"MARK 5:1-20: THE OTHER SIDE"

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Although this passage is usually interpreted from the Jewish perspective of purity or the necessity to cast out pagan influences represented by the demons in the swine, an examination from the other side, i.e. the Roman side in Geresa and the Decapolis, indicates that Mark is also concerned about issues of commerce and Roman religious concepts of sacred space, death and atonement.

Mark 5:1-20 is one of the most unusual healing narratives in the New Testament and in spite of the considerable amount of recent research[1] which has attempted to unravel its secrets, scholars

[1] For summaries of previous studies see J. Craghan, "The Geresene Demoniac," *CBQ* 30 (1968), 522, n 4; P. Lamarche, "Le Possédé de Géresa", *NRT* 96(1968), 58; G. Swarz, " 'Aus der Gegend' (Markus v.10b)", *NTS* 22(1976), 214. More recent detailed examinations include those of J. Starobinski, "The Geresene Demoniac, A Literary Analysis of Mark 5:1-20", *Structural Analysis And Biblical Exegesis, Interpretational Essays* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1974), 57-84; F.-J. Leenhardt, "An Exegetical Essay: Mark 5:1-20, 'The Madman Reveals The Final Truth of Man' (M. Foucault)", *loc. cit.*, 85-109; F. Annen, *Heil für die Heiden, Zur Bedeutung und Geschichte der Tradition vom bessenen Gerasener (Mk 5,1-20 parr)* (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1976); J. D. Derrett, "Contributions To The Study Of The Geresene Demoniac", *JSNT* 3 (1979) 2-17; Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study", *JAAR* 49(1981) 567-587; Z. Kato, *Die Völkermission im Markusevangelium, Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Frankfurt am Main, N.Y.: Peter Lang,1986); Carol Schersten LaHurd, "Biblical Narrative and Reader Response to Ritual in Narrative", in *The Daemonic Imagination, Biblical Text And Secular Story*, edited by Robert Detweiler and William G. Doty, AAR Studies in Religion 60, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 53-63; Carol Schersten LaHurd, "Reader Response to Ritual Elements in Mark 5:1-20", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990), 154-160; Ken Frieden, "The Language of Demonic Possession: A Key-Word Analysis", *The Daemonic*

still find themselves frustrated in the attempt to interpret its bizarre details and determine its significance within the structure of Mark's gospel.[2] Considering the waste of the herd of pigs and the extraordinary nature of the exorcism of a legion of demons, it is not surprising that the story of the Geresene demoniac has been variously described as "shocking"[3], "stupendous" and "scandalous"[4], even alleged to contain elements of the burlesque and absurd.[5] On occasion it has been suggested that the narrative

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Imagination, 41-52; Mark McVann, "Destroying Death: Jesus in Mark and Joseph in "The Sin Eater" ", in *The Daemonic Imagination*, 123-35; Gordon Franz, "The Demoniac(s) of Gadara: Mark 5:1-20", [microform], *Evangelical Theological Society Papers* (1991), 1-11; Helmut Merklein, "Die Heilung des Besessenen von Gerasa (Mk 5, 1-20), Ein Fallbeispeil für die tiefenpsychologische Deutung E. Drewermans und die historisch-kritische Exegese", *The Four Gospels, 1992, Festscrift Frans Neirynck*, vol II, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992) 1017-1037; Thomas Schmeller, "Jesus im Umland Galiläas, Zu den markinischen Berichten vom Aufenhalt Jesu in den Gebieten von Tyros, Caesarea Philippi und der Dekapolis", *BZ* 38 (1994) 44-66; J.L.P. Wolmarans, "Who Asked Jesus To Leave The Territory of Geresa (Mark 5:17)?", *Neotestamentica* 28 (1994) 87-92; Erik K. Wefald, "The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark, A Narrative Explanation of Markan Geography, The Two Feeding Accounts and Exorcisms", *JSNT* 60 (1995) 3-26; Ze'ev Safrai, "Gergesa, Gerasa, or Gadara? Where Did Jesus' Miracle Occur?", *Jerusalem Perspective* 51 (1996) 16-19. Recent commentaries with detailed examinations include Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1:-8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary 34A, (Dallas: Word Books, 1989); Robert Gundry, *Mark, A Commentary On His Apology For The Cross*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1993).

[2] See, for example, the analysis of F. G. Lang who thinks it is Christologically significant ("Kompositionsanalyse des Markusevangeliums," *ZThK* 74[1977],1-24).

[3] H. Sahlin, "Die Perikope vom gerasenischen Besessenen und der Plan des Markusevangeliums", *ST* 18(1964) 159.

[4] R. Pesch, "The Markan Version Of The Healing Of The Geresene Demoniac", *Ecumenical Review*, 23(1971), 349. See also his "Der Besessene vom Geresa, Enstehung und Überlieferung einer Wundergeschichte" (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1971) as well as *Das Markusevangelium*, I (Freiburg: Herder,1977).

would be more credible if the reference to the swine was eliminated altogether as a superfluous and secondary detail.[6]

One factor which has often been overlooked is that even though the narrative clearly takes place in Gentile territory, in the region of the Geresenes in the Decapolis, the pericope, generally speaking, has only been examined from the Jewish side of the lake. Since Jesus and the disciples are moving from west to east (4:35; 5:1-2) and return in the next passage (5:21-22) to an encounter with a leader of the synagogue, the passage has usually been interpreted in light of the Jewish abhorrence of unclean swine, the biblical and talmudic understanding of exorcism and demonology[7] and the multiplicity and demonic nature of Gentile divinities. More currently, it has played a role in the renewed interest in the discussion of Mark's understanding of the distinction between the Jewish and Gentile areas into which Jesus traveled and the origin of mission in Gentile regions.[8]

In recent study it has been demonstrated that important Markan themes can be fruitfully understood not only from Judaic and Judeo-Christian perspectives but also in light of Greco-Roman thought patterns and culture.[9] Since it is generally acknowledged

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[5] D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987) 98-99.

[6] Pesch,for example, sees it as detail that came into the story later and he agrees with those who consider it to be an afterthought (*ER*,368).

