

JESUS THE HEALER IN THE GOSPELS, THE *ACTS OF THE APOSTLES*, AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY*

Abstract. This paper argues that the Gospels and *Acts of the Apostles* contain sustained and substantial punning on the name of ‘Jesus’ as ‘healer’ and explores the implications for the following: the interpretation and appreciation of these texts, including the question of whether (if at all) they function as Classical texts and the consequences of an affirmative (however qualified): present-day Classicists should be able to ‘speak to them’, and they in turn should ‘respond’ to such Classical addresses, to the benefit not only of New Testament scholarship but also of Classicists, who at a stroke acquire five major new texts; the constituent traditions of these texts; the formation, teaching, mission, theology, and political ideology of the early Jesus movement, and its participation in a wider, public, partly textual, and political debate about the claims of Christianity; and the healing element of the historical Jesus’ ministry.

Key words: Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, historiography, biography, name puns, Jesus, healing, resurrection, anti-Judaism (‘anti-Semitism’)

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* ‘Early’ = before ca. 110 CE (my outside limit for the *Acts of the Apostles*). Versions of this paper were given at the Newcastle Classics Research Seminar (19/01/2011) and Manchester Erhardt Seminar (24/02/2011). I thank: all who commented at the seminars; Professor George Brooke for tending and good advice; Professors John Barclay, Todd Penner and Heather Vincent and the anonymous *Histos* readers for comments on various written versions, and Todd Penner for a copy of a forthcoming paper; Professor Martin Karrer for copies of two of his papers; and, for help of various kinds, Professors Mark Goodacre, Robert Hayward and John Marincola, Drs Livia Capponi, Andrew Gregory, Justin Meggitt, Thomas Rütten, Federico Santangelo and Rowland Smith, and Mrs Jennifer Wilkinson of the Newcastle Medical School. Naturally, I take full responsibility for a literary exegesis which has historical aspects; for those (including myself) interested in theological matters, it surely also has theological (or, possibly, anti-theological [n. 42]) implications, but these are irrelevant to *Histos*. Translations (except Simonetti (2001)) are mine. For reasons of bulk, much of the treatment involves paraphrase; readers should consult full texts. Bibliography and annotations are correspondingly restricted, numerous corners/roads cut. The Greek text is Nestle and Aland (2001).

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1 Contextualisations

These are partly for readers new to the field, partly to delineate positions on basics. While the main analysis stands or falls on its own merits, these questions inevitably affect more detailed reconstructions. Informed readers (and doubtless others) may avert their gaze until p. 125.

1.1 Jesus the Healer

Within the writings of NT scholars, of 'historical Jesus' scholars and of Christian theologians, 'healing' is seen as one of the central components of Jesus' ministry, and, often, as its defining characteristic (Jesus' 'healing ministry' is a summary formula, in English, as in other languages). On the basic facts, few scholars doubt that Jesus had a big contemporary *reputation* as a healer, and recent scholarship emphasises that much of his healing falls within the capacities of traditional healers, especially very gifted ones, as Jesus certainly was.¹ Physical healings are of course implicated in much larger religious perspectives, most of which appear in this paper.

'Healing' powers are also attributed to Jesus' disciples, to Paul in the next generation, and to Christian saints down the ages. Jesus' healings were competitively imitated by pagans—seemingly as early as by Vespasian in 69/70,² certainly (I would say—many would not) by the time of Philostratus'

¹ Cf. e.g. Vermes (1973) 58–82; Sanders (1993) 132–68; Theissen and Merz (1998) 296–315; Dunn (2003) 667–96; Casey (2010) 237–79; Eve (2008); (2009); Cotter (2010); Perrin (2010) 149–82; Theissen (2010); Penner (2011).

² *Mark* 8.22–26; Tac. *Hist.* 4.81; Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2; Dio 65.8; Eve (2008) and (2009) 44–46 argues the reverse: Mark attributed spitting to Jesus to contrast Jesus' true messianic powers with Vespasian's false ones. That contrast is available anyway, but since Jesus' spit seems authentic (see e.g. Dunn (2003) 683 n. 323; Casey (2010) 270), the influence should go from Jesus to Vespasian and his propagandists, especially given their physical location and exposure to Jewish messianic thinking (begun in Neronian Rome—p. 123);

third-century representation of the first-century pagan holy man, Apollonius of Tyana. By a peculiar historical irony, the first great Roman persecutor of Christians, the emperor Nero, enjoyed several *Nachleben*, as Jesus' healing resurrection spawned (it seems) a series of *Nerones redivivi*.³ The sudden first-century emphasis, within the Hippocratic tradition of medicine, on ethical healing might owe something to the impact of Christian healing.⁴ Once Rome became Christian, Jesus' healing acquired a status parallel to that of the Hippocratics. He also became celebrated as a 'physician of the soul', therein surpassing pagan philosophers. Conversely, Julian the Apostate maintained the overwhelming superiority of the pagan healing god Asclepius.⁵ Jesus-like healing powers have been attributed to—or claimed by—charismatic Christians down to the present day. Thus, for better or for worse, Jesus' 'healing' is fundamental to Christianity.

1.2 The Texts: the Gospels and the *Acts of the Apostles*

The earliest *extant* written sources for Jesus' 'healing ministry' are the canonical Gospels (a term I discuss below), *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*,⁶ the sequel to *Luke* which relates the growth of the Jesus movement after the crucifixion of Jesus (c. CE 30)⁷ until Paul's arrival and two-year stay in Rome (*Acts* 28.30), before his own martyrdom (somewhere in the period 62–64).⁸ There are possibilities of *lost* written sources (below).

1.2.1 Generic Questions

Classicists might naturally read the Greek-language Gospels and *Acts* as falling into the categories of historiography or biography—or, certainly, historical writing of some sort (given the enormous elasticity of that Greek and Roman category). Within the specialist scholarship, however, there is much debate about their genre. Many hold that 'Gospels' are *sui generis* and that

that this entails at least some fabrication in the biography and historiography of Vespasian is a bonus, not a problem, for our understanding of Flavian tradition. Penner (2011) takes the Vespasianic material straight.

³ Wright (2003) 68, 720.

⁴ This possibility was raised by Thomas Rütten. I cannot assess it medically but do not think it *a priori* implausible (n. 21).

⁵ Appendix 2.

⁶ The traditional title (abbreviated to *Acts*), whose authenticity is disputed. I use it for convenience (while believing it authentic).

⁷ Detailed dating controversies about Jesus' biography do not affect this paper; recent discussion: Humphreys (2011) 61–79; 93–94.

⁸ The ending of *Acts* is controversial; see p. 158 below.

Christians invented the form, as a Christian counter to imperial ‘good news’, in order to propagate the ‘gospel/good news [εὐαγγέλιον] of Jesus Christ’ (‘of’ meaning both ‘about’ and ‘announced by’).⁹ But strong cases can be made: that the Gospels generally are (primarily) to be classified as Classical biographies,¹⁰ especially given the non-existence of Jewish rabbinic biography,¹¹ though the nature of their subject matter puts them in competition with their pagan equivalents; that *Luke* and *Acts*, by the same author (*Acts* 1.1), form a unity (a ‘double-work’);¹² and that *Luke-Acts* is a work of historiography that incorporates biography and individual-orientated historiography (and, indeed, other genres such as various types of philosophical work).¹³

None of this confines any of these texts to generic strait-jackets, a point that needs emphasis, since, in this area, as in others, NT scholarship—in contrast to comparable recent Classical scholarship¹⁴—characteristically operates with excessively tight generic models. The hypothesised ‘natural assumption’ of Classicists—that all these texts fall into the broad category of Classical historiography—finds support in the Preface to *Luke*, which not only aligns that text with (Classical) Greek historiography but also impresses other Gospels (*sic*) into the same genre.¹⁵ For the separate classification of ‘Gospels’ is indeed viable (cf. *Mark* 1.1), provided it is taken to mean ‘also Gospels’.

⁹ E.g. Barton (2006); Edwards (2006).

¹⁰ Burrige (1992); Frickenschmidt (1997); Keener (2009) 73–84.

¹¹ Alexander (1984); Philo’s *Life of Moses*, however, is an important and neglected Judaeo-Greek forerunner: McGing (2006).

¹² *Acts* 1.1; Talbert (1974); Keener (2009) 85–94; separatists remain: Parsons and Pervo (1993); Gregory and Rowe (2010); Dupertuis and Penner (2012); Moles (2011), (2012) and the present paper assume, but also, I think, support, unity. For those who reject it, the papers may at least show, I hope, that the writer of *Acts* was a very good reader of *Luke* (though in my view because he wrote it).

¹³ Keener (2009) 85–94; Moles (2012). For a ‘non-Classical’ classification of the Gospels see now Troiani (2011) 115.

¹⁴ Kraus (1999); McGing and Mossman (2006); Marincola (2007); Miller and Woodman (2010).

