

JORDASH KIFFIAK

Responses
in the Miracle Stories
of the Gospels

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

429

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

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Jordash Kiffiak

Responses in the Miracle Stories of the Gospels

Between Artistry and Inherited Tradition

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-154083-7 / eISBN 978-3-16-154220-6

ISSN 0340-9570 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was printed by Laupp & Göbel in Gomaringen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

The present volume is a revised and enlarged version of my doctoral dissertation, accepted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in July of 2015. It is the result of developments in my thinking, influenced by a number of people. It is a privilege to acknowledge these debts here.

Serge Ruzer, my principal doctoral advisor, has contributed significantly to my critical thinking. His keen eye has helped sharpen my arguments at numerous points, even when we at times could not agree on some point. I have greatly benefited from Serge's way of thinking about texts, looking for broader patterns of thought, noticing especially the way that the New Testament writings can be read as examples of Second Temple Jewish literature. Serge gave me freedom to work independently, demonstrated patience, flexibility and understanding in various capacities. This was especially evident during the three years in which I experienced significant restrictions in my ability to do research, given far-ranging health complications (three years of, alternately, carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis, tailbone difficulties and, finally, neck and back issues), followed by a change in my research direction large enough to require the submission of a second proposal. He has my deeply felt gratitude for his continued faith in me despite these challenges.

Loren Stuckenbruck, who generously volunteered to be my second advisor, has given me extensive, detailed feedback on my research and writing. He has helped me to see gaps in my work and – equally importantly – to know proper limitations, while placing my project in the light of wider issues in the field. His constant encouragement and belief in me has, on multiple occasions, given me the needed confidence to continue. He has been especially generous with his time. And he and Lois have extended warm hospitality, hosting me, also my wife, Jo Woo, when in Munich for the purposes of discussing my work. Loren's generosity extends to his material resources, for he took personal initiative to finance my conference participation abroad.

My gratitude for tutelage goes also to Justin Taylor, who at an earlier point in my doctoral studies was one of my supervisors, alongside Serge. This is especially appropriate as Justin's work on the representation of reality in the Gospels has been one of the inspirations for the present work. From Justin I learned much on how to read a given gospel as a piece of literature. He also read an early version of my chapter on the Gospel of Mark and provided

helpful feedback. Beyond this, Justin's life is an inspiration and I have learnt a good many things from him about what is important during our short stint on this earth.

I thank the members of my doctoral committee at the Hebrew University, consisting of Maren Niehoff, Yair Zakovitch and Doron Mendels, in addition to Serge and Loren, for their acceptance of a widely conceived project, which universities with traditional approaches to the New Testament may not have permitted. My interest in miracle stories was inspired in part by Yair, with whom I studied the biblical stories of Elijah, Elisha, and Moses.

I am grateful to Jörg Frey, who read and provided feedback on my chapter on the Gospel of John early on. Later, as one of the two external readers of the dissertation and then, in his capacity as general editor of the WUNT II series, Jörg has provided me with detailed and helpful comments on the overall project. A special thanks goes to Jörg for the hospitality shown me as a guest at the University of Zurich during the final years of my PhD. I was given borrowing privileges and a personal seat in the library and access to the Faculty of Theology's building outside of regular hours.

Interaction with various other scholars has contributed to my thinking. Steve Runge gave valuable written feedback on key sections of my work concerned with discourse analysis. Randall Buth and Stephen Levinsohn each gave me hours of their time in Jerusalem and Vienna, respectively, to discuss miracle stories in light of discourse analysis. To Randall I owe gratitude also for inspiration and years of mentoring in reading ancient Hebrew and Greek texts with linguistic acumen.

On more than one occasion Michael Segal gave me valuable advice and encouragement during the long haul of doctoral research.

Parts of my research, including preliminary stages, were presented at various university seminars and international conferences. My thanks go to those who interacted with my work on these occasions, including those presiding over the relevant sessions, namely, Robert Cousland, Paul Danove, David du Toit, Bruce Fisk, Jörg Frey, Loren Stuckenbruck and Samuel Vollenweider. In addition, I benefited from the comments of others when presenting parts of my research in less formal contexts, whether at my home, in a public lecture (Caspari Center), in popular level studies (Narkis Street Congregation) and in personal conversations. Prominent among those who have helped me in one or more of the foregoing contexts, in addition to other scholars I have mentioned already, are: Gary Alley, Sharon Alley, Phillip Ben-Shmuel, Leah Hananel, Christoph Heilig, Theresa Heilig, Aaron Hornkohl, Michael Jost, Jamie Kiffiak, Danny Kopp, Benjamin Schliesser, Eran Shuali, Phillip Lasater, Friederike Kunath, Franz Toth. I owe Michael Jost further thanks for proofreading many of the citations in German.

