. 1 (2021): 113-138.

²⁹ Lewis, "Death on the Nile," 164-166.

³⁰ Lewis, "Death on the Nile," 169.

³¹ Douglas M. Parrot, "Gnosticism and Egyptian Religion," *Novum Testamentum* 29, no. 1 (1987): 73-93. For further discussion of the god Amun's significance within Egyptian theology and the supposed similarities between ancient Egyptian and Christian creation myths, see Gordon H. Johnston, "Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths," 178-94.

³² Frankfurter, "Demon Invocations in the Coptic Magical Spells," 4.

³³ *Pistis Sophia*, c. 102.

³⁴ Archons in Gnosticism refer to supernatural beings or deities with the power to govern and maintain the world, and the term is derived from the Greek *Arkhon* (meaning ruler).

that one would encounter in the twelve chambers of Amente.³⁵ These demonic beings are reminiscent of ancient imagery from mortuary texts like *Books of the Dead* and Pharaonic-era art that depicted anthropomorphic supernatural beings. The ancient Egyptian journey to the Afterlife detailed in the *Papyrus of Ani* reveals that Egyptians believed in animal-headed demons that would be encountered in the twelve chambers of hell.³⁶ The similarities between the accounts of the Underworld in the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Papyrus of Ani* suggest a form of syncretism between ancient Egyptian and early Christian cosmologies, and a continuity of beliefs that persisted from the Pharaonic-era through Late Antiquity in Egypt. Frankfurter notes that the similarities between these two texts indicates that the author of this section of the *Pistis Sophia* would have had at least some level of access and familiarity with ancient forms of mortuary literature, which may have come from either priestly training or knowledge from Roman-era scribes who worked to maintain those forms of literature.³⁷ This also suggests that ancient Egyptian views of guardian demons of the Underworld were appropriated into Christian contexts in a way that was familiar to early Christians, who still had some semblance of the ancient religion.

Amente demons in particular are essential when comparing the function and role of demons between Pharaonic and Late Antique Egyptian cosmologies and theologies. The ontological purpose of these ancient supernatural beings were to act as mediators between humans and the gods, and as guardian figures they provided a link between funerary and daily magical practices.³⁸ As these traditions extended through the Roman period into Late Antiquity,

³⁵ *Pistis Sophia*, c. 102.

³⁶ Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge. *The Book Of The Dead: The Papyrus Of Ani In The British Museum*. Courier Corporation, 1967.

³⁷ David Frankfurter, "Amente Demons and Christian Syncretism," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 14, no. 1 (2013): 87.

³⁸ Rita Lucarelli, "The Guardian-Demons of the Book of the Dead," *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 15 (2010): 86.

guardian demons appeared in early Christian texts and were used in similar fashions to serve cosmological functions associated with ascent or descent into the Afterlife.³⁹ The *Pistis Sophia* contains many references to guardian demons and the magical seals and ciphers needed to pass by the archons, which was reminiscent of earlier Egyptian mortuary traditions and reflects a continuity in the eschatological role of demonic forces.⁴⁰ Frankfurter notes that themes of demonic guardians and magical seals to pass through gates of the Underworld were based on broader Mediterranean religious practices, which can be seen in early Christian texts originating from Asia Minor.⁴¹ Further significance of demons associated with the Underworld and the idea of hell can be seen throughout magical papyri in spells that invoked funerary magic. For example, a divination spell in lines 348-58 of the *PGM VII* contains a formula to be spoken aloud:

I call upon you, inhabitant of Chaos and Erebus, of the depth, of earth, watchers of heaven, of darkness, masters of things not to be seen, guardians of secrets, leaders of those beneath the earth, administrators of things which are infinite, those who wield power over earth, servants in the chasm, shudderful fighters, fearful ministers, inhabitants of dark Erebus, coercive watchers, rulers of cliffs, grievous of the heart, adverse daimons, ironhearted ones BITHOURARA⁴² ASOUEMARA ... OTOUR MOURROUR APHLAU MANDRAROUROU SOU MARAROU, reveal concerning the matter which I am considering.⁴³

This spell reflects broader patterns of syncretism between pre-existing Mediterranean theologies that can be seen throughout spells created between the second and fifth centuries CE. Many spells and magical texts produced in this period refer to Greek religious figures and mythology,

³⁹ Frankfurter, "Amentes Demons and Christian Syncretism," 89.

⁴⁰ *Pistis Sophia*, Book II c. 86, 100; Book III c. 112-113, 132, 138.

⁴¹ Frankfurter, "Amentes Demons and Christian Syncretism," 88-89.

⁴² This paper utilizes Betz's translations of the Greek magical papyri, and therefore these texts will be formatted the way that they are formatted in Betz's translations to provide greater clarity and adhere to the conventions set forth in the section of his book titled, "Explanation of References and Textual Signs." Per Betz, words that are in all-caps indicate magical names which are typically untranslatable.

⁴³ *PGM VII*. 348-58. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

and this was part of a long-lasting tradition in which priests would refer to deities in Greek terms.⁴⁴

Another spell from the Greek magical papyri titled “Powerful Spell of the Bear Which Accomplishes Anything” provides further insight into Late Antique views of hell and demonic forces. The syncretic tendencies found throughout magical traditions is exemplified throughout this spell, which was to be spoken aloud:

I call upon you, holy, very-powerful, very-glorious, very-strong, holy, autochthons, assistants of the great god, the powerful chief daimons, you who are inhabitants of Chaos, of Erebos, of the abyss, of the depth, of earth, dwelling in the recesses of heaven, lurking in the nooks and crannies of houses, shrouded in dark clouds, watchers of things not to be seen, guardians of secrets, leaders of those in the underworld, administrators of the infinite, wielding power over earth, earth-shakers, foundation-layers, servants in the chasm, shudderful fighters, fearful ministers, turning the spindle, freezing snow and rain, air-traversers, causing summer heat, wind-bringers, lords of Fate, inhabitant of dark Erebos, bringers of compulsion, sending flames of fire, bringing snow and dew, wind-releasers, disturbers of the deep, treaders on the calm sea, mighty in courage, grievous of the heart, powerful potentates, cliff-walkers, adverse daimons, iron-hearted, wild-tempered, unruly, guarding Tartaros, misleading Fate, all-seeing, all-hearing, all-subjecting, heaven-walkers, spirit-givers, living simply, heaven-shakers, gladdening the heart, those who join together death, revealers of angels, punishers of mortals, sunless revealers, rulers of daimons, air-traversers, almighty, holy, unconquerable...⁴⁵