¹⁵ *Luke* 1.1–4 ‘Since indeed many have set their hand to draw up a narrative guide about the things done which have been brought to fulfilment among us, (2) just as those who became eyewitnesses from the beginning and servants of the word handed them along to us, (3) it seemed good to me also, having followed all of them closely from the up, to write them down for you in order, most powerful Theophilos, (4) so that you may additionally know/experience/recognise the truth/security/safety/un-slipperiness about the words in which you have been orally instructed’; of endless discussion of this (dense, complicated and extremely Classical) preface see e.g. Cadbury (1922); Alexander (1993); Moles (2011); (2012). I intend a general treatment.

1.2.2 Readerships/Audiences

There is much debate, too, about the projected readership(s) or audience(s) of these texts. For Classicists, an important question is: does the readership or audience include, at least in an ideal sense, non-Christians and non-Jews? The very recourse to written texts written in Greek and in at least serviceable Greek (or, sometimes, certainly in the case of *Luke-Acts*, far better), and to texts which envisage certainly some readers,¹⁶ and the choice of Classical generic ‘packaging’, seem to open up this possibility, especially as Christians early became committed to evangelisation that included Gentiles, and even, at least theoretically, that extended to the ends of the earth (*Matthew* 28.19; *Luke* 24.47; *Acts* 1.8).

The weight given these various considerations is obviously affected by the degree to which one supposes Jews, both in the various parts of Palestine and in the various countries of the Diaspora, to have been Hellenised, a question which remains highly controversial, and by one’s views on the speed and geographical distribution both of the general advance of Christianity¹⁷ and of the so-called ‘Parting(s) of the Ways’ between Judaism and Christianity, both also highly controversial questions and far beyond the scope of this paper.

Few scholars have positively argued the possibility of the texts’ including non-Christians and non-Jews in their projected readership/audience, but already in the second century some educated pagans *were* reading some of these texts,¹⁸ which must mean something. ‘Classical’ elements beyond basic

¹⁶ *Mark* 13.14; *Luke* 1.3; *John* 21.24–25 ‘this is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true. (25) But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I do not think that the world itself could contain the books that would be written’. ‘Reading’ is important because it maximises both audience and interpretative complexity; but ‘reading’ and ‘orality’/‘aurality’ are compatible, since even ancient private readers mostly read aloud (apparently), and the Gospels and *Luke-Acts* are also Christian ‘performance texts’.

¹⁷ How far there is a unified phenomenon is massively controversial; brief remarks on p. 170; the term ‘Christians’ is also one-sided and anachronistic, since it was applied to Jesus’ followers by others, including Romans (*Acts* 11.26; *Tac. Ann.* 15.44.2; *1 Peter* 4.16), and not adopted by Christians before the second century. It is also misleading, in obscuring the complete Jewishness of the first generation and the still substantial Jewishness of the next generations. It remains fast and convenient.

¹⁸ Crook (1993); (1994); (2000); (2010); König (2006); note also the widespread interest in resurrection (or similar phenomena) in pagan Imperial literature (Bowersock [1994] 99–113).

genre have also been argued for all of them;¹⁹ and I believe that *Luke-Acts* in particular contains enough ‘Classical’ material to suggest that it is partly designed to ‘hook’ educated pagans. Obviously, that claim cannot be substantiated here, though *Acts* 17 may stand as a test case.²⁰ Obviously, too, one could argue a less strong version of this case: these texts both commemorate and implicitly commend certain behaviours towards non-Christians and non-Jews. Thus, again, *Acts* 17 has often been read (rightly) as a ‘how-to-talk-to-Greek-philosophers’ guide. On any view, therefore, these texts are partly about ‘converting pagans’ and attest Christians’ desire to ‘speak to’ pagans.

1.2.3 Christian Historiography and Jewish and Pagan Historiography

There is, then, a theoretical possibility that (some of) these texts were designed (partly) to function within a wider, public, and partly textual debate about the claims of Christianity. That possibility is strengthened, if one thinks that after Jesus’ death (some) Romans were quick to inform themselves about the continuing Jesus, or Christ, movement,²¹ reaching generally hostile conclusions (requiring rebuttal), and, if allowed, the possibility further increases the importance of our topic. And, given the texts’ generic status as works of (to some degree) ‘Classical’ biography and historiography, that larger public, partly textual debate comes to include—at some point—the Jewish historian Josephus, the Roman historian Tacitus, the Roman biographer Suetonius, and the Greek satirist and biographer Lucian, all of whom reference Christianity.²² Certainly, these writers mostly postdate the Christian texts under discussion, but this is perhaps not true in all cases,²³ and at least they show that Christianity, theme of Christian historiography and biography, quite rapidly gained some attention in their Jewish and pagan counter-

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Pervo (1987); MacDonald (2000); (2003); Alexander (2006/7); Moles (2006b); Lang (2008); Moles (2011); (2012).

²⁰ P. 153.

²¹ ‘(Some) Romans’ = both the Roman authorities (in various places) and ordinary Romans (in various places); recent survey: Crook (2010); also Moles (forthcoming).

²² Jos. *AJ*. 18.63–64; 20.9.1; Tac. *Ann.* 15.44.2–5; *fr.* 2; Suet. *Claud.* 25.4; *Nero* 16.2; Lucian, *Peregrinus* (with König (2006)). Probably a majority of scholars accept a Josephan core at *AJ* 18.63–64, a Tacitean core at *fr.* 2, and the relevance of Suet. *Claud.* 25.4, in all cases, I believe, rightly; discussion: Moles (forthcoming).

²³ Following Mason (2005) 250–93, and with additional arguments, I think the author of *Luke-Acts* had read Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* (CE 93). That *Acts* is a second-century text is quite a popular view (see e.g. Dupertuis–Penner (2012)), usually involving a claim of the *disunity* of *Luke-Acts* (n. 12). My own view is that the unified *Luke-Acts* was written by ‘Luke the beloved physician’ (pp. 123–4, n. 29; p. 163) in ca. 105 at the end of a long life.

parts. This must surely also apply to attested but lost earlier works of Classical historiography and biography which covered the same material as Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius.

There is also the possibility, little known among NT scholars, that a text of a different, but not entirely unrelated, Classical genre, Petronius' *Satyricon* (not later than CE 65), alludes not to the text of *Mark* (which I regard as chronologically impossible—see below) but to the *story* of Jesus' Passion.²⁴ Such knowledge, at Nero's court, is utterly likely. Nero's wife, Poppaea, was a 'God-fearer' (Gentile follower of Judaism); before Paul's trial 'what has happened to me has eventuated to the advance of the gospel, so that my bonds are clearly known to the whole Praetorium and to all the rest as being for Christ' (*Philippians* 1.12–13 [written in Rome]);²⁵ and Paul defended himself before Nero.²⁶

1.2.4 Authorships and Places of Writing

The much-disputed questions of authorships and places of writing do not concern us (subsequent references to 'Matthew' et al. can be taken as merely traditional and convenient), except for three factors. First, there is the question of whether these texts are (at least primarily) 'community texts' (the majority view), or whether they (also) envisage an 'international' Christian audience or readership.²⁷ Clearly, the latter possibility becomes even more plausible, if they are (also) targeting pagans. Clearly, too, even the rather limited degree of traffic between the texts allowed by the modern consensus on the source picture (below) supports this possibility. Second, Bauckham has recently re-emphasised, with (for me) compelling arguments, that the Gospels and *Acts* represent themselves as being the products of eyewitness testimony.²⁸ Third, there is the question of whether Luke's emphasis (greater than that of any of the other Evangelists) on Jesus' 'healing' reflects his own identity: if, that is, he is Luke 'the beloved physician' of *Colossians* 4.14, as

²⁴ Ramelli (1996), critiqued by Courtney (2001) 121 n. 67 (there is actually a large Italian bibliography on this and similar possibilities); the refinement of allusions to story, not text, protects the hypothesis; noteworthy also is the allusion to Jesus in the Syriac Letter of the Stoic Mara bar Sarapion to his son (19), of which the dramatic (and, if the letter is genuine, actual) date is 73: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/mara.html>.

²⁵ Cf. 4.22 'all the holy ones greet you, especially those from Caesar's household'.

²⁶ *Acts* 27.24, with Lane Fox (1986) 430–32.

²⁷ Bauckham (1998).

²⁸ Bauckham (2006); multiple reviews in *JSHJ* 6.2 (2008); *NV* 6.3 (2008); for Bauckham, they *are* the products of such testimony (hence, for Bauckham, reliable); for me, it is enough—and important—if they so *represent* themselves.