[7] See Derrett, for example, who explains the passage in light of Old Testament and haggadic traditions about the Exodus, Moses, David, Isaiah and Nahum (3-17).

[8] See H. Anderson, *The Gospel Of Mark*, (London:Oliphants,1976), 150; E.S. Malbon, "Galilee And Jerusalem: History And Literature In Markan Interpretation", *CBQ* 44(1982) 242-255; for the history of this discussion. For more recent examination of the question from varying perspectives see Pesch, *ER* 373; Annen, 51ff; 85-90 and Kato, 44-63,188-197; Wefald, 3-26; Gundry, 265-266. Gundry argues convincingly that Mark's emphasis is Christological rather than anti-Judaistic or Gentile-evangelistic.

[9] See especially V.K. Robbins, *Jesus The Teacher, A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation Of Mark* (Philadelphia:Fortress, 1984); also my "Is Mark 15:39 The Key To Mark's Christology?", *JSNT* 31(1987) 3-22.

that Mark's gospel is written to Christians living outside of Palestine in a Gentile area of the Roman Empire, possibly to believers living in Rome itself [10], it is not unlikely that Mark also composes the miracle narratives with the religious and cultural world in which his readers live in mind as well.[11]

The review of a few studies suggests possible connections between Mark's gospel and its Roman environment.

1. Paul Hollenbach argues, for example, that the demoniac's mental illness is to be seen as a socially acceptable protest, or escape from, the social and political oppression of the Roman Empire. The demoniac represents the oppressed lower class in Roman society in opposition to the powerful elite. Demon possession provides an "oblique aggressive strategy" which is able to identify Roman legions with the destruction of the swine who

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[10] V. Taylor reviews various theories about the gospel's connection with Rome (*The Gospel According To Mark* [2nd edn: London:Macmilllan, St. Martins, 1967] 32). A more recent examination is found in M. Hengel, *Studies In The Gospel Of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); D. Senior, "With Swords And Clubs...-The Setting Of Mark's Community And His Critique Of Abuse Of Power", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17(1987) 10-20; E. Earle Ellis, "The Date and Provenance of Mark's Gospel", *The Four Gospels, Festscrift Frans Neirynck,* 1992, II, 801-815. Anderson gives the evidence for a provenance more generally in the Roman Empire (20-29); also see Wefald, p. 7. Other suggested areas include Galilee (W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956, 1959])and Antioch (H.C. Kee, *Community Of The New Age* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977)]; Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence, Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). For a summary of recent discussions see John R. Donahue, "The Community of Mark's Gospel", *The Four Gospels*, II, 816-838.

[11] This likelihood is raised in 5:7 since the man's acclamation of Jesus is a Gentile formulation. C.E.B. Cranfield points out that the expression is used by non-Israelites in the Old Testament (*The Gospel According To St. Mark* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1959] 177). For references to its use in inscriptions to Greco-Roman gods see G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (Macquarie University: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre,1981) I, 25-29.

plunge over the cliff. By interpreting and practicing exorcisms in an unique way, Jesus challenges both the Roman authorities and the Pharisees and presents a countercultural move which was considered a threat to the power and culture of both societies.[12]

2. Ched Meyers points out that Mk 5:1-20 is filled with military imagery which is meant to call to mind the Roman military occupation of Palestine. The demon represents Roman military power and in him Jesus encounters "the other half" of colonial condominium. The destruction of the swine indicates the initial breach of Roman's symbolic domination and Jesus' inaugural challenge to the powers.[13]

3. In a more recent study, J.L.P. Wolmarans contends that owners of the pigs are involved in the commercial raising of swine on a large scale to supply the Roman army with pork.[14] Although Wolmaran's argument that the herdsmen who fled (5:14) are slaves who must now be disciplined under a code which determines the punishment for those who have been irresponsible with a master's property is not substantiated in the Markan text, he does highlight an important aspect of the commercial and social value of the pigs in a Roman colonial setting. A study by Ramsay MacMullen indicates that from the middle of the first century soldiers attached to occupied areas did their own farming, growing fodder for their horses or buying hay from contractors.[15] Tacitus relates that some fields were left empty for the usage of soldiers and that they also kept herds (*Ann.* 13.54-55). *Pecuarii* had contracts with municipal magistrates to sell meat in camp markets and the magistrates supervised pastures, sheds, flocks, herds and herdsman engaged in these commercial ventures. MacMullen is unsure, however, about the precise chronological development of these activities, noting

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12 "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study", *JAAR* 49(1981) 567-587.

13 *Binding the Strong Man, A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1991).

14 J.L.P. Wolmarans, "Who Asked Jesus To Leave The Territory of Geresa (Mark 5:17)?", *Neotestamentica* 28 (1994) 87-92.

15 Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier And Civilian In The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) 9-10.

that although they were practiced in the first century, the most concrete evidence comes from Severan times and later.

A re-examination of Mark's introductory and concluding insertions, Jesus' unusual interaction with the legion of demons and the pervasive Roman religious imagery in 5:1-20 indicates the continuing value of examining this pericope from the Roman side of the lake and indicates that in addition to military and commercial imagery which illuminates the perspective of Mark's Roman readers, religious and sacrificial evidence indicates how the story of demoniac reflects Mark's concern with his readers' understanding of Roman attitudes toward purity, death and atonement.

I. REDACTIONAL CLUES AND NARRATIVE LOCATION

Although it is generally agreed that Mark has retained the story of the Geresene demoniac largely as he finds it in the tradition, the clearest signs of his redaction are found in v. 1 *a*, *b* and v. 20 [16] where Mark indicates that the incident occurs in Gentile territory.[17] As Bultmann points out, Mark's redaction is evident in the abrupt shift from plural (v. 1) to singular (v. 2) as he includes the disciples in a story which originally only pertained to Jesus.[18] The expression εἰς τὸ πέραν, furthermore, occurs in Markan descriptive passages (3:8) and is particularly prominent in transitions where Mark introduces Jesus' movement by boat and

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[16] R. Bultmann, *The History Of The Synoptic Tradition*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968) 210. See the convenient summary of the conclusions of several redaction critics by F. Neirynck, "The Redactional Text Of Mark," *ETL* 57(1981) 144-162; also Lührmann, 99; William R. Telford, "The Pre-Markan Tradition in Recent Research", *The Four Gospels*, II, 694-723. Most scholars also agree that v. 8 is a Markan insertion: Bultmann, 210; K. Kertelge, *Die Wunder Jesu im Markusevangelium, Eine redactionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1970) 102; C.S. Mann, *Mark, A New Translation With Introduction And Commentary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1986) 279; Lührmann, 99. Some scholars attribute 2*a*, 9*c*, and parts of 18 and 19 to Mark as well. See Neirynck, 144-162.