Many similarities can be seen between this spell and the aforementioned divination spell, as both call upon inhabitants of Chaos, Erebos, and other references to Greek mythology. Both spells also mention “adverse daimons” and describe some of their qualities as being “shudderful fighters, fearful ministers,” and “punishers of mortals.” These negative attributes reveal the nature of supernatural entities from the Underworld as evil beings, distorting the earlier conceptions of Greek *daimones* to fit into Christian-Egyptian contexts. This particular spell also

⁴⁴ Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, 38.

⁴⁵ PGM IV. 1331-89. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

provides a wealth of information surrounding the characteristics and roles of Underworld demons.

A spell from the *PGM* I dating to the fourth or fifth century CE containing an Apollonian invocation utilizes Greek mythology while explicitly naming important Christian and Jewish figures alongside them. Following several references to Greek deities, the spell states:

First angel of [the god], great Zeus. Iao and you, Michael, who rule heaven's realm, I call, and you, archangel Gabriel. Down from Olympos, Abrasax, delighting in dawns, come gracious who view sunset from the dawn, Adonai. Father of the world. All nature quakes in fear of you, Pakerbeth.⁴⁶

This spell is especially useful when examining the process of Christianization and its impact on local traditions because it demonstrates how pagan and Christian beliefs were practiced alongside each other. Allusions to many powerful supernatural and holy beings, regardless of their religious origin, was thought to have increased the spell's efficacy by those using and producing it.⁴⁷ The spell goes on to state, "Hear blessed one, I call you who rule heav'n and earth and Chaos and Hades where dwell [daimons of men who once gazed on the light]. Send me this daimon at my sacred chants..." This spell also references the Egyptian god Thoth in line 327, further affirming the notion of syncretism.⁴⁸ Other texts written on papyri discuss the inter-religious figures seen in the Greek magical papyri, continuing to show Greek, Jewish, Egyptian, and Christian influences. The Gospel of the Egyptians states:

Then Sakla, the great angel, saw the great demon who is with him, Nebruel. And they became together a begetting spirit of the earth. They begot assisting angels. Sakla said to the great demon Nebruel, "Let the twelve aeons come into being in

⁴⁶ *PGM* I. 262-347.

⁴⁷ Christopher A. Faraone, "The Collapse of Celestial and Chthonic Realms in a Late Antique 'Apollonian Invocation,'" in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, edited by Ra'anan S. Bousthan and Annette Yoshiko Reed, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 218.

⁴⁸ For a further discussion of the significance of Apollonian invocations in magical papyri, see Faraone (2004) or Eleni Pachoumi, "The Religious and Philosophical Assimilations of Helios in the Greek Magical Papyri," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 55, no. 1 (2015) 391-413.

the [...] aeon, worlds [...]." [...] the great angel Sakla said by the will of the Autogenes, "There shall be the [...] of the number of seven [...]." And he said to the great angels, "Go and let each of you reign over his world." Each one of these twelve angels went forth. The first angel is Athoth. He is the one whom the great generations of men call [...]. The second is Harmas, who is the eye of the fire. The third is Galila. The fourth is Yobel. The fifth is Adonaios, who is called 'Sabaoth'. The sixth is Cain, whom the great generations of men call the sun. The seventh is Abel; the eighth Akiressina; the ninth Yubel. The tenth is Harmupiael. The eleventh is Archir-Adonin. The twelfth is Belias. These are the ones who preside over Hades and the chaos.⁴⁹

The references to “Hades and the chaos” and other allusions to Greek, Jewish, and Egyptian beliefs alongside Christian figures aided in the cultural assimilation of Christianity by it provided a sense of familiarity. It also allowed Christian figures to gain a comparable sense of power in the eyes of magical practitioners, which further promoted Christianity’s religious authority. The use of demonic figures as “punishers of mortals” in the Greek magical papyri was an important display of the syncretic tendencies of early Christian texts and culture that would have already been understood in the pagan world.⁵⁰ Grypeou notices a shift in the role and function of demons that can be seen in Christian texts, with early texts illustrating the imprisonment of Satan and fallen angels in hell while later texts tend to emphasize the role of demons as the punishers in hell.⁵¹ The *Revelation of John*, which dates to the first century CE, describes Satan as being imprisoned in hell after the war in heaven:

The Great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.⁵²

⁴⁹ *The Gospel According to the Egyptians*, Nag Hammadi Codex II, 55-56, in Alexander Bohlig, Frederik. Wisse, and Pahor. Labib. *Nag Hammadi codices III, 2 and IV: The Gospel of the Egyptians (the Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)*, (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

⁵⁰ Emmanoela Grypeou, “Demons of the Underworld in the Christian Literature of Late Antiquity,” in *Demons in Late Antiquity: Their Perception and Transformation in Different Literary Genres*, ed. by Eva Elm and Nicole Hartmann, (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2020), 81.

⁵¹ Grypeou, “Demons of the Underworld in the Christian Literature of Late Antiquity,” 82.

⁵² The Revelation to John 20:7-9 (New Revised Standard Version). All references to the New Testament will be from the New Revised Standard Version.

The description of Satan as a dragon or a serpent would remain a signifier of evil and the demonic throughout Late Antiquity, as these theriomorphic forms were already easily recognizable by pagans and Christians alike.