Christian tradition has generally maintained since about the middle of the second century.²⁹

1.2.5 Datings and Relative Chronology

Most scholars rightly hold that *Matthew*, *Luke-Acts*, and *John* post-date, by some considerable time (fifteen years or more), the Romans' capture of Jerusalem and their destruction of the Temple in 70,³⁰ and that *Mark* falls within the period 66–73, with particularly strong arguments for c. 70.³¹ *Mark*'s priority is further supported by the 'Two-source Hypothesis' (which is widely, though not universally, accepted): namely, that *Matthew* and *Luke* follow (at least largely) *Mark* and a second, hypothetical, sayings and anecdotes source (or sources) of the 50s or 40s, dubbed 'Q' (German 'Quelle') by modern scholarship. Any Classicist who believes in *Quellenforschung* and 'runs the parallels' would (I believe) find this hypothesis convincing, although it admits variations, gradations and loose ends.³² The subsidiary question of whether Q ever existed in Jesus' own language of Aramaic³³ need hardly concern us. That there were written *narratives* about Jesus before *Mark* remains a minority hypothesis, for which there are interesting arguments,³⁴ but which little affects the present paper.

Most scholars put *John* at, or near, the end of the sequence. Whether John has read all, or any, of the so-called Synoptics/'seeable-togethers'³⁵ (*Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*) is disputed; I accept the arguments for his having read *Mark* and *Matthew*.³⁶ However, I hold the minority view that *Luke-Acts* comes at the end, hence that Luke has read *John*, as well as the others.³⁷ That positioning is not essential to the analysis, although *Luke-Acts* contains the richest exploitation of our theme, which might reflect not only Luke's own qualities as a writer and religious thinker but also his having read all the

²⁹ Not the only argument: cf. n. 168.

³⁰ E.g. Davies and Allison (1988) 131–38; Brown (1999) 216–17; 273–74; Lampe (1984).

³¹ Brown (1999) 163–64; Telford (1999) 12–13; Boring (2006) 14–15; Collins (2007) 11–14; I cannot accept the very low date (ca. 40) argued for by Casey (2010) 71–74, following Crossley (2004).

³² See e.g. Davies and Allison (1988) 98–114; Keener (2009) 131–32.

³³ As e.g. Casey (2002).

³⁴ E.g. Allison (2010) 392–423.

³⁵ The term refers in the first instance to the fact that the parallels between these three Gospels can be 'seen together' in parallel columns.

³⁶ See e.g. Barrett (1978) 15–17, 42–46.

³⁷ *Luke* 1.1–3 'since indeed many have set their hand to draw up a narrative guide ... it seemed good to me also ...'; Gregory (2006).

others. Both for these reasons, and for reasons of balance and proportion, *Luke-Acts* is here treated last. Some details of the analysis seem (to me) to make better sense if it really is last.

NT scholarship has little acknowledged the possibility of competitive intertextuality among these texts, but, unless one takes an implausibly reverential attitude to their writers or to Christianity itself, such a scenario is itself natural, largely consistent with the relative chronology and with the indications of who has read whom, and implicit alike in Matthew's expansions and corrections of earlier material and in editorial remarks made both by John and by Luke.³⁸

1.2.6 Oral Traditions

Thus far, texts. Some prominent recent scholarship, however, has emphasised the role of continuing oral traditions about Jesus and their supposed influence upon the surviving written texts.³⁹ There must have been such traditions and some influence of this kind, but it seems insufficient to disturb the main patterns of written interaction, which leave little room for other material.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is of course sometimes legitimate—even in a paper such as this—to raise the questions of what 'outside' knowledge (from whatever sources) readers (or, some readers) might be presumed (or reconstructed) to possess, and of how that knowledge might affect their reception of the texts, just as it is also legitimate to use the texts to reconstruct wider religious debates and perspectives, though at some point the latter process will exceed the *Histos* guidelines.⁴¹ I have stretched these a little in this case, because the topic is so important and has so many different aspects.

1.3 Name Puns in Classical Literature and Culture

Much scholarship over the last four decades has demonstrated the importance of puns and name puns in Classical societies, cultures and literatures, including historiography and biography. If individual cases and limits may obviously be debated, the general phenomenon is indisputable. Of the many levels on which such punning works, I cite four relevant to this paper. First,

³⁸ Sim (2011); *Luke* 1.1–3 (n. 15); *John* 21.24–5 (n. 16).

³⁹ E.g. Dunn (2003); Bauckham (2006); Keener (2009) 138–61.

⁴⁰ Sensible remarks in Eve (2009) 87–89. Classicists may compare the problematics—and limited explanatory power—of orality in Homeric and Herodotean scholarship.

⁴¹ Viz: 'it is not our intention to publish material which is per se historical, unless it illuminates the qualities of ancient historians or biographers (this will be a matter of balance and judgment)'.

bilingual punning is common. Second, it is not necessary for a word or name to interact with a cognate: a synonym or synonymous phrase suffices. I call this phenomenon ‘punning by synonym’. Both these phenomena are illustrated by ‘suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit’ (Horace, *Epodes* 16.2), where ‘Roma’ glosses Greek *ῥώμη* = strength, and ‘Roma’/*ῥώμη* interacts with ‘viribus’ = ‘strength’. Third, divine names are enormously significant and can have (or be understood to have) more than one meaning. Fourth, punning can be assisted by assonance or alliteration, though it requires neither. Punning in Classical historiography (and biography) naturally works in similar ways to that in other genres, but it may be even more organic and sustained, and etymological name punning may be particularly linked to the construction of genealogies and of early history.⁴²

1.4 Names and Puns in the Jewish World

The above remarks about punning in the Classical world apply just as much to the Jewish world. Names are extensively punned on in the Hebrew Bible. ‘As his name is, so is he’ (*1 Samuel* 25.24).⁴³ Names can obviously be very significant and punned on in the Gospels and *Acts* (‘thou art Peter’, etc.), which, as we have seen, are themselves also (to some extent) Classical texts.

Furthermore, in studying personal names in the Gospels, Bauckham has recently claimed: ‘Names are a valuable resource for ancient historians, but one of which New Testament scholars have made relatively little use.’ And: ‘Onomastics (the study of names) is a significant resource for assessing the origins of Gospel traditions.’⁴⁴

⁴² Huge bibliography, e.g. Woodhead (1928); Wiseman (1974); Cairns (1979) 90 ff.; Snyder (1980); Ahl (1985); Maltby (1991); (1993); (2003); O’Hara (1996); Woodman and Martin (1996) 491–92; Paschalis (1997); Harrison (1998) 37 and n. 144; 38 and nn. 146–47; Moles (1998) 106 n. 14; 117–119, 134, 143, 153–59, 166, 168 n. 111; (2002) 44–47; (2007b) 253, 256, 259, 260 n. 80, 262, 264, 267; (2010) 32, 34–35, 38; Michalopoulos (2001); Peraki-Kyriakidou (2002); Lateiner (2005); Booth and Maltby (2006); Hinds (2006); Henderson (2007); Irwin (2007); Elliott (2009); there is also a massive bibliography on punning and related sound effects in comic authors; on the general theory and a history of scholarship see also Attardo (1994). I thank Heather Vincent for expertise in this area. Some at Manchester registered unease at the term ‘pun’. I use it as short, broad, and (unlike ‘paronomasia’) instantly comprehensible. There is no implication of triviality or of ‘mere word play’: quite the reverse (though grounds for Christian anxiety remain; possible alleviation on p. 171). Like Irwin (2007) 46 and n. 13, I am unconcerned with terminological exactitude or analytical precision, and think this pragmatic laxity appropriate to the topic.

⁴³ Surveys: Metzger and Coogan (1993) 545–59; Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman (1998) 582–86.

⁴⁴ Bauckham (2006) 67, 84.

These principles must be right (however controversial Bauckham's use of them). But what if their single most crucial application is to the central figure of the NT?

1.5 The Name of Jesus; Factors Favouring the Pun on 'Jesus' ~ 'Healer'

The Palestinian Jewish Jesus bore the very popular name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ('Joshua'), which means something like 'Yahweh [or 'Yah'—shortened form] saves'.⁴⁵ The Jewish-Greek *form* of the name, found in the NT, is Ἰησοῦς , whence our 'Jesus'. Bilingual and etymological puns on the meaning of 'Joshua'/' Ἰησοῦς as 'Yahweh saves', alike in the Gospels and *Acts* (as we shall see), and in the letters of Paul and of others in the NT, are clear and acknowledged in some of the more linguistically alert scholarship.⁴⁶ But there is a crucial additional factor: Jews who bore the name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ and wanted a straight Greek equivalent chose Ἰάσων (Ionic form Ἰήσων , modern 'Jason'): an equivalence attested in official and governmental contexts.⁴⁷ This Greek name actually means 'healer' (~ ἰάομαι) and readily produces etymological puns.⁴⁸ Jews who adopted Greek names generally tried to adopt ones nearest in form and meaning to the original. So not only do Ἰησοῦς , the Greek-Jewish form of 'Joshua' and the name of a renowned Jewish 'healer', and Ἰάσων , the Greek form of Ἰησοῦς /'Joshua' and a name which actually means 'healer', look similar and mean similar things: from a Hellenistic Jewish perspective, they are actually the same name, as any Jew with a modicum of Greek would have known.⁴⁹ For us it is of course completely immaterial in this sort of context whether they are *actually* the same name.