To participants in the Jerusalem School of Synoptic research, whose monthly meetings I frequently attended during my years living in Jerusalem, I

owe gratitude for inspiration, modeling and interaction on the Synoptic Problem: especially Serge Ruzer, Randall Buth, Steven Notley, David Bivin, Hana Safrai (may her memory be a blessing), Malcolm Lowe, Sharon Alley, Gary Alley, Brian Kvasnica and Yair Furstenberg.

I am grateful to the library of the *École biblique et archéologique française* de Jerusalem for their help in obtaining important resources. My thanks go also to the librarians of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Zurich – Ute Beck, Isabel Grau and Regula Wegmann – for their kindness towards me and providing me with extraordinary access to resources.

I have gratitude to Susanne Mang of Mohr Siebeck for her guidance in the processes of the formatting and copy-editing of the manuscript. I would like to express a special thanks to Henning Ziebritzki for expressing faith in me and accepting this work into the WUNT II series already at an earlier stage of writing.

My heartfelt thanks go out to Chuck Kopp and Liz Kopp, also the other leaders and members of the Narkis Street Congregation in Jerusalem, past and present, for the community they have fostered, which is supportive of academic research. Without this community my research would be of lesser quality.

A special thanks goes to Benny Trakhtenbrot and Anat Stolarsky for their belief in me and friendship, especially during the transition between Israel and Switzerland.

David Woo and Bianca Chang, Jo's and also my parents, have been extremely generous in financially supporting my many years of research. I do not know how I would have been able to accomplish my academic dreams without their kindness.

I am grateful to each of my parents, Lee Kiffiak and Dennis Kiffiak, who made room for and encouraged me at a young age to express and defend my own ideas and later supported my academic pursuits – emotionally, financially and in other ways. For support, also dear friendship, during my graduate studies I am greatly indebted to my mom. It is a pleasure to have her as one of my best friends, one who has known my abilities, as well as my shortcomings, all through my life. My dad's belief since my youth that I could do whatever I set my mind to has always stayed with me.

I have the deepest gratitude to Jo (Joanna) Woo, my spouse of eight years and best friend of many more, for her multi-faceted help in this project. Her discerning mind and keen sense of logic, alongside her familiarity with ancient Greek and Hebrew, as well as many of the texts involved, provided me with frequent, valuable feedback on my ideas and argumentation. She has helped me come up to speed with statistical analysis, wrote a script that helped me enormously with the indices and aided me in far too many other ways to list here. Her constant belief in me and the value of this study has brought me through, despite my discouragement over various setbacks.

Words cannot express my gratitude to God and also to my Lord Jesus. Whatever success I have had in this project I attribute especially to this divine love and help.

This volume differs in two ways from the doctoral dissertation, upon which it is based. First, some material was removed. An appendix on lexicography and ancient Greek terms denoting feelings is now published elsewhere (Kiffiak, forthcoming). Similarly, a chapter on miracle stories in apocryphal gospels, notably the *Gospel of Peter*, is not to be found here. Second, other chapters were revised, with much material being added (approximately 120 pages). The structure of Chapter Six has been greatly revised and a substantial amount of material added. Chapter Seven now contains a fuller discussion of the stilling of the storm episode. Beyond this, the introduction and conclusion to each chapter have been enlarged and given greater detail, to better aid the reader in following the volume's overarching lines of argumentation. To this end also the volume's introductory and concluding chapters have themselves been revised and enlarged.

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ANTJ	Arbeiten zum Neuen Testament und Judentum
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
BBMS	Baker Biblical Monograph Series
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 2000. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3rd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BINS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BThSt	Biblich-theologische Studien
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
<i>CurBS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FF	Foundations and Facets
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GTA	Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten
HALOT	Köhler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner. 1994–2000. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , 5 vols (Leiden: Brill)
HBI	<i>Hermeneutische Blätter</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCP	Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KFWI	Zimmermann, Ruben (ed.). 2013. <i>Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen, Band 1: Die Wunder Jesu</i> , in collaboration with Detlev Dormeyer, Judith Hartenstein, Christian Münch, Enno Edzard Popkes and Uta Poplutz (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus)
LBRS	Lexham Bible Reference Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MBI	Methods in Biblical Interpretation
MNTS	McMaster New Testament Studies
NIB	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTL	New Testament Library
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
PCNT	Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament
PLAL	Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RNBC	Readings: A New Biblical Commentary
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments

SBFA	Studium biblicum franciscanum: analecta
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBR	Studies of the Bible and Its Reception
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHBS	Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>TDNT</i>	Kittel, G. and G. Friedrich (eds.). 1964–1976. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , trans. by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans)
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It is clear from even a cursory look at the four canonical gospels that stories about the miraculous are not only ubiquitous but also integral to each of these texts. By miraculous I mean the deeds of power performed by Jesus and also related occurrences, such as his transformation into a glorious state, uncanny appearances by him subsequent to his resurrection, the appearances of angels in relation to his birth and to his resurrection and pronouncements about him by a voice from heaven accompanied by various remarkable visible phenomena. Among the features that link such stories together is the frequently occurring motif of various individuals' and groups' *responses* to the miracles. Though I will define the term "response" in more detail later, for the moment it is sufficient to state that with this term I refer to feelings, cognitive activity, words, physical actions and the like that people experience or express as a result of their knowledge of a miracle. What function(s) were the responses intended to serve in the respective narratives of the Gospels and in the earlier traditions about Jesus, both written and oral, upon which the Gospels drew? Do the responses simply serve as a kind of round of applause to validate Jesus? Or do they have more specific narrative functions?

The work of two formidable scholars, Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Dibelius, has provided leadership at the beginning of the twentieth century to the guild of New Testament scholars on how to understand the significance of the responses. The narration of figures' responses, they allege, serves to magnify the miracle worker and, as part of the proposed general propagandistic agenda of miracle stories, seeks to win converts. Their form-critical work has been expanded upon and to some extent modified by redaction critics in the third quarter of the century, notably by Gerd Theissen, who returns to the question of form criticism as well. But the basic trend set by Bultmann and Dibelius has not been altered. In their view the responses serve to magnify the miracle worker. Strangely, despite the rise of narrative criticism in the 1980s, which challenges the tendency of form and redaction critics towards an atomising approach to features in a given gospel, and its subsequent widely felt influence on the study the Gospels, there remains a tendency to treat the responses monolithically. The vestiges of the form criticism of Bultmann and Dibelius continue to exert their influence. There are occasional exceptions to the trend. But, by and large, when it comes to the responses both the interests and approach of form criticism and of its cousin, redaction criticism, continue to

rule the literary studies of the miracle stories in the Gospels, even for those who are interested in these texts in their entirety in their final form. The rule of form and redaction criticism goes unspoken.

The form- and redaction-critical paradigm has rightly received criticism also with regards to its understanding of the social context and manner in which traditions about Jesus in the earliest communities of followers developed. Inasmuch as the miracle stories are concerned, criticism has focused on the undue concentration on non-Jewish social contexts and sources and the use of problematic constructs. Other criticisms pertain to the sharp delineation of almost hermetically sealed trajectories of tradition for narrative and speech material for Jesus. Yet when it comes to responses such criticism has not been followed up on. This statement is true, oddly, despite the fact that Bultmann and Theissen, admittedly, have not found adequate parallels in non-Jewish sources for responses and have given only limited attention to responses in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature. Given their ubiquity in the Gospels and potential rarity in contemporary sources, the possibility must be considered that the responses in miracle stories of the Jesus tradition may evidence features that are uniquely characteristic of it. Furthermore, use of the response motif may stem from a period prior to the written source material behind the Gospels and, if so, from a Jewish social context situated in Palestine.

The present study aims to investigate the motif of responses from two principal angles. First, the potentially diverse ways it is employed in each gospel as the respective narrative *unfolds* (narrative criticism) deserve treatment at length. Not just individual miracle stories on their own need examination, but also their relation to one another and to the overall shape and logic of the narrative. The topic has not been addressed before. Second, the similarities and differences between the Gospels in the use of the motif will be investigated with a view to clarifying their interrelations (source criticism). Possibilities of both literary dependence and shared oral traditions are to be given due attention. The question of social setting – whether Jewish and/or broader Hellenistic – for the development of miracle stories in the Jesus tradition comes into play here. The question will be important also for a third investigation, preliminary in nature, of potential influences (Jewish or non-Jewish or a mixture of both) on the story-telling patterns found in the traditions behind the Gospels (tradition-historical criticism).