In the Gospel of Luke, an exorcism performed by Jesus on a man possessed by demon in Gerasenes further illustrates the idea of demons belonging to the “abyss” throughout spells and Christian texts as it says:

When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice. “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”- for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.⁵³

The idea of demons taking on the role of punishing the dead as tormentors in hell can be seen in Jewish texts, such as in the *Parables of Enoch* (53:1-11) which describes an “army of angels of punishment” sent to punish fallen angels. This apocalyptic Jewish text from the Second Temple Period indicates that there was a “new class of angels,” separate from earlier beliefs found in the Bible, which emerged in both Jewish and Christian traditions that were likely subject to Greek influences as well.⁵⁴ Egyptian beliefs also had influences on Christian ideas regarding tormenting demons, which can be seen in the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*. This text was likely Jewish in origin but survived in Coptic, and details the “monstrous” appearances of Amente demons that would have punished those in the abyss.⁵⁵ A spell in lines 1390-1495 of the *PGM IV* further

⁵³ Luke 8:28-31.

⁵⁴ Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 120.

⁵⁵ Grypeou, “Demons of the Underworld in the Christian Literature of Late Antiquity,” 82-83.

demonstrates the syncretism involved in descriptions of chthonic demons as it references Jewish, Greek, Egyptian, and Christian ideas together. One section of the spell says:

O primal Chaos, / Erebus, and you
 O awful water of the Styx, O streams
 O Lethe, Hades' Acherousian pool,
 O Hekate and Pluto and Kore,
 And Chthonic Hermes, Moirai, Punishments,
 Both Acheron and Aiakos, / gatekeeper
 Of eternal bars, now open quickly,
 O thou Key-holder, guardian, Anubis.⁵⁶

Later lines in this spell also invoke "Iao / Sabaoth," which was a reference to the Jewish divine name meaning "Lord of Hosts."⁵⁷ The appearance of the name Sabaoth is relatively frequent in Late Antique amulets and magical texts, and is often used alongside demonic beings in an effort to confront or attack the demons.

An amulet from the Greek magical papyri to protect a house and its occupants from evil contains references to Egyptian and Judeo-Christian figures and reads:

CH M G. Hor Hor Phor Phor Phor, Yao Sabaoth Adonai, Eloie, Salaman, Tarchei,
 I bind you, artemesian scorpion, 315 times. Preserve this house with its occupants
 from all evil, from all bewitchment of spirits of the air and human (evil) eye and
 terrible pain and sting of scorpion and snake, through the name of the highest god,
 Naias Meli, 7 (times) (?), XUROURO AAAAAA BAINCHOOCH MARIIIIIL
 ENAG KORE. Be on guard, O lord, son of David according to the flesh, the one
 born of the holy virgin Mary, O holy one, highest god, from the holy spirit. Glory
 to you, O heavenly king, Amen.⁵⁸

This spell demonstrates the syncretic nature of early Christian spells as it contains references to Jewish, Egyptian, and pagan figures, although the ultimate power comes from the invocation of the Christian and Jewish God. Another common context in which Sabaoth is invoked is within healing spells and amulets. A magical text in *PGM VII*. 213-14 provides the instructions for

⁵⁶ *PGM IV*, 1390-1495, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁵⁷ Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), 142.

⁵⁸ *Oslo 1.5*, in Marvin W. Meyer, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, Vol. 88, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 49.

healing a fever with shivering fits, which states, “Take oil in your hands and say seven times, “Sabaoth.”⁵⁹ Instructions for a phylactery for fevers can be found in lines 218-21 of the *PGM VII*, and contains the incantation that would have been written on a piece of papyrus and worn as an amulet. These words were, “Iao Sabaoth Adonai Akrammachammarei,” and would have been repeated on the amulet three times.⁶⁰ Protection and healing amulets calling upon the power of the Jewish divine figure Sabaoth, also equated to the Christian God. This suggests the divine authorities that could be invoked and reveals the syncretism embedded within early magical practices.

Jewish influences within early Christian magical practices and conceptions of underworld demons are clear when examining the portrayal of demonic beings throughout Jewish apocryphal texts that early Christians had access to by the fourth century.⁶¹ Frankfurter makes an important distinction between the very early Christian conceptions of demons and hell that were likely to have been influenced by Pharaonic-era mortuary traditions from texts produced after the fourth century CE.⁶² By the fourth century, Egyptian mortuary literary traditions could not have been the main resources for texts considering the afterlife because the necessary priestly institutions, and the ability to read and write ancient hieroglyphs, were gone.⁶³ However, there was still access to the ideas that were presented in traditional Egyptian mortuary literature through the apocalyptic and apocryphal texts that had been in circulation early on, which had been copied in Greek and translated into Coptic.⁶⁴ Thus, the foundations of the magical practices in later (fourth through sixth-century) Christian texts were still based on the ancient pagan traditions. This is

⁵⁹ *PGM VII*, 213-214, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁶⁰ *PGM VII*, 218-21, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁶¹ Frankfurter, *Amente Demons*, 89-90.

⁶² Frankfurter, *Amente Demons*, 91.

⁶³ Frankfurter, *Amente Demons*, 89-90.

⁶⁴ Frankfurter, *Amente Demons*, 91.

evident in Shenoute of Atripe's *De Iudicio*, which makes references to "Satan in Amente" in the fourth or fifth century.⁶⁵ The impact of Egyptian theology surrounding Amente can even be seen as late as the seventh century in the Coptic *Book of Bartholomew*, which discusses the rule of Amente by Abaddon [Death].⁶⁶ The Abbadon, also referred to as Death, throughout Coptic literature relating to hell (or Amente) is significant because it can be equated to the ancient Egyptian god Seth.⁶⁷ The continuity of Egyptian mortuary traditions and its impact on Late Antique views of demons and hell cannot be understated, as it clearly demonstrates the syncretism inherent in the religious traditions of Late Antiquity.