There are also wider considerations. Not only was 'healing' by Ἰησοῦς a central part of his ministry, there was a much larger Jewish healing context in the period.⁵⁰ Solomon had a great first-century reputation as a healer (Jos.

⁴⁵ Cf. e.g. Williams (1995) 87; Karrer (1998) 47; (2000) 255. The precise meaning is in fact unclear, but the availability of 'Yahweh saves' is validated alike by the Gospels and *Acts* themselves, as we shall see, and by glosses both in other early Christian writers (nn. 46 and 86) and in Jewish writers (Karrer (1998) 47 n. 76); on the commonest male names among Palestine Jews in the period 330 BCE–200 CE see Bauckham (2006) 85–88; Joshua/Jesus is sixth; Diasporan patterns are significantly different: Bauckham (2006) 73.

⁴⁶ E.g. Karrer (1998) 46–48; it remains true that many very distinguished NT scholars often miss this pun even in clamant contexts.

⁴⁷ See Cohen (1984) 46–48; Williams (1995) 87; Jews and Greek names generally: Williams (1995); (1998) 113; Bauckham (2006) 83.

⁴⁸ E.g. Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.119, 270; Braswell (1988) 370–72; Mackie (2001).

⁴⁹ As we shall see, this factor is crucial to the interpretation of *Acts* 17: p. 153 below.

⁵⁰ Vermes (1973) 59–63; Casey (2010) 244–45.

Ant. 8.45). The Essenes—frequent comparators of Jesus in modern scholarship—were celebrated as healers (*Jos. B.Ĵ.* 2.136), which their very name may mean.⁵¹ While ‘Therapeutae’, the name of the Egyptian Jewish women philosophers, probably means ‘attendants’,⁵² both the Jewish Philo (*Vit. contempl.* 2) and the Christian Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.16–17) readily connect it with ‘healing’ (which the Therapeutai certainly practised). A few years after Jesus, the Galilaean charismatic Hanina ben Dosa performed similar healings to Jesus’.⁵³ The Qumran community (pre-68 CE) expected an ‘anointed one’ who would ‘restore sight to the blind, straighten the bent ..., heal the wounded, and give life to the dead’ (4Q521, 2.1, 8, 12).⁵⁴ The ‘healing’ of Ἰησοῦς is thus writ all the larger, because he was certainly the greatest Jewish ‘healer’ of the time, and because from the Christian point of view, from the very beginning, and ever afterwards, he was the greatest healer of any race or culture at any time.

Obviously, the possibility of punning on the ‘healing’ aspect of Jesus’ name is encouraged by the simple facts that the name of Jesus in its Jewish-Greek form was vitally important from the start to Christians who operated in Greek (‘in the name of Jesus’, etc.),⁵⁵ and that the NT is—through its very use of Greek—propounding a to some extent Hellenised Jesus. And where better to look for such punning than in Classical *biographies* of Jesus?

The further potentialities of the names also intrigue. The names Ἰάσων and Ἰησοῦς have similar divine associations. Not only does Ἰάσων, the Greek form of Ἰησοῦς, itself the Jewish-Greek form of ‘Joshua’, mean ‘healer’, but it derives from the pagan goddess of healing who is called Ἰάσω (Ἰήσω in Ionic).⁵⁶ Thus on the Greek side Ἰάσων is a human name derived from a god’s: a theophoric name, just as on the Jewish side יְהוֹשֻׁעַ is a human name derived from ‘Yahweh’. Furthermore, for the early Christians, this Ἰησοῦς is in some sense, and to some degree, himself a divine figure.⁵⁷ There is also a simple matter of sound. Ἰησοῦς, Ἰάσων and Ἰάσω not only look very similar:

⁵¹ Vermes (1973) 59–63.

⁵² Taylor (2003) 55–73.

⁵³ Casey (2010) 245.

⁵⁴ Dunn (2003) 669; Casey (2010) 272.

⁵⁵ Heitmüller (1903); Hartman (1997); Dunn (2009) 188–9.

⁵⁶ *LSJ* s.v.; *RE* IX.1 (1914) 758–59.

⁵⁷ Jesus’ exact divine status in our various texts (and in the rest of the NT) is a very vexed issue: recently, Dunn (2010). I believe my material provides new arguments for a very ‘high’ Christology from very early on. See p. 170. Of course, the question cannot be dissociated from that of the historical Jesus’ self-perception: also, of course, hugely controversial.

they sound very similar. And the sound of names is very important.⁵⁸ There is also a matter of extended meaning. There can be important links between ‘saving’, the basic meaning of ‘Joshua’, undeniably punned on in the NT, and ‘healing’, both at the levels of the divine and the quasi-divine and alike in medical, religious/social and political contexts. Given these links and the sound factor, one even wonders whether the many Greek speakers who knew that the Jewish god was denoted by ‘Yahweh’ or ‘Yah’ could also ‘hear’ both Ἰησοῦς and Ἰάσων as ‘Yah saves’ directly, because –σοῦς and –σων could evoke σώζω and σῶς, and whether bilingual speakers could even regard the Greek σώζω and the Hebrew verb⁵⁹ as cognates.

Another important linguistic factor is that by our period the commonest Greek translation—even transliteration—of Yahweh is Ἰάω (‘Iao’),⁶⁰ which is instantly connectable by Greek-speakers to the verb ἰάομαι. ‘Healing’ is indeed one of Yaweh’s/Iao’s key attributes.⁶¹ An interesting example from the Hebrew Bible is *Exodus* 15.26: ‘For I am Yahweh [thus the Hebrew] the one that heals you’, where the latter phrase is rendered in the Septuagint by the participle ἰώμενος, and where there must be a bilingual etymological association (which must have been perceived by the translators) between Yahweh, Ἰάω and ἰάομαι. In this fundamental capacity of divine ‘healing’, as in many other things, like Father, like Son. This connection between Jesus’ ‘healing’ and Yahweh’s was instantly available to the NT writers (who variously used the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Bible) and to Diaspora Jews (who used the Septuagint and who would certainly have known of the Greek form Ἰάω).

If these considerations seem rather theoretical (not my own view), there are also the simple (though little-known) facts that Ἰησοῦς is directly glossed

⁵⁸ Cf. pp. 154 and 161.

⁵⁹ Root עֶשֶׂה (Y-Sh-Ah, Strong’s #3467); see further p. 134 below. As many have found, and many others have observed, investigation of name puns is a road whose ultimate destination is madness. In that spirit, one speculates (uninspired by the considerable and ill-disciplined Internet material on the matter) on an etymological association between ‘Iovis’ (~ ‘iuvare’ [Maltby (1991) 319]) and the similar-sounding/looking ‘Yahweh’, who is also a ‘helper’ (Renn (2005) 486–87, hence also between ‘Iovis’ and Ἰησοῦς, hence also whether a bilingual etymological *frisson* occurs whenever people ask Ἰησοῦς to ‘help’ them, as they not infrequently do (e.g. *Matthew* 15.25; *Mark* 9.22; *Luke* 9.38, 18.38; cf. also p. 134 below). There seems to be no ancient attestation, or implication, of ‘Iovis’ as cognate with ‘Yahweh’, although I would be astonished if there were not ancient people who ‘heard’ that association, especially as ‘Jupiter’/‘Iovis’ is one of the two main pagan equivalences of ‘Yahweh’ (the other being Dionysus). But I do not *argue* any of this.

⁶⁰ Kooten (2006) 126–28; I thank John Barclay for suggesting Iao’s relevance to this paper.

⁶¹ Renn (2005) 472–4.

as *ἰώμενος* by the fourth-century Greek bishop Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. Myst.* 10.13) and that it is clearly sometimes so understood by other Greek Church Fathers from as early as Ignatius of Antioch (? early second century), that is, in the same period as the Gospels and *Acts*, or only slightly later.⁶² Church Fathers themselves also make the pun.⁶³ This etymology is also known to the Greek-speaking and Christian-raised Roman emperor Julian.⁶⁴ Thus a punning association between *Ἰησοῦς* and *ἰάομαι* was both seen and actively exploited, by native Greek speakers and readers, both Christian and pagan, of the Gospels, and (?) from as early as the early second century. Some of these readers, needless to say, were extremely good readers (and I sometimes cite them),⁶⁵ and they certainly knew their texts. Food, surely, for thought.

Given all this, I would even claim that, within their cultural context(s), Christians would have missed an obvious trick, if they had not availed themselves of this available, extremely useful, and obviously rich pun, especially if they were also punning fruitfully on Jesus' 'other name', *Χριστός* (*Chreestos*), while with equal energy pagans were punning negatively on it,⁶⁶ and while competing and widely different authority figures—above all Roman emperors—were also claiming to be 'healers'.

There is, then, a mass of considerations commending a *Ἰησοῦς-ἰάομαι* pun in our texts.