[17] See the discussion below.

[18] Bultmann, 344.

the special revelation he gives on these occasions (4:35; 6:45; 8:13).

In v. 20 the use of the auxiliary verb ἤρξατο, κηρύσσω (began, preach) in reference to the proclamation of the word about Jesus, and the amazement of the bystanders connected with unbelief and fear (1:27; 6:6; 10:24,32; 15:5,44), all indicate that the whole verse is a Markan construction and that Mark is responsible for locating the miracle in the region of the Decapolis.[19] Although it has been argued that the passage was already connected to 4:35-41 before Mark received it[20], the presence of a carefully constructed introduction and conclusion suggest that Mark himself has brought the passages together for the first time and that he may also be responsible for locating the miracle in the region around Geresa as well.[21]

Mark's placement of the story in this location has often puzzled later interpreters[22], of course, and has been thought to create a severe strain in the narrative credibility of his account. Clearly it was a source of embarrassment to Matthew and Luke and later editors of synoptic texts since Mark has Jesus crossing the sea only to land some 55km southeast of its terminus. Changes in the text which locate Jesus closer to the sea in Gadara (Matt 8:28 and later Markan texts which imitate it)[23] or directly on the eastern

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[19] For the Markan nature of ἤρξατο and κηρύσσω see Taylor, 48.

[20] P. J. Achtemeier, "Toward The Isolation Of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae," *JBL* 89 (1970) 265-291.

[21] Scholars differ on this point. Kertelge, 101-102; Pesch *ER*, 368; Kato, 45 think that reference in 5:1 was already in the pre-Markan tradition. Annan argues that Geresa was in the tradition and that Mark has designated a more general area because he has no interest in that specific city (197). Merklein, 1024-26, argues that 5:1-20 is the product of a long growth process in narrative tradition. See further discussion below.

[22] Attempts have been made to distinguish different levels of pre-Markan tradition. See especially Cragan, 522-536; Pesch *ER* 349-376; Anderson, 145-151; Annen, 182-197; Kato, 44-63. As Lührmann points out, such studies yield tentative results and are often of limited value for understanding Mark's own interpretation (99).

[23] Located in Umm Qeis in Jordan, the ruins of black basalt Gadara have a number of tombs on the outskirts, especially on the main road

shore in Gennesaret [24] remove the incongruity but do not resolve the difficulty in Mark's gospel since εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν[25] remains the *lectio difficilior* and the preferred text.[26]

Because Mark's reading provides yet another problem in a pericope already laden with insuperable difficulties, his reference to Geresa is often dismissed as theologically insignificant or merely another example of the confused nature of Jesus' itinerary around the Sea of Galilee and Mark's apparent lack of knowledge of the

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leading into the modest tourist center, near one of the theaters. Gordan Franz thinks it may represent the historic location of the miracle. Even though it is 10km south east of the lake, it may have been connected with the recently discovered harbor south of Tel Samra, "The Demoniac(s) of Gadara: Mark 5:1-20", [microform], *Evangelical Theological Society Papers* (1991), 1-11. See Iain Browning, *Jerash And The Decapolis* (London:Chato & Windus, 1982) 42-46, for a discussion of archaeological activity there.

[24] Geographically Kursi (Gergesa) is the most logical site for the miracle's location. Situated just north of Kibbutz En Gev, with a commanding view of the lake from the east, a gentle slope leads to the shore about 1km away. One might suppose that the waterline has receded over the centuries, thus eliminating the necessity of a jump of super-Olympic proportion for the story's swine. The site is surrounded by several ancient tombs but they are not easily reached by the casual tourist at this time because of the danger of land mines remaining from the 1967 war. See Gundry, p. 256, for a detailed discussion about the archaeological evidence concerning the site.

[25] Modern Jerash is one of the most handsome archaeological sites in either Jordan or Israel. It is accessible from Israel but tour groups wishing to visit the area must currently make arrangements with Jordanian authorities to secure Jordanian guides and tour buses. Tombs excavated to date span the period from the first century to the sixth century, and are especially notable near the North-west Gate, the foundations before Hadrian's Arch, on both sides of the Church of Bishop Marianus and in the South-west Cemetery. See Rami Khouri, *Jerash, A Frontier City Of the Roman East* (London & NY: Longman, 1986) 51-52.

[26] So Pesch, *ER*, 353. This reading is usually the accepted one; Taylor, 278; Cranfield, 176. See Gundry's detailed study of the possible reasons why Geresa is Mark's choice of location, p. 256.

topography of that area.[27] The study by O.A.W. Dilke demonstrates, however, that it was not unusual for writers of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. to make cartographical errors, even those who considered themselves to be historians and geographers.[28] Ptolemy, for example, criticizes Marinus for incorrectly locating certain places opposite others in his discussion of the Mediterranean coast.[29] As Dilke points out, furthermore, ancient writers were often interested in more than the exact coordinates of places. Even if the location of an area or city was not precisely known, an author could still attribute great prominence to it because it could be connected in his mind with information of more significant value to his readers, data about the aetiology of gods and goddesses, the background of various myths and symbols, the movement and success of conquering armies or a simple fascination with the horrific and bizarre. In the case of Mark 5:1-20, an examination of the history of Geresa suggests that its background as a Roman city and it consequence for Mark's Roman readers is more significant to Mark than its precise location vis-à-vis the Sea of Galilee.