The term *daimon* in Greek and Latin contexts is representative of the nature of demons in ancient Christian societies, as these groups were influenced by pre-existing religious traditions in the Roman Empire. *Daimon* is a broader term than "demon" because it fits both malevolent and benevolent beings into a single term. *Daimon* in the context of Late Antiquity can be used interchangeably with the term "demon," although "demon" in Western thought is much more connected to an inherently evil or malevolent being. Thus, in the case of exorcistic texts trying to rid oneself of a harmful supernatural being, the term "demon" is just as appropriate as the term *daimon* would be.⁶⁸ Lucarelli argues that the term "demon" to describe Pharaonic supernatural beings is a scholarly convention meant to represent an ancient Egyptian concept that does not necessarily fit with the term *daimon* or "demon," and *daimon* can be too broad of a term to cover

⁶⁵ Shenoute of Atripe, *De Iudicio*, trans. by Heike Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe: Deiudicio*, (*Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino*: 1996), 32-33.

⁶⁶ *The Gospel of Bartholomew*, trans. by M. R. James, in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 197.

⁶⁷ E. A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, (London: The British Museum, 1913), lxiii.

⁶⁸ Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 245.

the beings that were inherently evil.⁶⁹ *Daimones* were not necessarily evil beings in Mediterranean cultures, but over time the meaning of the word was distorted by Christians with the purpose of promoting the idea of possession by a *daimon* that would require the power of the Christian god in order to be cast out.⁷⁰

When *daimones* are being cast out of one's body and treated as ill-intentioned spirits, they are clearly viewed in a way that is more similar to Christian conceptions of evil "demons" than they are to the morally-ambiguous *daimones* from Pharaonic traditions. The appropriation of the concept of ancient *daimones* into Christian exorcism texts illustrates the idea that demons were used to promote a self versus other distinction, with the "Other" being those following the pre-existing pagan traditions. Translations of magical spells from the Greek magical papyri differ in their decisions to either use the word *daimon* or demon, and Betz tends to use the form *daimon*. For the purposes of this study, the term "demon" will primarily be used when discussing the malevolent beings present in exorcistic spells and amulets as this term best represents how Late Antique Egyptians, who were influenced by Christian theology, conceptualized these supernatural beings as inherently evil and capable of harm.

Appropriation of the concept of *daimones* by Christians can be seen in the exorcistic text titled, "An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons" in lines 1227-64 of the *PGM IV*. The term "demon" is more appropriate and direct than *daimon* in this case because the intent of the spell is to drive an intrinsically harmful being out of a person. The beings' evilness is presented in the forceful language utilized by the person performing the exorcism. The spell calls upon the "unclean demon Satan" and states, "I bind you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I deliver

⁶⁹ Rita Lucarelli, "Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman Periods in Egypt," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011), 110.

⁷⁰ Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2001), 57-59.

you into the black chaos of perdition,” which clearly indicates that the entity referenced in this exorcism spell is viewed very negatively by the Christian exorcist who would be using this text.⁷¹ This line in the spell points to a marked shift from *daimones* as beings who were ethically ambiguous to the notion of the “demon” as a being that is inherently evil. The spell also specifically calls out the “unclean demon Satan,” indicating a Christian element within the text presented alongside the pre-existing local references which again demonstrates the syncretism involved in Graeco-Roman Egyptian magical practices.

The shift from morally ambiguous *daimones* based in pre-existing traditions to inherently evil beings akin to contemporary Christian views of demons represents a process of demonization. The connection between local non-Christian traditions and evil demonic powers enhanced Christian power over the supernatural forces that plagued Late Antique society, further legitimizing the role of Christian figures and theology in Egyptian cultural practices. One example that clearly illustrates the process of demonization in early Christian literature can be seen in the *Life of Pisentius*, which describes the punishment that an idolater faced in Amente. The text states that as the idolater (who worshiped Poseidon) was about to die, angels came to him and “declared all the evil things which [he] had done.” The text continues, saying:

After a little time my eyes were opened, and I saw death suspended in the air in many forms. And straightaway the Angels of cruelty snatched my wretched soul from my body, and they bound it under the form of a black horse, and dragged me to Ement (Amenti). O woe be unto every sinner like myself who is born into the world! O my lord and father, they delivered me over into the hands of a large number of tormentors who were merciless, each one of whom had a different form. O how many were the wild beasts which I saw on the road! O how many were the Powers which tortured me!⁷²

⁷¹ PGM IV, 122-64, 4th Century, in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁷² “The Life of Pisentius,” in *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt: Edited, with English Translations*, trans. by E.A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), 525.

The “angels of cruelty” are clearly meant to inspire fear in those who read this text as it connects Amente to a place of punishment and torture for those who do not follow Christian ways of living. Personification of death (also referred to as Abbaton) in this narrative can be seen throughout Coptic literature, such as in the *Testament of Abraham* or the *Homily on Abbaton*. The personification of death may reflect Jewish influences as this theme can be found throughout Jewish apocryphal texts such as the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarch*, and likely functioned as a metaphor to cope with the harsh realities of death.⁷³ Association of this personified Death, who ruled over Amente, with the Egyptian god Seth is also revealing of the Christian attitude towards the concept of a “hell.” The Abbaton came to symbolize the Devil in the Christian sense of the term, while still being primarily based on pre-existing beliefs presented in ancient Egyptian and Jewish theologies regarding the “Evil One” who ruled over the Underworld. Seth was the “personification of all physical and moral evil,” similar to Satan.⁷⁴ His presence can also be seen in the Greek magical papyri, such as in a spell to cause “evil sleep,” which says:

I call upon you who are in the empty air, you who are terrible, invisible, almighty, a god of gods, you who cause destruction and desolation, you who hate a stable household, you who were driven out of Egypt and have roamed foreign lands, you who shatter everything and are not defeated. I call upon you, Typhon Seth...⁷⁵

Calling upon Seth in a spell that is meant to perform harmful magic signifies Seth’s evil qualities in the eyes of the magician, and provides insight into their conceptions of world-governing forces. The text in the *Life of Pisentius* goes on to discuss the demonic forces in Amente, saying:

When they had cast me into the outer darkness I saw a great gulf, which was more than a hundred cubits deep, and it was filled with reptiles, and each one of these had seven heads, and all their bodies were covered as it were with scorpions. And

⁷³ S. G. F. Brandon, “The Personification of Death in Some Ancient Religions,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, no. 2 (1961): 317-335.

⁷⁴ Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, lxiii.