I offer one final note before addressing the history of research in more detail. I use the terms “miraculous” and “miracle” above with caution, aware of the intellectual freight they carry, resulting from use in contexts from the Enlightenment until the present day. But no other term than “miracle” seems adequate for use as a rubric under which I can group the phenomena I have listed in the opening sentence. I will provide, below, a fuller justification for use of the term.

A. History of Research on Responses

I. Establishing the paradigm for a form-critical, also redaction-critical, approach to responses

1. From David Friedrich Strauss to Richard Reitzenstein

The Enlightenment spawned naturalistic explanations of the events ostensibly behind the gospel miracle stories. The watershed work of David Friedrich Strauss (1837), observing the absence of Jesus' miracles in the Epistles, argues that they are later mythical elements added to Christian tradition. Contemporary Jewish expectation of the Messiah performing wondrous deeds greater than those of Elijah and Elisha was the catalyst, he argues, for Christian invention of the miracle stories. Historical interests henceforth give way to cultural and literary concerns.

At the end of the nineteenth century papyrological and archaeological discoveries, especially at Epidauros,¹ provided an impetus for the idea that the miracle stories in the Gospels had their closest parallel in non-Jewish, Greco-Roman sources. Supporting this line of thinking is Richard Reitzenstein's (1910) construct of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ (divine man): a Greco-Roman type who, on the basis of higher nature and virtue, has profound knowledge and vision and can work miracles. Reitzenstein's (1906) study of literary parallels to the miracle stories of the Gospels curiously ignores the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint.² Rather, he focuses on the aretalogy: "a miracle story or a collection of miracle stories" whose "primary use... was praise or propaganda for the [non-Jewish] deity supposed to have done such deeds."³ The purpose of the miracle stories in the Gospels, according to Reitzenstein, is to sing the praise of Jesus, the θεῖος ἀνὴρ, and foster belief in him.

2. Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann

Martin Dibelius (1919, ²1931, ⁶1971) and Rudolf Bultmann (1921, ¹⁰1995), at the beginning of the twentieth century, made foundational for gospel studies both the θεῖος-ἀνὴρ construct and the proposed propagandistic nature of the

¹ Excavations at Epidauros under the direction of Panagiotis Kavvadias were begun in 1879. The inscriptions in the Sanctuary of Asclepius there are of special relevance.

² For a stinging criticism of Reitzenstein in this regard, see Bremmer (2013: 18).

³ Kee (1973: 409), citing with approval Smith (1971: 176–177; italics mine). Bremmer (2013: 17) observes that, since, "Reitzenstein was not very good in defining his subjects," it was left to later scholars to define what aretalogies are: "mostly the epigraphical collections of the healing or punishment miracles of Asclepius or Sarapis and the cultural innovations of Isis."

gospel miracle stories.⁴ To win converts, they maintain, stories were told orally about Jesus' mighty deeds, through which he was portrayed as superior among the presumed host of contemporary, divine miracle workers. These stories were brought together to form collections, aretalogies championing Jesus. The aretalogies were then mined as source material by the Gospels, notably Mark and John. Dibelius' and Bultmann's individual systems of categorisation of those gospel stories concerned with miracles and their particular concepts of individuals' and groups' *responses* in such stories, despite their differences, support their respective cases for the paradigm.

Dibelius is clearest on this point. First, his understanding of what constitutes a miracle story is to an appreciable extent predicated on the presumed propagandistic purpose of the episodes. To draw out this point, I begin with some aspects of methodology and categorisation that the form critics hold in common. Each of the scholars, though dividing up the greater body of material found in the Gospels along different lines, defines one of their respective categories such that it consists only of episodes narrating Jesus' mighty deeds – “Novellen” (Dibelius) and “Wundergeschichten” (Bultmann), in each case roughly equal to what English-speaking scholarship calls “miracle stories.”⁵ Just miracles *performed* by Jesus are in view. A threefold pattern is observed: a description of the problem or distress; a description of the action that procures the miracle; a conclusion, whose main function is to *confirm* the success of the miracle. Yet, neither scholar includes all stories of Jesus' mighty deeds in their respective categories. For example, Mk 3.1–6 is excluded by both form critics, since the healing here evidently serves as a backdrop for a controversy, involving a didactic point made by Jesus.