II. GERESA, ROMAN CITY OF THE DECAPOLIS

Geresa, by the time Mark wrote, was clearly identified as a Roman city in a Roman province. After the invasion of Pompey in 63 B.C., the Decapolis had ceased to be a loose confederation of

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[27] See Pesch, *ER*, 352. Mark's confusing geographical references in the first eight chapters are discussed in my study "Mark VIII.22-26:The Blind Man From Bethsaida", *NTS* 25(1979) 372. Also see D.-A. Koch, "Inhaltliche Gliederung und geographischer Aufriss im Markusevangelium," *NTS* 29(1983) 150-152; E.S. Malbon, "The Jesus Of Mark And The Sea Of Galilee", *JBL* 103(1984) 368,372; and in *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning In Mark* (San Francisco:Harper & Row, 1986) 27ff.

[28] *Greek And Roman Maps* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). Dilke particularly points out the errors made by Polybius, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Marinus of Tyre, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy (60-69). Also see J.O. Thompson, *History Of Ancient Geography* (N.Y.:Biblo and Tannen, 1965) 169-350.

[29] Dilke, 74.

Greek cities but was reorganized into the Roman province of Syria and its urban areas were used for the quartering of Roman troops.[30] Josephus mentions that the city was one of those brutally attacked by the Jews as a reprisal for Roman slaughter in Caesarea (*J.W.* 2.458-459). Later, he points out that the citizens refused to maltreat Jews who remained with them and agreed to escort them back to Jewish territory (2.480). Although Mark somewhat loosely identifies the place of Jesus' arrival as the area of the Geresenes, his readers would have understood that the exorcism was performed directly outside of the city limits of Geresa itself since the Romans routinely located necropoles on the outskirts of urban boundaries, ranged along the major routes which led into populated areas.[31] As G. Lankester Harding points out, Geresa (also known as Jerash or Jarash) underwent a rebuilding program in the first century A.D. and it is this city that Mark's readers would have in mind as the story about the Geresene demoniac is told. As Harding

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[30] Lührmann, 101; Malbon points out that the presence of the pigs alone indicates that the story takes place in Gentile territory (*JBL* [1984] 372). Contra Marxsen, 42, and Koch, 153, who argue that Mark does not distinguish between Gentile and Jewish areas around the Sea of Galilee. J. A. Overman indicates how powerful Roman influence was in Galilee as well ("Who Were The First Urban Christians? Urbanization In Galilee In The First Century", *SBL Seminar Papers* [1988]) 160-168) . For general information on the Decapolis see G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography Of The Holy Land* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), 594-608; D.C. Pellett, *Interpreter's Dictionary Of The Bible* (N.Y., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 810-812; *Princeton Encyclopedia Of Classical Sites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1976) 348-349. The Greek and Latin texts which refer to Decapolis are provided by A. Spijkerman, *The Coins Of The Decapolis And Provincia Arabia* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press) 1978.

[31] See M. Brion, *Pompeii And Herculaneum, The Glory And The Grief,* (N.Y.: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1960) 160; J.M.C. Toynbee, *Death And Burial In The Ancient World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971) 73; K. Hopkins, *Death And Renewal, Sociological Studies In Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) II, 205; R. Jones, "Burial Customs Of Rome And The Provinces", *The Roman World,* ed J. Wacher (London and N.Y.: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1987) 813.

describes it, Geresa was a "typical Roman provincial town", no doubt planned and designed as a unit by a Roman architect and carried out by a Roman supervisor.[32] An inscription in the northwest gate indicates that the town wall was completed in 75-76 A.D. although a new temple to Zeus was begun in 22-23 A.D. and was still under construction when Mark wrote the gospel. New streets were laid out a little later between 39-76 A.D. Rostovtzeff's aside about the uniqueness of Geresa clearly indicates the scene which Mark creates.

> In Jerash, as in all cities of the ancient world, a second and no less imposing town arises immediately behind the town of the living: this is the town of the dead full of remarkable monuments. There is no point in describing them here, for they are neither as strange nor as beautiful as those of Petra or Palmyra, yet the town would seem incomplete without them, for they were buildings first encountered by a traveler coming from Damascus or Palestine, Philadelphia or Bosra, or from other cities of the Decapolis. The temples and chapels, the huge massive sarcophagi, the step-pyramids set upon heavy bases, the facades cut in the rocks--all appear in fantastic sequence, and it was probably they that prepared the visitors for the splendors of the town of the living.[33]

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[32] G. Lankester Harding, *The Antiquities Of Jordan* (N.Y., Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1959, 1969) 79,85. Also see "Geresa", *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985) 340.

[33] M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, trans D. and T. T. Rice (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1932). Admittedly some of the monuments he describes postdate Mark's gospel. Yet, it can be assumed that the necropolis of Jerash had been substantially built up soon after Pompey's invasion in 63 B.C. See Gundry, 256, for a discussion of the discovery of tombs in Jerash.

II. LEGION AND THE ROMAN TOMBS

An appreciation of the way in which Mark's readers would have understood the exorcism of the demoniac in Geresa casts further light on the more bizarre and troubling features of the narrative, i.e. Jesus' encounter with a legion of demons and the casting of the unclean spirits into the herd which is instantly destroyed. Generally it is assumed that the word legion refers to the large number of demons involved, a Roman legion usually consisting of around 6,000 men.[34] Jesus' exorcism, it is argued, can demonstrate his unusually great power since he is able to defeat such an extraordinary army of unclean spirits.[35] While such an interpretation cannot be denied, the setting of the story suggests that it also makes a statement about Roman religion and the relationship between the Christian faith and Roman practices which would have been familiar to Mark's readers.

This conclusion is reached not simply because the word legion occurs in v. 9 but because Mark's readers would have been aware of the fact that a necropolis in a Roman city or town would be filled with the monuments and tombs of Roman soldiers, and that surrounded by the reminder of the presence of Roman military might and religious beliefs, the word legion would naturally describe the theological setting of the pericope. In his detailed study of the practice of Roman soldiers to memorialize themselves, particularly in provincial areas in which they last served, Richard Duncan-Jones demonstrates that it was common, especially for

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[34] See Anderson, 146; Pesch, *ER*, 363. Derrett points to several words which have "a military undersense" (5). Whether or not Mark's account could have been influenced by the fact that the Tenth Roman Legion (its symbol was a wild boar) was stationed near Gerasa from 70-135 CE depends upon the date assigned to the gospel's writing. See Gundry, 260.