⁷⁵ PDM XIV, 675-94, “A Spell to Cause Evil Sleep,” in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

there was another mighty serpent in that place, and it was exceedingly large, and it was a terrible sight to behold; and it had in its mouth teeth which were like unto pegs of iron.⁷⁶

The iconography of the Amente demons is clearly an allusion to Egyptian deities and mythological beings, and their role as tormentors and punishers in the Coptic afterlife highlights their evil nature that was used by Christians to condemn those who followed pagan traditions. The theriomorphic nature of these punishing forces unmistakably borrows from Egyptian traditions, particularly with the descriptions of reptiles and serpents. The mention of reptiles with seven heads may refer to the serpentine beast recognized in Egyptian mythological accounts like the *Book of the Dead*, which describes the “seven uraei of Amentet.”⁷⁷ Connecting these Egyptian beings of the Underworld with the inherently evil demonic forces in Christian literature reflects a process of demonization towards old pagan tradition. This is further explicated in the fact that the idolater in this story was punished by demonic forces for worshipping a pagan deity. The types of language and imagery associated with demons in magical texts and literary sources further indicates the shifting view of demonic entities, more specifically towards a demonic view of pagan deities. Some spells connected pagan deities to demons with apotropaic purposes in a way that highlighted their demonic nature and belonging to the Underworld, which can be seen in a fourth century spell for ascending to the heavens:

When you have finished sealing yourselves with this seal, and you recite its name one time only, say these protective spells also: “Retreat Prote(th), Persomphon, Chous, archons of the first aeon, for I invoke Eaza Zeozaz Zozeoz... When you have finished sealing yourselves with this seal, and have recited its name one time only, say these protective spells also: “Retreat Yaldabaoth and Choucho, archons of the third of the aeons, for I invoke Zozezaz Zaozoz Chozoz.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ “Life of Pistentius,” in Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, 527.

⁷⁷ Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, lxiii.

⁷⁸ “Spell for Ascending through the Heavens,” from the Bruce Codex, Bodleian Library, Oxford, in Meyer, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, 66-68.

In this spell, deities associated with the Underworld in Greek and Near Eastern traditions are reflective of the syncretic processes that impacted apotropaic deities within the religious and cultural spheres of Late Antiquity, as well as the growing fascination in the afterlife and death.⁷⁹ These apotropaic demons were not inherently evil or negative in earlier conceptions of the Afterlife, but this spell places them in the role of a demonic being that intends to harm the deceased individual. The notion of seals and ascension through multiple levels in the Afterlife is reminiscent of Gnostic traditions, as well as Egyptian journeys through the Underworld in which the dead would encounter deities guarding the entryways into the Underworld. The *Life of Apollo* describes the polytheistic practices of Egypt in a very negative light, saying that the Egyptians once worshiped “dogs and apes and other animals, and considered garlic and onions and other vegetables to be gods.”⁸⁰ The passage goes on to connect the idolatrous worship to evil beings, saying that pagans worshiped demons as they practiced “obscene” idolatry.⁸¹ Demonizing the pagan traditions was vital to promotions of Christian power as it offered a method of control over the evil forces that threatened society, effectively disempowering old belief systems.

Early Christian magical texts, amulets, and narrative sources illustrate the complicated nature of demons as inherently evil beings that were subject to the syncretism inherent in Christianity. The shift from native *daimones* as morally neutral beings to innately evil beings known in Christian theology as “demons” represents a process of demonizing pagan beliefs. The position of the demon in society went beyond being a symbol of tensions towards pre-existing traditions, as demons possessed a sort of physicality and were able to inflict harm. This promoted Christian interests and social power as it rejected the non-Christian “Other.” The cultural

⁷⁹ Hans Dieter Betz ed, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xlvi-xlvii.

⁸⁰ *Life of Apollo*, in Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: the Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, (London: Mowbray, 1981), 73.

⁸¹ *Life of Apollo*, in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, 73.

significance of demonic entities as manifestations of Christian attitudes towards paganism is apparent in the imagery associated with Christian texts. Pharaonic Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish influences are clear when examining magical texts and literature.

Section 2: Exorcisms, Possession, and Ritual Power

Christians in Late Antiquity believed that demons could inhabit people's bodies because demons were not purely physical beings, but rather a "divine power with no distinct form," similar to Greek and Roman traditions at the time.⁸² Therefore, these beings would be able to inhabit a human body as they could not take a substantial form on their own. This is represented in "An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons," as it explicitly states that the demon being referred to is "in him." Just before stating that the demon is "in him," the spell also reads, "this unclean daimon Satan."⁸³ This is an extremely important line as it indicates that ancient Christians would have viewed demons as having a sense of personhood, which is evident in the fact that the demon in this text has a name tied to a specific being mentioned in the Christian Bible. Christians thought that demons had the ability to actually possess a body, and would not have been conceptualized as having a "metaphorical or psychological meaning."⁸⁴ This notion can be seen in "An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons," as the exorcist who would have used this spell talks directly to the demon, saying, "Come out, demon," and "I conjure you, demon."⁸⁵ In ancient Christian thought, people could literally talk to and communicate with demons when they

⁸² Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World*, 33.

⁸³ PGM IV, 1239. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁸⁴ Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 29.

⁸⁵ PGM IV, 1239-45. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

were inside of a person's body. Through the process of inhabiting someone's body, the demon gained a sort of personhood and was a very real being to those who interacted with it.