Still, Dibelius' “Novellen” includes fewer stories concerned with Jesus' mighty deeds than does Bultmann's comparable category.⁶ Here Dibelius' criteria reveal how extensively the θεῖος-άνθρωπος construct informs his scheme of categorisation. He places some stories of mighty deeds among the “Paradigmen,” namely short episodes that are rounded off at beginning and end, have an edificatory style, focus on a saying of Jesus and, in essence, end on a thought useful for *preaching* (Dibelius 1971 [1959]: 55). “Novellen,” in con-

⁴ Note Dibelius' book underwent revision in only the second (Dibelius 1933) and third (Dibelius 1959) editions. Bultmann's book was revised in only the second edition (1931), though the tenth (1995) edition contains an epilogue by Gerd Theissen.

⁵ “Novellen” is translated with “tales,” “Wundergeschichten” with “miracle stories.” Unless otherwise noted, in what follows the English translation of Bultmann is cited directly from John Marsh's translation (Bultmann 1963), based on Bultmann (²1931). The same is true for Bertram Lee Woolf's translation (Dibelius 1971), based on Dibelius (²1933), wherever no significant difference occurs in the later revised edition (Dibelius ³1959). See further, above, n. 4.

⁶ Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 51–52) later comments openly on this difference between him and Bultmann.

trast are longer, more detailed, focused on the miracle itself, “secular” and serve the purpose of *winning converts*.

Second, Dibelius’ concept of the narrated responses to Jesus’ mighty deeds clearly fits the θεῖος-άνήρ paradigm. Jesus’ healings and the like are, to Dibelius’ (1971 [1959]: 67) mind, often followed by “chorische Akklamationen des Wundertäters.”⁷ This laudatory chorus motif, referred to in brief by “Chor-Schluß,” purportedly concludes the respective episode. Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 42, 54) understands the motif to be primarily verbal (“in feierndem Wort des Volkschors”), though also to some extent marked by amazement (“bestaunt und preist”).⁸ He is not precise on the matter. At any rate, the choruses occur not only in some “Novellen,” but also in various miraculous “Paradigmen” as well (Dibelius 1971 [1959]: 54–55, 67, 71–72).⁹ Yet, the chorus ending fits the “Novellen” best, he avers, since the concluding thought is not a preach-able point but a comment on the greatness of the miracle worker: “die Chöre... weisen... auf die Größe der Tat und die Bedeutung des Täters....” (Dibelius 1971 [1959]: 55).¹⁰ The praises of the miracle worker narrated within a “Novelle” are envisioned as working upon the hearers of the story, bringing about a similar attitude in them (Dibelius 1971 [1959]: 56):

...die Wundererzählungen der Umwelt und die urchristlichen Novellen, die in solchen Zuruf ausklingen, wollen Mission treiben, wollen für den Gott oder den Menschen, von dem sie berichten, werben.¹¹

Likewise, Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 94) sees the narration of amazement as inspiring the faith of the listeners:

Der Glaube, den die Wundererzählung auslöst, beginnt mit dem zum Wunder gehörigen „Staunen“ oder „Sich-Entsetzen“....¹²

The envisioned effect of the responses, then, is part and parcel of the overall purpose of the “Novellen” (1971 [1959]: 93):

Wohl aber konnte man durch die Erzählung solcher Novellen die Überlegenheit des „Herrn Jesus“ erweisen und die Konkurrenz aller anderen Kultgötter aus dem Felde schlagen.¹³

⁷ “chorus[es] of acclamation for the miracle-worker”

⁸ “choral ending”; “approving words of the people”; “expressing wonder and praise” – on amazement see also Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 94).

⁹ Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 42; cf. 54) claims that “Paradigmen” end on a word or deed of Jesus or the approving words of the people.

¹⁰ “[c]horuses... point... to the greatness of the deed and the significance of the doer...”

¹¹ “...the miracle stories of the surrounding world, and the primitive Christian ‘Tales’ which end with such an exclamation have a missionary purpose[:] to labour either for the [g]od or the man of whom they report.”

¹² “The faith which the miracle-story arouses begins with the ‘astonishment’ or ‘amazement’ proper to the miracle....”

¹³ “But by telling such Tales, the pre-eminence of the ‘Lord Jesus’ could be demonstrated and all other rival gods who were worshipped driven from the field.”

In summary, to Dibelius' mind miracle stories in general and the supposed *Chor-Schluß* – I will use this as a technical term in what follows, in italics, without translation – in particular serve to magnify Jesus and to foster believe in and praise for him among those listening to the stories told orally.