[35] For the significance of the number of demons see O. Böcher, *Dämonenfurcht und Dämonenabwehr, Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970) 107-116. It also demonstrates that since Jesus is able to learn their name, he has authority to cast them out, Mann, 279.

centurions and officers of a higher rank, to pay exceptional amounts of money for statues, tombs and funerary monuments in their own honor, often spending many times more than their annual salary or the funeral grants given by a grateful city or a burial society to which they subscribed.[36] Expenditures of such exorbitant nature were not made for ostentation alone[37] but reflected the Roman view that the necropolis or "house of the dead" was where eternity was to be spent and that a person without a suitable tomb was doomed to wander as a shade without rest or peace.[38] As Trimalchio says of his monument in Petronius' romance (*Sat* 71), "It is quite wrong for a man to decorate his house while he is alive, and not to trouble about the house where he must make a longer stay."[39]

A Roman necropolis was not a quiet English country setting and what has been assumed to be an exaggerated portrait of hectic confusion in Mk 5:1-20 by modern readers would not have seemed abnormal to the Gentile members of Mark's church. Not only was a Roman city of the dead located directly in the outskirts of populated areas, it was also placed at the junction of major thoroughfares. The location of the cemetery was important because it was expected to be inhabited by the living as well as the dead, it being the solemn duty of the relatives and friends to care for the well being and honor of deceased ancestors. The dead were often supplied with objects which could be used in the afterlife and tubes were inserted into the tombs into which food could be regularly

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[36] R. D. Jones, *The Economy Of The Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, 2nd ed 1982) 78-171. Money was taken out of soldiers' salaries to pay for the funeral expenses of comrades who fell in service. See Toynbee, 55.

[37] Hopkins describes the way in which Roman funeral processions drew attention to family status and honors, 201-202. Cicero complains about the extravagance of the monument of Gaius Figulus, commenting that it was not what Roman ancestors desired and was out of keeping with tradition (*De leg.* 2.25). See n. 49 below.

[38] So F. Cumont, *After Life In Roman Paganism* (N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1922, 2nd ed 1959) 48.

[39] Cited by Cumont, 49.

poured. Funeral banquets were held at the time of death and sacramental meals were observed later to help the deceased along the way in the afterlife.[40] The necropolis was set near to a city so that people could go in and out quickly (as is in implied in Mark 5:14,17,20) and frequently there were gardens and vineyards attached to the area to supply fruit and wine for libations.[41] Considering the number of people and the amount of food which would normally go in and out of a Roman city of the dead it would not be difficult for Mark's readers to visualize the scene which Mark 5:1-20 draws. Keith Hopkin's description of the activity at a Roman necropolis portrays the kind of hubbub which is assumed to lie behind Mark's narrative. Speaking of the major Roman religious festivals for the dead such as the *Parentalia* and the *Lemuria*, Hopkins notes that

> During these festivals, the law-courts and temples were closed, and no public business was done, and special rituals were performed in honor of the dead (Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.533ff. 5.4119ff.). At the *Parentalia* and on other days, relatives traditionally visited the graves of their kin and had a meal at the grave-side. Collective graves...were often provided with adjacent banqueting rooms; elaborate private tombs often had a special area designed for feasting; in the graveyards at Pompeii and Ostia, for example, there are modest family tombs with private courtyards, equipped with stone dining benches, an oven with a well. We have to imagine Roman families picniking *al fresco* at the family tomb,.... Sometimes, the dead were thought of as being present at these feasts.[42]

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[40] Cumont, 53ff.; 199; J. Ferguson, *The Religions Of The Roman Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970) 134ff; Hopkins,41, 233.

[41] Toynbee, 94-98. See Petronius, *Sat* 71.

[42] Hopkins, 233.

Since Romans celebrated the birthday of the deceased and often brought flowers, lamps and incense to the tomb on a regular basis, it is not impossible to assume that Roman cemeteries were constantly busy and filled with mourners and worshippers.[43]

III. SWINE AND ROMAN SACRIFICE

Throughout the history of interpretation of the story of the Geresene demoniac attention has understandably been focused on the exorcism of the demons and their destruction in the herd of pigs and both details have been considered key elements in the narrative. Generally the swine have been understood exclusively as a negative symbol in light of the Jewish abhorrence of ritually unclean animals and the prohibition of eating or sacrificing pigs (Lev- 11:7; Deut 14:8; Is 65:2-4; 66:3,17; 1 Macc 1:47).[44] Frequently it has been assumed that the pigs represent pagan irreligious behavior[45], heathen worship of the demonic or the destructive presence of Rome[46], frightening aspects which can all be annihilated by the powerful intervention of Jesus. Viewed from the other side, as a critical element in Roman religious practice,

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43 See Hopkins, 233-235. Evidence exists to demonstrate that Romans and Christians continued to build tombs and sarcophagi well into the 4th and 5th centuries. For photographs see R.S.O. Tomlin, "The Army Of The Late Empire", *The Roman World*, I, 128, pl. 7.11.

For general studies of Roman burial practices both in the provinces and Italy consult R. Jones, "A Quantitative Approach To Roman Burial", *Burial In The Roman World*, ed R. Reese (London: Council For British Archaeology, 1977) 20-25; G. Davies, "Burial In Italy Up To Augustus", *op. cit.*, 13-19. Also see references to the discoveries in the necropoles in Pompeii and Herculaneum, Brion, 160-173 and the photo on 43, pl. 7.

44 For studies of Old Testament and talmudic concern about pigs as unclean see E. Wiesenberg, "Related Prohibitions: Swine Breeding And The Study Of Greek", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 27(1956) 213-233; Cragan, 529; Pesch, *ER*, 361; Derrett, 12ff.; Annen, 168-181; Kato, 52-53.

45 See, for example, Cragan, 532ff.; Pesch, *ER*,361; Annen, 184ff.

46 In talmudic literature the pig is a symbol of Rome itself, see Wiesenberg, 221.

however, the pigs assume a much different role and point to a more positive significance for Mark and his Gentile readers.