Demons were believed to have the ability to cause physical pain or suffering on people, through possession which is a common theme throughout exorcistic texts and narrative sources from Late Antiquity. Gregory A. Smith argues that while demons were thought to have been invisible by early Christians, they were certainly not immaterial; instead, these demons could have physical characteristics, citing Origen's warnings to people to not make offerings to demons because they could become "fat and dangerous."⁸⁶ For example, in Ammianus' *Life of Apa Moses*, the god Bes is described as "attacking passersby," causing blindness, distorting faces, causing people's limbs to "become lame," and rendering others "deaf and dumb."⁸⁷ Bes, a supernatural being of ancient Egyptian origin, has clearly undergone a process of demonization in this text. While clearly being used strategically by Ammianus to further Christian power by casting him out of the afflicted persons' body, he was also depicted as having substantial power over the physical and immaterial worlds. In Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, demons are described as having caused illnesses, and it was the job of the exorcist to cleanse people of their illnesses and demons.⁸⁸ Amulets and exorcistic texts from Late Antiquity also describe fevers and illnesses as ailments caused by demons that require exorcists to treat them by casting out demons.⁸⁹ Texts from the *Nag Hammadi* collections of papyri also describe people being afflicted by demons and

⁸⁶ Gregory A. Smith, "How Thin is a Demon?" 482-483.

⁸⁷ Ammianus, *Life of Apa Moses*, in Mark Moussa, "The Coptic Literary Dossier of Abba Moses of Abydos," *Coptic Church Review* 24 (2003): 66–90.

⁸⁸ Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, trans. by Robert T. Meyer (New York: Newman Press, 1978), ch. 12-14.5.

⁸⁹ Some examples, also described in Smith's "How Thin is a Demon?," include: P.Turner 49 = Suppl.Mag. I 31 = BKT IX 134 (5th-6th century); P.Oxy. VIII 1077 = PGM P4 (6th century); Cf. SB XVI 12719 = Suppl.Mag. I 32 (5th-6th century).

granted healing by exorcists.⁹⁰ For example, the *Testimony of Truth* explains the role that Jesus played as a holy figure as he went to Hades and raised the dead, making the rulers of the Underworld jealous of his power as he destroyed the works of the demons by granting healing.⁹¹ The spell from the PGM IV, “An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons,” contains directions to forcefully cast out the demon from the afflicted body, and was also meant to heal the person of epileptic fits and seizures.⁹² This offers further insight into both the role of the exorcist in healing people’s illnesses, as well as the supposed power of demons over the possessed individual.

As demons were believed to have the power to cause sickness and disease in individuals, it was necessary for healing spells and amulets to be created in order to confront the evil beings seen as responsible for the harm. A multitude of healing charms and amulets written upon papyri exist throughout the Greek magical papyri, and many call upon holy beings and deities in order to heal the afflicted person. For example, a spell meant for those suffering from fevers says to “say seven times, ‘Sabaoth.’”⁹³ Many other spells also specifically call upon Iao Sabaoth, such as in lines 218-21 of the PGM VII⁹⁴ or lines 1-27 of the PGM XLIII.⁹⁵ The latter also calls upon Christian figures such as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael alongside Jewish figures to protect against the demons that could cause sickness. A spell in lines 675-94 of the PDM XIV demonstrates the power that demons had to strike people with “chills and fever.”⁹⁶ This spell calls upon pagan deities for power, revealing the negative attributes of certain pre-existing supernatural beings. Narrative sources from this period also exhibit the demon’s ability to cause

⁹⁰ “The Testimony of Truth,” Codex IX, 3, in the *Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. S. Giverson and B.A. Pearson, (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 101-203.

⁹¹ “The Testimony of Truth,” 153.

⁹² PGM IV, 1227-64, in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*.

⁹³ PGM VII, 211-12, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁹⁴ PGM VII, 218-21, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁹⁵ PGM XLIII, 1-27, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

⁹⁶ PDM XIV, 675-94, in Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*.

illness. Demonic possession was often characterized by illness, and exorcisms were performed to drive out the force that caused sickness. Athanasius' *Life of Antony* reveals that Christians believed one could be healed through the power of the Christian God when demons were cast out of the demoniac's body.⁹⁷ A spell buried with a mummy that dates to the fourth or fifth century CE invokes Christ to protect against the demons with the power to cause illness, calling upon the "god of heaven...who has come through the womb of the virgin Mary" to combat demons and protect against fevers.⁹⁸

The magical text in the Greek magical papyri titled "An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons" features a spell that was used in an ancient exorcism ritual, as well as specific instructions for the creation and use of a protection amulet. Understanding Christian syncretism in the context of exorcisms and demonic possession is relevant because it provides valuable information related to how early Christians in Coptic Egypt would have viewed demons. It also informs on how they would have understood exorcisms as forms of ritual power over both the supernatural notion of the demonic and the cultural construction of the "Other." In this case, the "Other" refers to non-Christians, which is due to the nature of Christianity in Coptic Egypt being focused on holding power over pagans and non-Christian ideas.⁹⁹ In this particular spell, this notion is presented through the frequent references to the Christian God and other significant holy figures.¹⁰⁰ Lines 1230-1235 also specifically invoke Jesus Chrestos, reflecting the Coptic

⁹⁷ Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, ch. 58.

⁹⁸ "Spell Invoking Christ for Protection Against Illness and Ill Treatment," 4th-5th Century CE, now in Cairo, Egyptian Museum (10263), trans. by Meyer, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, 35-36.

⁹⁹ Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, 268.

¹⁰⁰ PGM IV, 1230-35. in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Christian belief in Christ's power being crucial in the act of expelling demons.¹⁰¹ The references to Christian, Jewish, Greek, and Roman holy figures reveal that each of these religious traditions would have had an influence on the perception of exorcistic magic, as well as the role and function of demons in Late Antique Coptic society.

Demonic and spirit possession reveals a broader pattern of Christianization in which traditional spirits or beings “demonized under the ideology of a new religious system... retain some ambiguous powers in local religion.”¹⁰² Christian magicians who performed exorcism rituals were viewed by those living in Late Antique Egypt as having real power over supernatural beings such as demons as they were understood by both Christians and non-Christians, and the notion of demonic possession played on the existing ideas of *daimons* in a way that promoted Christianity through the demotion of *daimons* into demons as evil beings. Thus, demons became tools that served important sociocultural functions as they were used, either consciously or unconsciously, to create distinctive boundaries between the Christian and the non-Christian. Associating the traditional pagan gods with the demonic in Christian literature, especially in the fourth through sixth centuries with the rise of monasticism, became a powerful means of conversion.¹⁰³ Demons in this sense came to represent the cultural “Other” in society, signifying the intercultural struggles created by a self versus other mentality that manifested in the demonization of pre-existing beliefs. This tradition of demonizing outsiders is part of a larger

¹⁰¹ “Chrestos” is another form of the word “Christ” and these two forms can generally be used interchangeably, although it is important to note that “Chrestos” seems to be an appropriation of traditional pagan influences which are significant within the context of syncretism. This paper will use the “Chrestos” form because that is how it is spelled in the standard translation by Betz; in this particular spell either can be used as it is more of a technical issue, but a further discussion of the differences in spelling can be found in Eleni Pachoumi’s “An Invocation of Chrestos in Magic.” (2010).