Within existing NT scholarship, however, only a small minority of commentators on only one of our texts, *Acts*, sees a maximum of about four such puns.⁶⁷ Few, if any, commentators on the Gospels; few, if any, historical Jesus books; few, if any, books about, or discussions of, Jesus' healing, or of his attitude and conformity to the Jewish purity laws, or of NT representations of these things; few, if any, studies of the influence of *Isaiah* on the NT

⁶² Ignatius, *Ad Ephes.* 7.1–2 (contrasting deceitful Christian Cynics, who carry around 'the name', 'bite secretly' and are 'hard to tend', and the 'one healer ... Jesus Christ, our Lord'); later, Eusebius, *Demonstr. Ev.* 4.10; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 29.4. Cf. also pp. 137 and 141. Note, however, that some scholars date the letters attributed to Ignatius to the late second century.

⁶³ E.g. Justin, *Apol.* 2 6.6; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.25; *fr.* 54 in *Jo.*; Clement of Alexandria, *Str.* 3.17; *Paed.* 1.2.

⁶⁴ Appendix 2.

⁶⁵ Conversely, Church Fathers' apparent silences in contexts where I find puns are no discouragement: most of their comments come not from systematic exegeses but from homiletics, which have selective and rather simple concerns.

⁶⁶ Moles (forthcoming).

⁶⁷ Thus, for example, Page (1918) 142; Bruce (1951) 210, 333; Barrett (2004) 481; the cases variously cited are 4.30; 9.34; 10.38; 17.18; cf. also Moles (2006b) 88 n. 96 (slightly supplementing the list); (2012) (on the end of *Acts*).

or on Jesus and the early Christians;⁶⁸ and few, if any, histories of early Christianity even consider this possibility. That, certainly, is my impression of the admittedly endless bibliography, and it has been confirmed by several distinguished NT scholars whom I have consulted, as well as by a leading NT seminar. Indeed, one of the most linguistically accomplished and linguistically self-conscious of contemporary NT scholars, Maurice Casey, has recently written: ‘healing was central to Jesus’ ministry’, and then asked: ‘why is Jesus never called a healer...?’⁶⁹ (On the other hand, it must be admitted that there is a fair amount of more or less ignorant speculation about the etymological connexion on the Internet [not my inspiration], as readers can check for themselves.)

It will be a necessary implication of my analysis that failure to see or hear the pun is not only a literary but also a theological failure. For these texts are highly coercive, or ‘imperialist’, in their demands.⁷⁰ Of course, it is open to readers, particularly modern readers, to respond: ‘No, thanks, we don’t want to play that particular game.’ But they can only legitimately do so, if they first see what that particular game is.

But the proof of the pudding lies finally in the eating.

2 Textual Analyses

I translate *ἰάομαι* and cognates as ‘heal’ and cognates; *καθαρίζω* and cognates as ‘cleanse’ and cognates; *σώζω* as ‘save’; and *θεραπεύω* as ‘tend’. I choose the latter in order to open the possibility that Jesus’ ‘tending’ of the sick links to his role as ‘servant’ or ‘attendant’, in the same way as outsiders could view the Therapeutai as both ‘attendants’ and ‘healers’/‘medical attendants’.⁷¹ I do not think this possibility *a priori* excluded by the fact that the main NT word for ‘servant’, ‘attendant’, ‘slave’ is *δοῦλος*, not *θεράπων*, which actually occurs only once (and the ambiguous *παῖς* is characteristically used of Jesus). The aim is to maintain consistency (as standard translations lamentably do not). From time to time, I leave *Ἰησοῦς* in Greek, so as to re-emphasise linguistic points. I am not concerned with the much-studied questions of whether NT usage corresponds either to ordinary, or to specialised, medical usages. My first and overriding concern is to demonstrate that the pun is there. I explore the interpretative implications to some extent, but

⁶⁸ The relevance of this category will become clear.

⁶⁹ Casey (2010) 271, cf. 275.

⁷⁰ For similar irritating claims (*mutatis mutandis*) in pagan contexts see Moles (1998), 130–32, 159, 169–76; (2007b) 267–68.

⁷¹ P. 128.

I am well aware that many of the episodes discussed demand far more detailed and refined interpretation even on the basis of the pun—to say nothing of the many other bases that there often are. My method is ‘sequential reading’, and for comparative purposes it includes material where the pun does not occur. Thematic treatment might be more digestible and would certainly be less bulky, but it would be less rigorous, nor would it convey the distinctive rhythms, qualities and techniques of these texts, which are both like and unlike Classical texts and which also differ interestingly among themselves. I hope that the sheer mass of material will prove persuasive but at the same time that the result is not a shapeless mass.

2.1 Mark

In this first Gospel, Jesus’ name is announced in the opening words (1.1): ‘The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ’. It then comes three times (9, 14, 17) before the healing of the man with ‘an unclean spirit’ (23), who hails Jesus as ‘Jesus the Nazarene’ (24) (remarkably and significantly, no introduction is needed), and is rebuked by the named Jesus (25). The ‘unclean spirit’ (26) departs and the people commend Jesus’ new and authoritative teaching, including his authority over ‘unclean spirits’ (27). Several healings follow, one group of which is described in terms of ‘tending’ (34), while ‘cleansing’ is used of the man with a skin-disease (40, 41, 42, 44). The sequence already illustrates how healing often involves other areas, notably those of purity and impurity. In the subsequent healing of the paralytic (2.1–12), Jesus is twice named (5, 8), though there is no (other) significant vocabulary.

Many Classicists nowadays, I think, would already feel that Mark’s dramatic and emphatic foregrounding of Jesus’ ‘healing ministry’ is underpinned by the very name of Jesus, which seems to be deployed both strategically (1.1, 9, 14, 17) and locally (1.24–5; 2.5, 8) in a telling way.⁷² The logic would be that the combination of Jesus’ much-repeated name, which means ‘healer’, with the lexicon of ‘tending’ and ‘cleanness’ and ‘uncleanness’ effects ‘punning by synonym’, a process further helped by the intrinsic importance attached to names (both of exorcist and demon) in exorcisms, whether Jewish or pagan.⁷³ Certainly, in *Mark*, as in the others, use of Jesus’ name increases—sometimes dramatically—in healing contexts. By comparison with Classical texts (with which, as we have seen, *Mark* has some affinities), such punning would be quite elementary, naive even, by comparison with a text

⁷² Note also that Ἰησοῦς is quite well attested at 1.41, though not printed by Nestle and Aland.

⁷³ Dunn (2003) 675–6.

such as Pindar's *Fourth Pythian*, which puns in subtle and allusive ways on 'Jason' as 'healer'.⁷⁴ Sceptics might object that, since 'Jesus' was this Palestinian Jewish person's name, since the name was very common, and since this person performed (allegedly) 'healings', 'collisions' between name and 'healings' are inevitable and signify nothing. Such facile scepticism, already strained (I believe) by the disposition and economy of the material, cannot survive the sequel.

In the NT illness is characteristically linked to sin. So 'healing' can also apply to sin itself, as in the healing of the paralytic (2.5, 9), and as when, to criticisms of his eating with undesirables, the named Jesus replies (2.17): 'those who are strong have no need of a healer but those who are ill' (οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες). In this self-definitional context, Ἰησοῦς characterises himself as an ἰατρός, and the whole apophthegmatic formulation employs strong assonance and alliteration, reinforcing the association between Ἰησοῦς and ἰατροῦ. The pun seems clear, and crystallises the implications of the preceding material, in accordance with the knowing 'solution-to-a-problem' technique common (I believe) in Classical texts.

The 'tending' (3.2, 10) of a man with a withered hand is inserted into a variety of material before healing returns as a major theme in chapter 5. Another man possessed by an unclean spirit (2, 8) hails the named Jesus (6) by name (7); the man's own name is 'Legion, for we are many' (9). The unclean spirits enter the pigs and drown in the sea. The local people come to the named Jesus (15). At the end of this long episode the demoniac proclaims in the Decapolis all that the named Jesus has done for him (20). In this episode, there are at least climactic naming and a degree of ring structure (20 ~ 6) based on this naming.

In the healings of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the flow of blood (5.22–43), Jairus requests that his daughter 'be saved' (23), the woman has 'suffered many things by many healers' (26), the verb ἰάομαι and the name Jesus are juxtaposed (29–30), and there is emphasis on the woman's 'being saved' (28, 34) and being 'in sound health [ὑγιής, 34] from her scourge'.⁷⁵ There is significant overlap between 'healing' and 'saving'. The juxtaposition of the verb ἰάομαι and the name Ἰησοῦς, proximity of cognate noun (ἰατρῶν), and proximity of alternative etymology ('saved') are telling. The punning on Ἰησοῦς and ἰάομαι is clear. The named (36) Jesus' then 'raises up' (41–42) Jairus' apparently dead daughter. Since both these episodes involve questions about 'cleanness' and 'uncleanness', and since Ἰησοῦς here appears, etymologically, both as 'saviour' ~ 'healer' and as 'healer' *simplex*,

⁷⁴ See n. 48.