Studies of Roman sacrificial practices demonstrate, for example, that pigs played a prominent role in Roman religious practice from the early days of the Republic.[47] Rather than being considered unclean or demonic they were a necessary part of true piety, and were customary sacrificial animals in Rome.[48] According to Ovid, Ceres was the first divinity in the Roman pantheon to demand the sacrifice of swine (at games in her honor), presumably because the goddess has learned that they routed up growing grain with their snouts in the spring (*Fasti* 1.349).[49] In his play *The Menaechmi* (written ca. 275-270 B.C.), Plautus presents a comic dialogue between two characters in which Menaechmus thinks that the slave cook Cylindrus is a madman (282). Because he assumes mistakenly that the cook is insane he asks him where he can quickly purchase some sound pigs for sacrifice (288) because he wants to purify the domestic at his own expense (*iube te piari de mea pecunia*). Cylindrus cheekily replies that if Menaechus does not recognize him he should take the money and get a porker for himself (313)! Although Plautus is clearly lampooning practices which he considers pretentious and superstitious, his description involves rituals which must have been common enough for theatergoers to recognize and ridicule.

A few years later (ca. 234-149 B.C.), Cato mentions in *De Agri Cultura* that pigs were used in a number of sacrificial offices. He speaks particularly of the *porca praecidanea* (134) which was a

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[47] For general studies of the place of pigs as sacrificial animals in Roman religion and other cultures see B. Brentjes, "Das Schwein als Haustier des alten Orients", *EAZ* 3(1962) 125-138; F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweinopfer im alten Orient", *BZ* 18(1974), 263-271; Annen, 164-165.

[48] See R. Lewinsohn, *Animals, Men And Myths* (N.Y.: Harper And Brothers, 1954) 101; J.M.C. Toynbee, *Animals In Roman Life And Art* (Ithaca:Cornell University Press, 1973) 134; H.H. Scullard, *Festivals And Ceremonies Of The Roman Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981) 23.

[49] Citations from Latin literature are from the Loeb Classical Library unless otherwise indicated.

sacrifice before the harvest when the entrails of the victim were removed and the pig was offered along with cakes and prayers to Janus and Jupiter. The entrails were then presented with a libation to Ceres. Cato also describes the Roman formula to be observed in thinning a grove (139).

> A pig is to be sacrificed (*porco piaculo facito*), and the following prayer uttered:
> 'Whether thou be a god or goddess to whom this grove is dedicated, as it is thy right to receive a sacrifice of a pig for the thinning of this sacred grove, and to this intent, whether I or one at my bidding do it, may it be rightly done. To this end, in offering this pig to thee, I humbly beg that thou wilt be gracious and merciful to me, to my house and household, and to my children. Wilt thou deign to receive this pig which I offer to this end?

Cato further mentions (160) that pigs were also to be offered at the time of the tilling of the ground and illustrates how many would be needed for all of these activities. "So long as the work continues, the ritual must be performed in some part of the land every day; and if you miss a day, or if public or domestic feast days intervene, a new offering must be made."

Of particular interest is Cato's description (161) of a better known sacrifice for purifying the land, the *suovetaurilia*, which incorporated the offering of a pig (*sus*), ram (*ovis*) and a bull (*taurus*)[50] to Mars as a god of agriculture as well as a god of war. Again appealing for mercy in language reminiscent of Mark 5:19, suppliants prayed to Father Mars saying, "I pray and beseech thee that thou be gracious and merciful to me, my house, and my household." Cato says that the sacrifice was also performed with suckling animals to prevent sickness seen and unseen, barrenness

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[50] Compare the famous carving of this sacrifice on the altar of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarus in Scullard, pl. 1; also in *The Roman World*,I, pl. 30.1, 761.

and destruction, ruin, unseasonable influence, to permit harvests, grain, vineyards, plantations and flocks to flourish. When the moment came for the offering to be given the formula used was "To this intent deign to accept the offering of these victims." Cato mentions that if favorable omens were not obtained a second pig, along with a prayer of atonement, was to be given. "Father Mars, if aught hast not pleased thee in the offering of these sucklings, I make atonement with these victims." And if there was still doubt a final offering and supplication should be used, "Father Mars, inasmuch as thou wast not pleased by the offering of that pig, I make atonement with this pig (*te hoc porco piaculo*)."[51]

The practice of the *suovetaurilia* continued into the Christian era, long after Mark's gospel was written. Suetonius mentions the fact that it was given as an offering of purification (*lustrum*) every five years by the censors and was presented by Augustus (*Augustus* 2.97.1) and Tiberius (*Tiberius*,21.1). A carving left by the *legio II Augusta* has been found on the Antonine wall in Britain[52] which shows a Roman soldier on a horse bearing down on a group of barbarians in one panel and a depiction of a celebration of the victory through the sacrifice of a pig, sheep and bull, in another.

According to Terentius Varro (ca. 116-27 B.C.), *Rerum Rusticarum*, the very origin of sacrificial religion can be specifically traced to the offering of a pig (2.4 9). Although his etymology may be questionable, his comments no doubt reflect common sentiment when he writes, "The Greek name for the pig is ὗς, once called θῦς from the verb θύειν, that is 'to sacrifice'; for it seems that at the beginning of making sacrifices they first took the victim from the swine family." He specifically mentions the sacrifice of swine to Ceres, their offering at rites to initiate peace, when a treaty is made and at the beginning of marriage ceremonies

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[51] For discussions of Cato's account see W. W. Fowler, *The Religious Experience Of The Roman People, From The Earliest Times To The Age Of Augustus* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1911) 82, 212; H.J. Rose, *Ancient Roman Religion* (London: Cheltenham Press, Ltd., 1948) 62; Scullard, 17-18; 124.

[52] *The Roman World*, I, pl. 9.7, 221.

of ancient kings. Piglets, he says, are weaned on the tenth day because they are considered "pure" at the time, called *sacres*, then they are first fit for sacrifice (2.4.16).