¹⁰² David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 33.

¹⁰³ David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 214.

tradition that occurred since the Pharaonic-era, which mainly centered around the negative perception of foreigners as enemies that bring social unrest and chaos.¹⁰⁴ Lucarelli notes that in times of greater unrest and disorder, a greater focus on evil spirits and demonic forces emerges that can be seen throughout Egyptian art.¹⁰⁵ This trend towards the “politicization of evil” that became especially prominent in the Late and Graeco-Roman periods of history gave rise to evil forces, such as Seth, symbolizing the conflict between Egypt and the foreigner.¹⁰⁶ This suggests a continuity in the tradition of demonizing the cultural “Other” in Egyptian society and literary conventions that would have carried on throughout the Graeco-Roman era and into Late Antiquity.

There are many accounts in the New Testament in which Jesus performs exorcisms against the demons possessing a person’s body, and these would have provided the basis for later exorcisms. For example, the Gospel of Mark recounts how Jesus performed an exorcism on a man with an unclean spirit. In this story, Jesus rebukes the demon by saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” after which the “unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.”¹⁰⁷ In Acts, people would gather around Jerusalem if they were “tormented by unclean spirits” as they believed that if the shadow of the apostle Peter touched them they would be healed.¹⁰⁸ The exorcistic power that could only be held by Christians is demonstrated in Acts 19, which explains that the seven sons of a Jewish high priest attempted to exorcize an evil spirit by saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” However, the demon replied,

¹⁰⁴ Lucarelli, “Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman Periods in Egypt,” 116.

¹⁰⁵ Lucarelli, “Demonology during the Late Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman Periods in Egypt,” 116.

¹⁰⁶ Assmann, *Of Gods and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*, 50.

¹⁰⁷ Gospel of Mark, 1:23-27.

¹⁰⁸ Acts, 5:12-16.

“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” and attacked the seven sons.¹⁰⁹ The account by Athanasius of the exorcism performed by Antony also offers information of how exorcisms were performed, as it says, “he called upon Christ, and signed the sufferers two or three times with the sign of the Cross. And immediately the men stood up whole, and in their right mind, and forthwith gave thanks unto the Lord.”¹¹⁰ Biblical accounts of demons in the New Testament also reveal the connection between demonic beings and Satan, which is evident in the Gospel of Matthew as it explains how the Pharisees claimed that “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”¹¹¹ A Christian versus non-Christian binary was perpetuated throughout these biblical examples that relied on the idea of a power of God that was needed to combat evil forces, and these themes would carry on through later exorcisms.

Narrative sources and later Christian literature discussing saints’ lives are integral in determining what constituted evil in Late Antique society as they describe the encounters that took place between demonic forces, and reveal Christian attitudes regarding sin and paganism. Athanasius’ *Life of Saint Antony* describes the demons that Antony encountered as taking the forms of many wild beasts that “gnashed their teeth upon him.”¹¹² The appearance of demons as animals demonstrates a clear connection between pagan deities, which often took on animal forms, and the evil demonic forces that plagued ancient society. Athanasius describes the nature and appearance of demons and quotes scripture, saying:

For we have terrible and crafty foes--the evil spirits--and against them we wrestle, as the Apostle said," Not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Great is their number in the air around us, and they are not far from us."¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Acts, 19:12-17.

¹¹⁰ Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, ch. 82.

¹¹¹ Gospel of Matthew, 12:24-32.

¹¹² Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, ch. 9.

¹¹³ Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, ch. 21.

Antony's encounters and fights with demons provide insight into the role of monks and holy men as combatants of evil. Brakke explains that Athanasius frames Antony's fight with the demonic forces in terms of the conflict between Christian and pagan gods,¹¹⁴ thereby exposing the underlying tensions faced by Late Antique society as a result of conflicting worldviews. This is most clearly seen when Antony confronts the Greek philosophers and argues for the efficacy of Christian power against the demonic forces of evil that pagan beliefs could not successfully fight against, and states, "Where the sign of the cross is, magic is weak and witchcraft has no strength."¹¹⁵ The role of exorcism as a form of ritual power over the pagan demons is a major theme throughout this work, which relied on the demonization of pagan beliefs in order to show Christian dominance over local traditions. When Antony performs exorcisms in front of the pagan philosophers, the power of God is upheld and the pagans are proven ineffectual.

John Chrysostom (347-407 CE) highlights the efficacy of the spoken word during exorcisms as he explains, "After he [a demon] hears that terror-inducing formula, even if he is a dangerous beast, he is not capable of slinking away or lurking in his den, but he makes off and runs away even against his will."¹¹⁶ The belief in invocations and spoken word in exorcism rituals is made clear when examining magical texts in the Greek magical papyri. The spell titled "An Excellent Rite to Drive Out Demons" contains a formula which was to be spoken aloud over the demoniac:

Greetings, god of Abraham; greetings, god of Isaac; greetings, god of Jacob; Jesus the upright, the holy spirit, the son of the father, who is below the seven, who is

¹¹⁴ Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*, 33-34.

¹¹⁵ Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, ch. 72-79.