⁷⁵ I choose 'sound' (and cognate phrases) for 'consistency' reasons.

there is some sense, at least just below the surface, that the ‘healing’ done by Ἰησοῦς transcends, or sublates,⁷⁶ the complex problematics of the Jewish purity laws. This sense becomes explicit when, in chapter 7, Jesus (unnamed) is arrestingly described as ‘making all foods clean’ (7.19).

Amidst his general failure of power at Nazareth (6.1–6), the named Jesus (4) ‘tends’ a few infirm people (5). In the part of Jesus’ commissioning of the Twelve Disciples (6.7–13) which deals with healing, there are allusions to ‘unclean spirits’ (7) and ‘tending’ (13). In the healings at Gennesaret, the sick ‘are saved’ (6.56). In the healings of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter (7.24–30) and the deaf and dumb man (7.31–37), no significant vocabulary is used. In the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (8.22–26), there is again no significant vocabulary. In the healing of the boy with an unclean spirit (9.14–29), Jesus is thrice named (23, 25, 27). In the healing of the blind Bartimaeus (10.46–52), Jesus is directly addressed (47), in the narrative Jesus’ name is repeated five times (47, 49, 50, 51, 52), and Bartimaeus’ faith ‘saves’ him (52). There is here at least punning on Ἰησοῦς ~ σώζειν in its medical application. This seemingly prepares for the next item (which, if so, illustrates Mark’s unobtrusive literary skill).

At the crucifixion, mockers exhort Jesus to ‘save yourself’; similarly, the chief priests: ‘he saved others, he cannot save himself’ (15.30–31).

As we have seen, Mark clearly puns on Ἰησοῦς/ἰάομαι (and synonyms). His representation of Jesus as ‘saviour’ also stresses his ‘saving’ in healing contexts;⁷⁷ Mark also knows and exploits the association between the name of Jesus and ‘saving’. Here, since Jesus’ ‘healing’ can include ‘saving’ from death (5.23; 5.28, 34), the double mockery at the crucifixion *inter alia*, but primarily, rejects the claims of Ἰησοῦς as ἰατρός, so that there is a broad ring structure between 15.30–31 and 2.17.

There is perhaps further ironic punning when the named Jesus ‘cries for help’ (15.34 ἐβόησεν).⁷⁸ At any rate, from a superficial, non-Christian view, in this, his seemingly most wretched situation, the gulf between ‘Jesus’ = ‘The Healer’ and ‘Yahweh saves’, the Son, and the Hebrew God, his Father, seems absolute, because ‘Yahweh’ does not ‘save’ him. Some readers might perhaps also ‘hear’ Ἰησοῦς (34) as ‘Yah saves’ directly.⁷⁹ Then some of the

⁷⁶ ‘Sublate’ is a useful theological term (less aggressive than ‘cancel’ or ‘annul’) implying ‘absorb and transform’.

⁷⁷ Since this claim, especially in this context, aroused discussion at Manchester, I emphasise that I am not saying that Jesus’ ‘healing’ and ‘saving’ are formally the same: only that there can be significant overlap, and that it is important to recognise this overlap where it occurs (as numerous commentators on this passage and on others do not, but Church Fathers sometimes do [pp. 137 and 141]).

⁷⁸ See n. 59 above.

⁷⁹ See p. 129 above.

bystanders hear Jesus' 'cry for help' as a cry to Elijah (35), and one individual exhorts them to 'see if Elijah comes to take him down (36). And/but [more the latter] Jesus [named] let out a great cry and breathed his last' (37). The allusions to Elijah⁸⁰ are triply significant. First, Elijah, like Jesus, (allegedly) raised people (precisely, one person) from the dead (1 *Kings* 17.17–24; 2 *Kings* 4.34–35). Second, in the earlier narrative Elijah functions as an anticipatory paradigm for Jesus himself (*Mark* 6.15; 8.28; 9.4–13). Third, the name Elijah (Eli-Jah), which means 'Yahweh is God', is cognate with Ἰησοῦς. There is another significant pun. Jesus' 'cry for help' (15.34) takes the form of the question from *Psalms* 22.2 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'. Jesus himself cries in the Aramaic version of the psalm, which Mark quotes and then translates into Greek. The Greek word for 'God' (θεός) interacts punningly with 'Jesus' (~ 'Yahweh'), but the punning interaction is even stronger in the Aramaic version, where the word for God (transliterated into Greek as ελωι) interacts also with 'Elijah' (Ἠλίας), hence some of the bystanders even interpret Jesus' 'cry for help' as 'calling Elijah' (35).

The effect of this intense and varied punning is to ratchet up the identity and theodicean problems of the crucifixion to the very highest pitch. Is 'Yahweh' 'God'? Does he 'help'? Does he 'save'? Can the crucified 'Jesus' bring/be the 'salvation' of 'Yahweh'?

But of course all these problematics are resolved by the wider Christian narrative. Practising Christians who use *Mark* already know, and new readers who read *Mark* to the end learn, that the horrible mockery is refuted by the resurrection (16.1–7), when Jesus 'rose' (6 ἠγέρθη), just as some of those he himself 'saved' in 'healing' 'rose' or 'were raised' by him (1.31; 2.9, 11–12; 5.41–42; 9.27), and in some cases from death or effective death. So Jesus' resurrection is the greatest 'healing' of all, the 'healing' of death itself. Mark's soteriology of the crucifixion is rammed home by a whole series of significant name plays.

Mark's general treatment of Jesus' 'healing' acquires extra force from a special feature of his narrative technique: his very extensive use of present tenses,⁸¹ which also occurs in healing contexts.⁸² Jesus' healing in all its aspects remains 'present' to all readers and 'present' both in space and time. Thus Mark integrates the puns on the name of Jesus into the most essential Christology, or perhaps in this context one should rather say 'Jesusology'. That word exists but is usually pejorative. I use it descriptively and neutrally. In the present context, it seems unarguably the *mot juste*.

⁸⁰ I thank John Barclay for suggesting Elijah's significance to my theme.

⁸¹ Boring (2006) 1, 24.

⁸² 1.21, 41, 44; 2.3, 4, 5, 8, 10; 3.3, 4, 5; 5.9, 15, 19, 22, 23, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41; 7.32; 8.22; 9.19; note their profusion in the chapter 5 material.

Although the Greek of Mark, himself apparently bilingual in Greek and Aramaic and perhaps even also Latin-speaking, is certainly rough enough, and is apparently sometimes technically distorted by imperfect efforts to render Aramaic into Greek⁸³ and by the sometimes inappropriate incursions of Latinisms,⁸⁴ its creativity *qua* Greek should also be recognised, and Mark's deployment and exploitation of the Ἰησοῦς-ἰάομαι pun (and of related puns) is an excellent example of this. There are marked felicities (as noted) in this Gospel's literary handling and disposition of this material, too.

2.2 Matthew

Like Mark (whom he has read), Matthew foregrounds Jesus' name (or names): 1.1 'The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham'; 1.18: 'the birth of Jesus Christ was like this'; 1.21 'you [Joseph] shall call his name Jesus'; 1.23 'and his name shall be called Emmanuel'; 1.25 'and he [Joseph] called his name Jesus'. There is already heavy emphasis on the process of naming and on the particular names, and chapter 1 is ring-structured by Jesus' name. Two of these references are etymological: 1.21 'you shall call his name Jesus, *for he will save his people himself from their sins*'; 1.23 'and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which is translated, "God with us"'. Such etymological punning on the name of the central figure of the particular narrative has many parallels both in Jewish and in Classical historiography (and biography), and it is particularly appropriate to histories of beginnings. There is a basic point here: the name of Jesus matters not just because of the person who bore it but also because of its meaning(s)—or, rather, the point is that in this case person and name are a complete and already complex unity.

The first of the etymological references spells out what Mark had left implicit (albeit heavily implicit), that 'Jesus' means 'Yahweh saves', although Matthew does not directly relate this meaning to the Hebrew, as he explicitly does with 'Emmanuel'. The natural inference is that early Christians who operated (whether entirely or partly) in Greek knew this meaning of 'Jesus' without necessarily deriving it actively from the Hebrew, an inference that is consistent not only with Mark but also with Paul⁸⁵ and with later Christian, 'Hellenistic' allusions.⁸⁶ In so far as 'saving' can include 'healing' and the latter also can be described as 'saving', the way lies open for puns on Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι. In any case, the occurrence of two explicit etymologies pre-

⁸³ Casey (2010) 63–5, 74–6, 112–14, 323–4, 418–19.

⁸⁴ Winn (2008) 81, 82, 235.

⁸⁵ N. 46 above.