Yet challenges immediately arise for Dibelius' scheme. While later scholarship will expose broader methodological and conceptual problems underlying the form-critical enterprise, I note here some other issues specific to responses, inherent in the nature of the gospel miracle stories themselves. The first point is that Dibelius' scheme already admits that the alleged "Paradigmen," which serve purposes of preaching, contain the said responses to miracles. Moreover, one encounters the narration of responses to miraculous occurrences in actually four or five of the six categories of material that Dibelius divides the Gospels up into, though he does not notice this point. Not just "Paradigmen" and "Novellen," but also episodes placed under the rubric "der Mythos," "Legende" and possibly even "die Leidensgeschichte" narrate similar sorts of groups' and individuals' responses.¹⁴ The transfiguration – one of only a few stories categorised within "der Mythos" by Dibelius, who discusses the Markan version – describes the extreme emotion and speech of the disciples upon encountering Jesus in a transformed state (Mk 9.5–6). Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 275–276), commenting on the reaction of Peter and the others, does not observe that the language used is akin to the proposed choral acclamations, filled with amazement, elsewhere.¹⁵ The Markan "Legende vom leeren Grab," the alleged original ending of that gospel, also contains a description of characters' amazement and fear and, with an ironic twist, their *silence* in response to the encounter with an angel and his relating of Jesus' miraculous resurrection from the dead (Mk 16.8).¹⁶ Dibelius' (1971 [1959]: 190–192) reference to the women's actions fails to note the similarities, given the variation on a theme, between the literary motif here and the alleged chorus endings elsewhere. If joy, not just amazement, and praise of God, not just affirmation of Jesus, could be taken to be a *Chor-Schluß*, then the Lukan Easter story contains one (Lk 24.52–53). Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 200) makes no mention of the disciples' joy and praise at the conclusion of the story, though this response to Jesus' resurrection and ascension bares similarities to the responses to healings and the like elsewhere.¹⁷

Equally significant, not all of the material Dibelius cites for choral acclamations are of the same quality. He attempts to explain why demonstratively

¹⁴ "mythology"; "legends"; "passion story"

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Mk 2.12; 7.36–37. Note, recognising Peter's failure to appreciate Jesus' identity, as Dibelius does, should also draw to attention the incomplete nature of statements and questions about Jesus in responses elsewhere, as in healings (e.g. Mk 1.27–28).

¹⁶ "legend of the empty grave"

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., Lk 5.25–26; 7.16–17 – also, 13.13, 17; 17.15–16; 18.43.

positive choral endings, taking the crowd near Nain's proclamation of Jesus as a prophet (Lk 7.16) as a prime example, are rare. Dibelius' (1971 [1959]: 72) explanation is unsatisfying: the Jesus tradition is still "shy" ("noch spröde verhält"), he avers, of a more elevated style, entailed in such endings. But his admission is already indicative that something in the paradigm he advocates is awry. Importantly, some responses to miracles are less positive than Dibelius' propagandistic *Chor-Schluß* construct would allow for. For example, he fails to observe the difference between responses containing proclamations and those marked by questioning. Dibelius does not observe how the disciples' fearful and bewildered question about Jesus in response to the stilling of the storm is qualitatively inadequate. Those listening must themselves supply the answer to the question that the disciples raise. Dibelius (1971 [1959]: 91–92; cf. 77) recognises this point, but does not intuit the degradation of the disciples' response that is entailed, when compared to others, say the fearful proclamation of the crowd near Nain, Dibelius' flagship positive *Chor-Schluß*. Related, Dibelius does not give adequate attention to potential differences corresponding to which figure responds – a point especially pertinent to group respondents versus individuals. Finally, Dibelius' approach is reductionist in that all responses – whether verbal or emotional – are taken to be a single phenomenon, with one sole characteristic and a single purpose.

Bultmann also takes the miracle stories to have an intrinsic missionary goal, with the responses they contain serving that purpose. He sees the stories as not, for example, biographical or didactic in nature but "proofs" of Jesus' power: "...Erweise... seiner messianischen Kraft bzw. seiner göttlichen Macht" (Bultmann 1995 [1931]: 234).¹⁸ Whereas Dibelius provides just one overall category for miracle stories, Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 247–249) gives four subcategories: "Dämonenbeschwörungen," "andere Heilungsgeschichten," "Totenerweckungen" and "Naturwunder."¹⁹ This subdivision is accepted, at times with minor structural or conceptual differences, by the majority of later scholarship.²⁰ Exorcisms and other healings are common, while nature miracles are few, because of how the former pertain to the per-

¹⁸ "proofs... of his messianic authority, or his divine power"