¹¹⁶ John Chrysostom, *Cateches ad illuminados*, in Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 78.

within the seven. Bring Yao Sabaoth; may your power issue forth from N.,¹¹⁷ until you drive away this unclean daimons Satan, who is in him. I adjure you, demon, whoever you are, by this god, Sabarbarbathioth Sabarbarbathiouth Sabarbarbathioneth Sabarbarbaphai. Come out, demon, whoever you are, and stay away from N., hurry, hurry, now, now! Come out, demon, since I bend you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I deliver you into the black chaos in perdition.¹¹⁸

Invocations of Christ in exorcism spells were believed to have worked primarily because they were able to “summon authoritative precedents,” which was important to Late Antique Egyptians in terms of the power of Christ with roots in the Synoptic Gospels.¹¹⁹ Spells invoked important deities and holy figures to draw upon their already established power, which would have given the practitioner power by extension. For example, a spell in lines 1-42 of the *PGM XXXV* invokes the “god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” to obey the authority of the practitioner.¹²⁰ Other spells in the Greek magical papyri that intended to cast out demons utilized biblical stories from the Old Testament. Lines 3007-86 of the *PGM IV* conjures Jesus, the god of the Hebrews, by alluding to the story of Moses and the ten plagues found in Exodus as well as the parting of the Red Sea to reference God’s power.¹²¹ Another Coptic spell draws upon this notion as it provides an exorcism spell to drive evil forces from a pregnant woman by saying:

Protect, shelter her, Yao Sabaoth...archangel Michael, Gabriel, helper. For N. daughter of N., her and the child with whom she is pregnant, cast forth from them every Aberselia, now, now, at once! Sura daughter of Pelca. Yao Sabbaaoth Atonai Eloei Elemas Miksanther Abrasakks Michael Gabriel Raphael Suriel

¹¹⁷ “N,” or “NN,” is in place of the name of the afflicted individual and would have been replaced with the person’s actual name when the spell was spoken.

¹¹⁸ *PGM IV*, 1227-64, in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*.

¹¹⁹ Joseph E. Sanzo, “The Innovative Use of Biblical Traditions for Ritual Power: The Crucifixion of Jesus on a Coptic Exorcistic Spell (Brit. Lib. Or. 6796[4], 6796) as a Test Case,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 16, no. 1 (2015): 67-98.

¹²⁰ *PGM XXXV*, 1-42, 5th century, in Hans Dieter Betz ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, Volume 1*, Vol. 1, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹²¹ *PGM IV*, 3007-86, “A Tested Charm of Pibechis for Those Possessed by Daimons,” 3rd-4th Century CE.

Raguel Asuel Saraphuel Yao Atonai Eloei Elemas Sabaoth, I adjure you by your holy powers... Cast forth from them every chill and every fever and every trembling and every Abersalia, and every doom, every evil, and every Apalaf, and every power of darkness and every demon...¹²²

These exorcistic texts stress the power of God (Sabaoth) that is needed to cast out the demonic being, and make references to the “unclean” or harmful nature of these forces. The idea of “unclean” spirits, in contrast with “good” spirits or deities, represents the evil inherently in these beings. The ritual of exorcism was therefore important as a way of casting out the unclean beings that could possess people, and the demoniac would have undergone a process of ritual in which they emerged transformed and become “clean” again through the power of the Christian god. The context of Christianization under which the exorcism occurred is significant in terms of ritualization, which is understood through the ritual agents interacting with each other within a structured environment and the existing sociocultural situation.¹²³ Ritualization is useful in understanding the methods by which Christians could gain dominance over pagan cultures in Late Antiquity. In undergoing the ritual of exorcism, the power of Christ was affirmed while pagan forces were transformed into demonic beings. Turner’s approach to rituals as the “manipulation of symbols,” which also indicates underlying conflicts or social tensions, is especially apparent in these exorcistic spells.¹²⁴ As references to pagan traditions were assimilated into Christian contexts, their existence was proven to be inferior to the Christian god. The act of exorcizing the demonic forces became a performance of Christian power over the divine, which, according to narrative sources, had to be bestowed upon a Christian magician or monk by God. For example, in *the Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, Paul was invested with the

¹²² “Exorcistic Spell to Drive Evil Forces Out of a Pregnant Woman,” London Oriental Manuscript 5525, trans. by Richard Smith in *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, 35-36.

¹²³ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 100.

¹²⁴ Victor Turner, and Victor Witter Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 47.

grace and power of God through his obedience to Christian law.¹²⁵ The magical practitioner performing the exorcism is also transformed into a holy figure. Christian magical practitioners and holy figures with exorcistic powers clearly occupied important roles within Christianity as they were invested by God with the power to control the evil forces that threatened the individual and the society.

Working against the pagan demons and beliefs was a way for Christians to enhance their identity and was central to the creation of a self versus other distinction. Frankfurter aptly describes the construction of a Christian sense of identity that was premised on the idea that “one ‘becomes’ Christian... by acting against the ‘counter-Christian.’”¹²⁶ While conceptions of evil and the demonic were heavily based on the pre-existing local traditions from Pharaonic-era Egyptian culture, as well as Hellenistic and Jewish religions, a uniquely Christian tradition emerged in Late Antiquity that can be viewed through historical ideas related demons, possession, and exorcism. As ancient texts provided a foundation for early Christian literature and spells, a syncretic form of Christianity took hold. A key aspect of this new religious tradition that allowed for its growth was based on the demonization of pre-existing pagan deities and practices, which promoted the Judeo-Christian form of God while condemning Greek and Egyptian beliefs. This idea is especially prominent in the view of demons associated with the Underworld, as many traditional Egyptian and Greek elements were used and challenged in the creation of demonic punishers in Amente. The shift, which is reflected by a transition from the morally ambiguous *daimones* to an inherently evil demon, reveals underlying tensions related to concern about the afterlife, death, and the cultural “Other.” Exorcisms acted as performances of

¹²⁵ *XXIV on Paul*, in Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: the Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, 115.

¹²⁶ David Frankfurter, "Things Unbefitting Christians": Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2000): 288.

these underlying tensions, simultaneously upholding Christian dominance and ritual power while also allowing for cultural conflicts to be confronted. Demons occupied a very important cultural space in Late Antique Egypt as they were tied to the demonization of pagan beliefs, and provide a unique perspective of the syncretic process inherent in Christianization.

I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized help on this work. Madeleine Gulbransen

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