⁸⁶ Davies and Allison (1988) 209.

sumably allows the possibility of more than two. That this is not lax ‘modernist’ literary thinking is proved by the comment of the anonymous Christian commentator, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaëum* 1:⁸⁷ ‘The Evangelist here interprets the meaning of Jesus in the Hebrew language, saying, “He shall save his people from their sins.” Therefore, while a *doctor*, who has no real power over human *health*, is unashamed to call himself a *doctor* simply because of his ability to prepare herbs, how much more worthy is the one who is *called Saviour*, through whom all the world is *saved*?’. Note how easily a qualified ancient reader ‘slides’ between the etymologies of ‘saving’ and ‘healing’. Importantly, the etymology of 1.21, a quotation from *Isaiah* (7.14), foregrounds *Isaiah* as central ‘proof text’ of Matthean Jesusology. The emphasis of ‘himself’ (astonishingly untranslated in many versions) is also significant: here, as often, *αὐτός* implies ‘by himself’ or ‘alone’, and Ἰησοῦς the son looks very like his father Yahweh.⁸⁸

Jesus’ healing ministry is first mentioned, in general terms, in chapter 4, where the term ‘tend’ is twice used (23, 24). In 8.2–4, a leper is ‘cleansed’ (2, 3) and Jesus is named (4). As in *Mark*, Jesus’ sublates Jewish ‘purity’ laws.

In 8.5–13, the healing of the centurion’s slave, Jesus is twice named (10, 13) and the verb *ἰάομαι* twice used (8, 13), once in the same verse as the name of Jesus (13). As in *Mark*, these juxtapositions speak. There is also allusion to Jesus’ ‘tending’ (7). Here the punning combines direct etymological punning (Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι) with ‘punning by synonym’. The combination serves to validate the earlier and subsequent ‘punnings by synonym alone’. Characteristically, Matthew here ‘plugs a gap’ in *Mark*’s less developed techniques. Given the emphases on the centurion’s ‘slave’ (6, 8, 9, 13), on the centurion’s authority and ability to give orders (9) and on his acknowledgement of Jesus’ superior authority (8), one immediately wonders if a contrast is being suggested between worldly ‘service’ and Jesus’ healing ‘attendance’, a form of ‘serving’ which actually *manifests* Jesus’ superior ‘authority’. Another important theme here is the extension of Jesus’ ministry, including his healing ministry, to Gentiles (cf. 10–12).

The episode may also be fruitfully read as a Socratic-style exchange about Jesus’ true identity, which the centurion perceives and challenges Jesus to admit but which Jesus only admits indirectly, through puns.⁸⁹ The centurion, who obviously already knows of Jesus’ healing powers (that is, that ‘Jesus’ is ‘the Healer’), addresses Jesus as Κύριε (6), which, as in modern Greek, can mean simply ‘sir’, although even that, as coming from a Roman

⁸⁷ Simonetti (2001) 18 = *PG* 56.634.

⁸⁸ Further, France (2007) 53.

⁸⁹ I follow (with modifications) a valuable suggestion of Heather Vincent’s.

centurion to a non-elite Jew, implies unexpected deference.⁹⁰ But it can also of course mean ‘Lord’ in a religious sense, being the regular Greek ‘substitution’ for ‘Yahweh’, and it is also the Greek equivalent of the Latin ‘dominus’, meaning ‘master’, and thus suits the centurion’s explicit acknowledgement of Jesus’ superior authority, as well as his implicit disavowal (in this context) of Roman ‘domini’ such as Roman emperors.⁹¹ Jesus, named (7), replies: ‘I will come and tend him’.⁹² ‘Tend’ (θεραπεύσω) glosses ‘heal’ without uttering that word. The expressed ‘I’ (Ἐγώ) is, however, highly emphatic, and ‘I will come’ is also challenging, since, as the centurion immediately points out, with a renewed address to Jesus as Κύριε, there can be no question of the Jewish Jesus’ literally ‘coming’ under the Gentile centurion’s roof. The punning phrase, in short, points to Jesus’ divine credentials as ‘the coming one’.⁹³ The centurion’s renewed appeal ‘caps’ Jesus’ oblique θεραπεύσω with an explicit ἰαθήσεται, and uses an equally emphatic ἐγώ to assert both his own authority and its inferiority to Jesus’. The astonished Jesus proclaims that he has never found such ‘belief’ (πίστιν) even in Israel and says to the centurion: ‘as you have believed, so shall it be to you’. This commends the centurion’s true belief without making explicit what that belief is and without explicitly using the word ἰάομαι. Readers and listeners are left to infer that the ‘true belief’ is that ‘Jesus’ is ‘Healer’ is ‘Lord’. A final point: if the incident has any claim to historicity,⁹⁴ the exchange must have taken place in Greek, not only because of the Roman interlocutor but also because the linguistic games would not otherwise work.

When Jesus then cures Peter’s mother-in-law, he is again named (14), so that his name comes in adjacent verses, further emphasising the punning relationship between Ἰησοῦς and ἰάομαι. She then ‘arises’ and ‘serves’ (διηκόνει) him (8.14–15). The last detail seems to confirm that the healing of the centurion’s slave is concerned with inversions of ‘service’ and ‘authority’. Jesus’ ‘tending’ (16) fulfils (17) the prophecy of the named Isaiah (53.4) that ‘he himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases’. That prophecy is immediately succeeded by another episode, in which Jesus is both named

⁹⁰ Discussion: Davies and Allison (1991) 20.

⁹¹ A parallel: it is well understood that Thomas’ unhistorical acclamation of the risen Jesus as ‘my Lord and my God’ in *John* 20.28 subverts Domitian’s claim to be ‘dominus ac deus’ (Suet. *Dom.* 13).

⁹² Many commentators think Jesus’ reply much better as a question. I think a statement (*qua* ironic) subtler, but the point hardly affects my analysis.

⁹³ Discussion of this concept, arguably accepted by the historical Jesus as applying to himself, in (e.g.) Allison (2010) 274–78; the ‘divine’ ἔρχομαι and ‘venio’ provide pagan parallels comprehensible to the centurion.

⁹⁴ Affirmative: e.g. Dunn (2003) 212–16.

and gives orders (18): details which maintain the themes of 5–17. The perfectly placed Isaiah prophecy casts Ἰησοῦς both as medical scapegoat (foreshadowing Jesus' 'healing' Passion) and (again) as 'attendant' or 'servant'. Thus both 8.7 and 8.16–17 confirm that Jesus' 'healing' and 'tending' can be part of his role as 'the Suffering Servant'.⁹⁵ Some Christian readers would also certainly have known the sequel to Matthew's restricted quotation of Isaiah: 53.5 τῷ μώλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν ('we were healed by his weal') and found there, already, a prophecy of Jesus' very name. We should also recall that the name Isaiah (Isa/iah), which means 'God is salvation', is closely cognate with the name of Ἰησοῦς, and that the name of Ἰησοῦς is the very opposite of 'disease' (17): the clash here could not be more elemental.

In the abbreviated story of the healing of the Gadarene demoniacs (8.28–34), Jesus is climactically named (34). In the healing of the paralytic, Jesus is twice named (9.2, 4). In the healing of the ruler's daughter and the woman with the flow of blood (9.18–26) Jesus is thrice named (19, 22, 23), and the woman's healing is thrice described as her 'being saved' (21, 22 [*bis*]). There is at least climactic punning on Ἰησοῦς as 'Yahweh saves', and, again, the implication that 'Jesus' sublates the purity laws.

In the healing of the two blind men (9.27–31), Jesus is thrice named (27, 28, 30). In the healing of the dumb man (9.32–34), no significant vocabulary is used. In the generalised description of Jesus' ministry at 9.35–37, mention is made of the named Jesus' 'tending' (35). Ἰησοῦς is again the opposite of 'diseases' (35), and this 'opposition' is reflected in the very structure of the sentence, with 'Jesus' at the beginning and 'disease' at the end. Here, too, there is significant stress on Jesus' 'all-ness' ('and Jesus went around all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and heralding the good news of the kingdom and tending all disease and all physical weakness'). In the named Jesus' commissioning of the Twelve (10.1–15), mention is made of 'unclean spirits' (1), 'tending' (1, 8) and 'cleansing' (8). Jesus' boasts to John the Baptist of his healing miracles are introduced by the named Jesus (11.4–5). In the healing of the man with the withered hand (12.9–13), mention is made of Jesus' 'tending' (10) and the hand is made 'sound'. The named Jesus (15) then 'tended all who followed him', and the following referenced Isaiah quotation (*Isaiah* 42.1–4; 41.9) emphasises that 'the races [= the Gentiles] will hope in his *name*' (21). And Ἰησοῦς and Isaiah are again conjoined. Jesus' 'healing' powers are thus now *formally* extended to the Gentiles. Jesus' 'tending' (22) of a blind and dumb demoniac leads to a long disquisition against the Pharisees and the present wicked generation (24–43).