¹⁹ "Exorcisms of demons;" "other healings"; "resurrections from the dead"; "nature miracles"

²⁰ Cotter (1999: 4) accepts Bultmann's scheme for "Jesus miracles" as well as "any miracle story, no matter what its provenance," though subsuming the "few raising of the dead stories" under healings, resulting in three categories. Blackburn (2011: 114, 127 n. 39) accepts the four categories, but subdivides "nature miracles," whose terminology he has reservation about, into: gift miracles, rescue miracles, epiphanies and punishment miracles. Blackburn's (2011: 126, n. 15) one epiphany (Mk 6.45–52 || Mt 14.22–33 || Jn 6.16–21) is, to Bultmann's (1995 [1931]: 231) mind, best understood in terms of the nature miracle: "das Seewandeln" (walking on the water).

ceived function of the stories. Given their allegedly automatic nature, exorcisms, as key *proofs*, proliferate: “Deshalb stehen auch die Dämonenaustreibungen an erster Stelle als Hauptbeweise der Messianität Jesu” (Bultmann 1995 [1931]: 234).²¹

For Bultmann the propagandistic nature of the miracle stories is seen especially in the development of the tradition about Jesus from individual units, through collections of like material, to written gospels and related documents. The form-critical enterprise, it should be noted, is predicated on a specific theory of the interrelations of the Synoptic Gospels, called the Two Document Hypothesis, which assumes that Mark and the hypothetical document Q (from German *Quelle*), understood as consisting mainly of sayings and roughly equivalent to the material shared by Luke and Matthew (but not Mark), write first, independent of one another and that both of them are in turn used by Luke and Matthew, independently. While both Bultmann and Dibelius distinguish between material ostensibly focused on speech and narrative respectively, Bultmann makes a sharp, categorical bifurcation of the entire Jesus tradition along these lines: “die Worte Jesu” versus “der Erzählungsstoff.”²² Just as aretalogies are formed from individual miracle stories, collections of sayings material also come together. The presumed end result of such trajectories are Mark and Q. The latter is a written collection of sayings by Jesus. The former is a narrative account, heavily punctuated by miracle stories. Thus, Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 256), in attempting to explain why miracle stories are rare in Q but numerous in the Gospels, consciously invokes the θεῖος-άνήρ construct:

Bei Mk ist er ein θεῖος ἄνθρωπος, ja mehr: der über die Erde wandelnde Gottessohn. Diese mythische Beleuchtung, in die bei Mk Jesus gerückt ist..., kommt zwar zum großen Teil auf die Rechnung des Schriftstellers, zum Teil aber auch auf die Rechnung seines Stoffes und zwar vernehmlich der Wundergeschichten.²³

Mark and Q, then, each serve as the poster child of two allegedly different and unrelated streams of development in traditions about Jesus. Bultmann’s strict conceptual division between speech and narrative materials in the Jesus tradition has had a wide-ranging influence on subsequent scholarship.

The responses to miracles narrated in the stories, too, fit within Bultmann’s concept of their propagandistic nature. It seems that Bultmann – though his writing on the matter is not clear – understands miracle stories to

²¹ “It is for this reason that the exorcisms of demons are in the first place the chief demonstrations of the Messiahship of Jesus.”

²² “the sayings of Jesus”; “the narrative material”

²³ “In Mark he is a θεῖος ἄνθρωπος, indeed more: he is the very Son of God walking the earth. This mythological light in which Jesus is set by Mark... is there [in large] part on the author’s own account but also in part on account of his material, and especially of the miracle stories.”

have been composed by drawing on a prototypical, ordered set of components, related to but distinct from the threefold pattern mentioned above. His analysis of Mk 5.1–21 and parallels provides what may be meant as a paradigmatic analysis of a miracle story, not just an exorcism. The story, claims Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 224), contains “die typischen Züge der Dämonenaustreibungen,” all six of which are “zwar in charakteristischer Abwandlung.”²⁴ The sixth feature is “Eindruck auf die Zuschauer.”²⁵ For no other “Heilungswunder” story does he provide a longer list of typical features.²⁶ Analysis elsewhere presents a problem, though, as a conflicting picture is given. His first example of “die typischen Züge einer Wundergeschichte, speziell einer Dämonenbeschwörung” provides a shorter list, with just four features.²⁷ Here, too, however the final feature is “Eindruck auf die Zuschauer.”²⁸ I will use this phrase in italics or, more commonly, the single word *Eindruck* as a technical term in what follows. Given the two instances mentioned, still it should be noted that Bultmann’s *Eindruck*, like Dibelius’ *Chor-Schluß*, is not seen as a constituent part of a miracle story. A key aspect of the motif for Bultmann would seem to be its location at the end of a story.²⁹ On this conception, then, he concurs with Dibelius, though Bultmann is not more precise than to say that *Eindruck auf die Zuschauer* is the last of six or four typical features in the stories. Bultmann does not – nor Dibelius for that matter – catalogue instances when the motif appears earlier or when some other bit of text, following just on the heels of the motif, actually closes a miracle story.