Varro gives careful advice about the raising of pigs (*porculatio*), weaning, the construction of a proper sty, feeding, how they are trained to come to the sound of a horn, and the normal size of a farmer's herd (100-150 pigs, 300 being extraordinarily large, 2.4.19-22). As an aside, he mentions that religious statues of pigs were common in his day: "There are bronze images of them standing in public places even now, and the body of the sow is exhibited by the priests, having been kept in brine, according to the account" (2.4.18).

Of particular interest for the proper understanding of Mark 5:1-20 is the fact that swine were especially used in Roman religion for sacrifice during a funeral, at a gravesite or a necropolis. As J.M.C. Toynbee writes, "Various statutory regulations had to be complied with on all occasions of death and burial. Only when a pig had been sacrificed was a grave legally a grave."[53] H.J. Rose points out, furthermore, that a grave was in a sense consecrated ground, it was *religiosus*, more or less taboo, and certain rites, including the sacrifice of a pig, were proper in preparing it.[54]

According to Cicero (*De leg*, 2.22.55) the sacrifice of a pig was so common at the gravesite that it was unnecessary to explain when a period of family mourning should end, what the rules were in regard to the obligation to sacrifice a sow, or when the grave first takes on the character of a grave or comes under the protection of religion. Nevertheless, he writes further on (2.22.57), "Yet their places of burial do not become graves until the proper rites are performed and the pig is slain." In a third text Cicero goes on to advise that a family was not held in defilement when a man died at sea and had his body thrown overboard. Yet the sow (its sacrifice) was required of his heir, a holiday of three days had to be kept and expiation made by sacrificing the sow (2.22.57).

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[53] *Death And Burial In The Ancient World*, 50.

[54] Rose, 47. Horace indicates that dead ancestors (*Lares*) can be propitiated by sacrifices which include sucking-pigs, *Odes* 3.23. A boar may also be offered to Diana for young mothers, 3.22.

At the beginning of the section in which this information is provided Cicero makes it clear that there was nothing unclean or irreligious about Roman porcine sacrifice. Instead it was an act of pure religious devotion and commitment to the gods. "Now graves are objects of so much religious veneration that it is considered sinful to bury in them corpses not belonging to the clan or participating in its rites;...." "This whole body of pontifical law shows deep religious feeling and a respect for the solemnity of religious ceremony."[55]

IV. CONCLUSIONS: COMMERCE, PURITY, DEATH AND ATONEMENT

Cicero's sensitive remarks illustrate that from a perspective which would have been known to Roman readers, the story of the Geresene demoniac would not seem unusual, bizarre or comic but instead describes scenes understandable from their own cultural and religious experiences. The survey of Roman practices which used swine in services of atoning sacrifice demonstrates that the swine are not unimportant elements of the story which can be eliminated without narrative loss ; neither does it indicate that the story is unsympathetic to the pigs or their Gentile owners.[56] Varro's comment that a large herd would not normally exceed 300 pigs suggests that Mark's figures may be exaggerated to demonstrate Jesus' superlative power over the demons, but it also shows that

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[55] Other Roman sacrifices of pigs include the expiatory sacrifice of a pregnant sow at the time of an earthquake (*De div* 1.45.101) and the offering in December to Bonna Dea for the promotion of female fertility. For discussion of the latter see R.M. Ogilvie, *The Romans And Their Gods In The Age Of Augustus* (N.Y.:W.W. Norton, 1969) 97-98. Ogilvie also provides excellent summaries of the meaning and practice of Roman sacrifice and the significance of the Roman religious calendar.

Scullard (39) points out that pigs were also sacrificed if a festival day was desecrated by unlawful labor and that the wife of the *Rex Sacrorum* sacrificed a pig or a lamb to Juno in the *Regia* on the 7th or 9th day of each month before the *Ides* (43).

[56] So T.A. Burkill, "Concerning Mark. 5,7 And 5,18-20", *ST* 11(1957), 159; also Vann, 278.

from a Roman perspective the loss would have been considered to be economically disastrous. At the very least, the response of the community (5:17) is understated and unexpectedly polite since the perpetrator of the destruction is merely asked "to depart from the neighborhood". As Fowler notes, domestic animals were valuable property[57], and were expected to be treated as such. In a city with a large necropolis, a Roman garrison, a prosperous commercial center[58] and an established religious base, huge numbers of pigs would have to be kept not only for the purposes of sacrifice but for food for the public and for troops billeted there. What is more, common knowledge about the large amount of food continually coming into a cemetery to honor the dead, as well as the fact that it was a regular practice in Roman sacrifice to burn only the most vital parts of an animal (the liver, heart, kidneys etc.) and to reserve the rest of the victim for the priests and worshippers to consume (1 Cor 9:13)[59], would enable Gentile readers to understand that a man, even a madman, could survive in such a setting.

Since Mark so clearly links the pericope with discipleship themes in vv 19 and 20 (the request of the man to be with Jesus is reminiscent of ἵνα ὦσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ in 3:14) it is likely that he sees the story in light of 8:34 and 10:29-31: following Jesus is a costly business and there are those who will refuse to pay the price. Riches (4:19; 10:22-23), families and property (10:29-30), the world (8:35) and herds of pigs may cause potential believers, Gentiles or Jews, to ignore Jesus' call. People are more important than pigs, and the gospel is certainly far more valuable than swine.

The Roman practice of sacrifice for the dead also indicates that community concern for the madman is not a fantastic element of the story either. Religious taboos and reverence for tradition in a

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[57] Fowler, 179.

[58] Harding points out that during the *Pax Romana* commercial and agricultural development was considerable in the Decapolis (84).