Inasmuch as *Eindruck* is characteristic of miracle stories, Bultmann affirms that the motif, like the type of story in which it appears, advances a propagandistic agenda. Narrating *Eindruck* serves both to extol the power demonstrated by the wonder worker and to elicit faith (Bultmann 1995 [1931]: 241):

²⁴ “the typical feature[s] of exorcism of demons”; “in their characteristic order”

²⁵ “impression on the spectators” (Note that Marsh [Bultmann 1963: 224] gives only five features, combining [inadvertently?] Bultmann’s fifth and sixth feature.)

²⁶ “healing miracle”

²⁷ Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 224). “the typical characteristics of a miracle story, and especially of an exorcism”

²⁸ Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 230) refers to this feature as typical, also, in his first example of a “Naturwunder,” though he does not refer to it again in subsequent examples, where it appears.

²⁹ That the feature appears last, also, in his more detailed, accumulative list, concerned with all kinds of “Wundergeschichten,” indicates that Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 236–241) understands the feature to appear commonly at a story’s close.

Endlich ist stilgemäß, dass der Eindruck des Wunders auf das anwesende Publikum beschrieben wird; dadurch wird sowohl das παράδοξον des Wunders betont wie auch eine Beglaubigung geboten.³⁰

For Bultmann *Eindruck* is primarily emotional.³¹ Words for amazement, fear and being troubled are indiscriminately listed together. Here he homogenises. He refers briefly to short, generic descriptions of praise. Citing Erik Peterson (1926), he states that in the Gospels there is no “Akklamationsformel”: a stereotyped verbal utterance praising God for a miracle. Yet he does not discuss the utterances of, for example, crowds that are present. Words and phrases pertaining to verbal utterance – δοξάσαι, δοῦναι αἶνον – are listed as, seemingly, functional equivalents to the emotional, more “charakteristisch” terms for *Eindruck* mentioned above. Similarly, one instance of χαρῆναι is included in the list of terms for verbal utterance, without indicating awareness of the difference in kind of response. As mentioned, he hints at the possibility of belief being an aspect of *Eindruck*.³²

Problems arise for Bultmann’s scheme, just as they do for that of Dibelius. For, first, Bultmann too fails to note how episodes in both of the narrative categories he fixes (“Wundergeschichten” and “Geschichtserzählung und Legende”), not just the miracle stories, contain *Eindruck*.³³ The transfiguration and appearances of angels and Jesus following his resurrection are placed in the second subcategory. As I have already treated, aspects of some of the relevant stories which depict extreme emotional responses to miraculous occurrences involved, I will not belabour the point here. But I will address one example where Bultmann’s blind spot is evident, for a second problem in his scheme comes to light here, namely the failure to see when *Eindruck* is less than purely positive. Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 280) claims that Peter’s lack of knowledge and related fear at Jesus’ transfiguration in Mark (9.6) stems from “die Verlegenheit des Ver[fasser],” arising from this legendary story being situated in Jesus’ Galilean ministry.³⁴ Yet, he fails to note similar instances of insufficient knowledge and fear or amazement in response to miracles elsewhere in this gospel, for material Bultmann labels “Wundergeschichten.”³⁵ In this way Bultmann homogenises the response data in stories of

³⁰ “Finally, it accords with the style of miracle stories that the *impression the miracle creates upon the crowd* that sees it is reported; by this means the παράδοξον of the miracle is stressed at the same time as belief in the miracle is demanded.”

³¹ Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 241) lists a number of characteristic words, all of which pertain to feelings.

³² Bultmann (1995 [1931]: 241) is aware that belief can be an important aspect in the stories, but does not expand on how this is communicated other than, apparently, potentially through the emotional feature that he terms *Eindruck*.

³³ “miracle stories”; “historical stories and legends”

³⁴ “the author’s embarrassment”

³⁵ Mk 6.49–50, 51–52; cf. 1.27; 4.41.

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