[59] Scullard, 23. Compare Paul's discussion of the propriety of eating meat sacrificed to pagan gods, 1 Cor 8:1-13; 9:1-15. For an analysis of Roman sacramental banquets see R. MacMullen, *Paganism In The Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981) 31-43.

necropolis would require that city leaders try and restrain a man who was desecrating a sacred area. Previous studies of the section of the gospel in which Mark 5:1-20 is found have often concentrated on Jewish purity issues.[60] Usually the story of the Geresene demoniac is understood to indicate that Jesus, by casting the taboo swine into the sea, has decontaminated an unclean Gentile area. But Mark indicates that from Jesus' perspective both sides of the lake are contaminated with their own brands of spiritless ritual.[61] If the story of the woman with the issue of blood (5:24b-34) is primarily concerned with matters involving contamination by being near women who are having menstrual or other gynecological problems[62], and if concerns about ceremonial and real defilement are the focus in Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and scribes in 7:1-23, viewing 5:1-20 from the other side demonstrates that purity issues are involved from a Gentile perspective as well. If Jesus violates Jewish expectations and disregards respected purity regulations by visiting areas where pork is an important commodity, if he makes himself ritually unclean by being in the presence of a bleeding woman (Hisako Kinukawa refers to Jesus as a "boundary breaker" because he stands against the discriminatory practices of Jewish ritual purity codes[63]) , if he challenges the whole notion of keeping utensils and body parts ceremonially clean, he also denigrates the long held Roman belief that one must purify a burial area with the sacrifice of swine. By encountering Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles are faced with a demand to reassess their religious stock. From either side he looks and sounds the same. They are left only with him, his power over evil, and his command to abandon Jewish and Gentile pasts and become disciples now. The proper response, in Mark's view, is not

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[60] See the excellent discussion of purity issues from religious perspectives in Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World, Insights From Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta:John Knox Press, 1981) 122-152.

[61] For a discussion of Mark's challenge to purity concepts in 5:1-20 see LaHurd, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990) 158.

[62] See Hisako Kinukawa, *Women And Jesus In Mark, A Japanese Feminist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994).

[63] See Kinukawa, 47.

to be scandalized by Jesus (6:4), to mock his ability to deal with the dead (5:35-43), to challenge the untraditional practices of his disciples (7:5) or ask him to get out of the neighborhood (5:17), but to allow oneself to be transformed by him, be freed from oppressive demons and religious practices, live a new life, and proclaim the gospel to friends and neighbors.

A final point may be made about the conclusion of the story in 5:17-20 and Mark's comment in v. 20 in particular where it is indicated that the healed man "preached" about his experience throughout the Decapolis. Here there is no secret about Jesus' identity or what he has done since his activities are a matter of public debate in the area. Throughout his gospel Mark indicates that Gentiles are a part of Jesus' concern from the beginning[64] and that 5:1-20 is not the first miracle which he performs for them (3:7-11), anymore than it is the last (7:24-30; 7:31-37). The key phrases in v. 19 concern what the Lord has done (ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν) and how he has had mercy on him (ἠλέησέν σε). In v 20 he preaches what Jesus has accomplished (καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, cf. 3:8 and 7:37).

Insights into the Roman imagery which stands behind the pericope make it possible to move away from fruitless attempts to unravel the so-called Messianic secret to a more substantial exploration of the significance of religious practices in Gentile mission. As the context of 5:1-20 indicates, Mark has sandwiched the story of the Geresene demoniac into a section of the gospel which is primarily concerned with the concept of death. In 4:35-41 the account of the storm at sea signifies that the disciples are so afraid that they wonder why Jesus does not care that they are about to perish (4:38).[65] In the double narrative which follows (5:21-

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[64] Annen argues that the debate about the origin of Gentile mission was centered in the pre-Markan tradition (51, 185-190). Kato contends that Mark shows Jesus limiting mission to the pagans until after the crucifixion (44-63, 188-197).

[65] As Pesch observes, the sea is often a symbol of the abyss (*ER*, 365,367); also M. Lubetski, "New Light On Old Seas", *JQR* 57 (1977) 65-77; Malbon, *JBL* 103(1984) 376-377.

5:43), Jewish bystanders scornfully disdain Jesus' ability to raise the dead (5:35-43). As Mark McVann points out, 5:1-20 is an integral part of the Markan sea-cycle (4:35-5:43) which demonstrates Jesus' power over death no matter how it manifests itself. "This pattern of overcoming death and transforming life is repeated four times in the sea-cycle. Although each exposure of the theme is taken from a different angle, the focus is consistently on Jesus as the only one who can save. Jesus' power over the forces of death and the settings on and by the sea combine to unify the cycle not only topographically but structurally and thematically as well."[66] Death, the ultimate uncleanness [to Jews and Gentiles] is now banished from the tomb-dwelling demoniac and by being driven into the swine is itself destroyed in the waters of chaos and death which Jesus has already destroyed.[67]

To a Roman reader, sacrificing swine for the dead was an act of piety which generated atoning power and guaranteed the deceased a smooth transition to the afterlife. From such a perspective Mk 5:1-20 might serve the same function as 11:12-19 does for the Jews. If the story of the cleansing of the Temple presents to the Jews the unimaginable prospect that the Temple, its economic basis (tables of the money-changers) and its sacrificial system (pigeons, cf. 15:38), is to be overthrown by Jesus through his crucifixion (15:29,30,38), so 5:1-20 suggests to the Gentile reader living in the Roman Empire that the revered and traditional sacrifices for atonement and preparation for the next life will also be replaced by Jesus' one atoning death. That Gentiles are amazed by Jesus' actions and claims (5:15,17,20) is no more surprising than his rejection by the Jews (5:35,42; 6:4-6; 7:6-8; 12:12-13,17). The church must prepare for the fact that some people will respond to the word and some will not (4:13-20). As the gospel is preached to all the nations (13:10) it may even take on different forms (ὕπαγε

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[66] Mark McVann, "Destroying Death: Jesus in Mark and Joseph in "The Sin Eater" ", in *The Daemonic Imagination* 124.

[67] McVann, 126.

εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σούς, 5:19).[68] The basic message, however, remains the same: from now on atonement can only be achieved by Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead (Rom 10:7-10; 1 Cor 2:2; Rom 1:16; 3:23-25, 29-30). Jesus, as the one true sacrifice to God, will indeed create a house of prayer for all cultures of the world (11:17) but the old systems must be cast out and nations and individuals alike must deny themselves and take up the cross (8:34).

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[68] In 5:18 the healed man wants to go with Jesus but he is denied. Cf. Paul's assertion that the gospel has different formats in different cultures, 1 Cor 9:12, 20-23.