After much material bearing on the question of people's acceptance or rejection of his teaching, Jesus explains (13.13–17): (13) 'it is for this reason

⁹⁵ On which, cf. e.g. Dunn (2003) 809–18.

that I speak to them in parables, that seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear. (14) And to them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah [6.9ff.] that says: “you will hear with your hearing and you will not understand, and seeing you will see and will not see. (15) For the heart of this people has grown dull, and they hear with their ears heavily and they have closed their eyes, lest ever they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I will heal [ἰάσομαι] them”⁹⁶.

In order to avoid overload and because the question matters less in the present context, I defer discussion of the syntax of ἰάσομαι until *Acts* 28.27,⁹⁶ although, since the immediate discussion takes the positivity of ἰάσομαι as read, linguistically keen readers may like immediately to correlate the two discussions.

There is supposedly a major textual problem here, in that some scholars reject verses 14–15 as a very early interpolation, perhaps ‘imported’ from *Acts* 28.27.⁹⁷ Probably most disagree, but, as always, it is the quality of the arguments, not a head count, that counts. The arguments, unfortunately, are too detailed for proper appraisal here. In brief, however, I think the text correct for the following reasons: (1) there is little or no manuscript disturbance to support, or suggest, deletion; (2) the verses are indeed attested very early (below); (3) the notion of ‘importation’ from *Acts* founders on our general relative chronology, and perhaps also on specific indications that in this area it is Luke who is taking material from Matthew’s text, not the other way round;⁹⁸ (4) there is also the question of where *John* 12.38–40⁹⁹ (substantially the same as the Matthew text) fits in the sequence; *prima facie*, it supports the extant text; (5) whatever minor difficulties—and there are some¹⁰⁰—the verses have great, and, I would say, decisive, positive strengths.

In *Isaiah*, the speaker is God. Here what is at issue is the teaching of Jesus, who is now speaking, and who is in some sense the son of God. Should readers not connect ‘I will heal them’ (ἰάσομαι) with ‘Jesus’/Ἰησοῦς, the pre-eminent ‘healer’? Should they not ‘hear’ Ἰησοῦς as punning on his own name?¹⁰¹ Why ever not? The connection is further helped (again) by the naming of the cognate ‘Isaiah’ and by the simple fact that Jewish unresponsiveness is here being characterised in terms of physical malfunction: that is, of spiritual *sickness*. Further, Matthew’s first use of *Isaiah* at 1.23 is etymologi-

⁹⁶ P. 159.

⁹⁷ Full range of arguments in Davies and Allison (1991) 393–4.

⁹⁸ P. 164.

⁹⁹ P. 145.

¹⁰⁰ Implicit riposte to Davies and Allison (n. 97) in France (2007) 513–14.

¹⁰¹ Thereby effectively acknowledging his own identity, as he did not explicitly do in his fencing exchange with the centurion (8.5–13).

cal; the use at 8.17 refers to ‘tending’ by Ἰησοῦς and is implicitly etymological; the present use is climactic and also etymological. These three etymological contexts bring out central things about Jesus’ name, identity and function. The explicit naming of Isaiah is also climactic and could not be better placed. Further again, the identification of ἰάσομαι with Ἰησοῦς in the present passage has been anticipated by the Isaian 8.17.

Eloquent here are the comments of the fifth-century Cyril of Alexandria (*fr.* 166):¹⁰² ‘he speaks in this way in order to *save* them, since he ought rather to have said nothing but have been silent, except that it is not for his own glory’s sake but for their *salvation* that *Jesus* does everything’. There are several noteworthy points. Cyril is evoking the etymology of Jesus ~ ‘saviour’, which he associates with the etymology of Jesus ~ ‘healer’; he clearly connects ἰάσομαι with Ἰησοῦς; and he takes ἰάσομαι positively. Although more complex, his thought process is essentially the same as that of the anonymous commentator on *Matthew* 1.¹⁰³

Now, a very big interpretative question is whether Matthew (writing, we have agreed, after the disasters of 70) regards the Christians’ general Jewish mission as over and the Jews in general as having been finally punished by the Jewish war and the destruction of the Temple.¹⁰⁴ My obviously far too quick answer to this question would be that ‘I [Ἰησοῦς] will heal [ἰάσομαι] them’ in the present passage, of the currently visually and aurally impaired ‘people’ of Israel, combines with 1.21 ‘you shall call his name Jesus [Ἰησοῦς], for he will save his people himself from their sins’, to assure readers (of whatever kind) that the Jewish war is not God’s last word on the Jews in general and that they will eventually be ‘healed’ by the Healer. Admittedly, scholars debate the scope of ‘his people’ in 1.21: the Jewish people in general, or Jesus’ ‘own people’ (redefined as those that accept him), or, proleptically, ‘all people’? In the immediate context of 1.21 and at first reading, the first is surely the most natural interpretation. While the developing narrative brings in the other two possibilities, and while the crucifixion sequence (which I discuss below) stages Jesus’ rejection by ‘the Jewish people’ in general,¹⁰⁵ it also intersects with the beginning (1.21) to pose the question of the salvation of the Jews in general, and 1.21 and 13.17 *combine* to convey their ‘salvation’ and ‘healing’ *beyond* the disasters of the Jewish War. If this interpretation is accepted, Matthew’s handling of the problem of Jewish rejectionism is not

¹⁰² Simonetti (2001) 272.

¹⁰³ Quoted on p. 137.

¹⁰⁴ On this question of anti-Judaism (more loosely, yet, I believe, justifiably, ‘anti-Semitism’) in *Matthew*, see recently Donaldson (2010) 30–54.

¹⁰⁵ On these interpretatively demanding ‘slides’ see e.g. France (2007) 53, 1057–8, 1112–13; Donaldson (2010) 41–42.

only morally commendable (up to a point),¹⁰⁶ but also very adroitly executed. And in both respects, the 'Jesus'-'healer' pun, coupled with the 'Jesus-saviour' pun, plays a key role.

The narrative proceeds.

In the Feeding of the Five Thousand (14.13–21), Jesus is twice named (13, 16) and performs 'tending' (14). The healing of the sick at Gennesaret (14.34–36) is described as 'saving' (36), which is etymologically emphatic because of the explicit etymology of 1.21, of the naming of Jesus at 14.29 and 31, and of the collocation with Jesus' 'saving' of Peter on the sea at 14.30.

The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter (15.21–28) juxtaposes the verb *ἰάομαι* and Jesus' name in the same verse (28), and the whole episode is ring-structured by the name of Ἰησοῦς (28 ~ 21). Here the theme of the extension of the 'healing' power of Ἰησοῦς to Gentiles receives even greater emphasis.

At 15.30 the named Jesus (29) again performs general 'tending'. The healing of an epileptic boy (17.14–20) names Jesus thrice (17, 18, 19) and speaks twice of his 'tending' (16, 18). The generalised notice about Jesus' healing juxtaposes Jesus' name with his 'tending' (19.1–2). So, too, 21.14. The healing of the two blind men (20.29–34) names Jesus thrice (30, 32, 34).

As in *Mark*, the crucifixion narrative (27.32–50) crystallises the most important 'healing'/'saving' elements and their punning expressions from the preceding narrative. Passersby mock: 'save yourself!' (40); similarly, the chief priests: 'he saved others, he cannot save himself' (42); and others wait to see if 'Elijah comes to save him' (49), itself a punning query, because Elijah means 'Yahweh is God', and 'saving' evokes both Yahweh and Jesus. Matthew's technique here is reminiscent of that of 8.17, 12.21 and 13.14 (the naming of Isaiah in juxtaposition with Jesus). As in *Mark*, the 'introduction' of Elijah at this point above all in the narrative recalls Elijah's 'saving' of people from death, Elijah's role as anticipatory paradigm for Jesus himself (16.14; 17.3–12), and the apparent absoluteness, in the present situation, of the gulf between Ἰησοῦς and Yahweh. But Matthew has intensified these effects by three deft modifications of *Mark*. First, the mockings (40, 42) of these representatives of the Jewish people acquire even nastier irony from the direct contrast with Matthew's first explicit etymology of Jesus at 1.21: 'he himself will save his people from their sins'. Second, into Jesus' otherwise Aramaic quotation of *Psalms* 22.2, he puts the Hebrew form of the word for 'God', transliterated into the Greek letters *ηλι*. This makes the punning interaction with Elijah (47 Ἠλίαν) sharper and more obvious. Third, at 49 he juxtaposes the name 'Elijah' with the verb 'save' (instead of *Mark*'s more

¹⁰⁶ The discussion of the end of *Acts* explores the issues more fully (p. 159).

prosaic ‘take down’ [*Mark* 15.36]), thereby further heightening the problematics of the crucifixion’s ‘soteriology’.

As in *Mark*, however, these punning conundra are resolved by the wider Christian narrative: existing Christians know, readers of *Mark* know, and new readers learn, that the sneers are refuted by Jesus’ ‘rising’ (28.6) from the dead, in the ultimate healing—that from, and of, death itself, just as he himself ‘raised’ others in his ‘healing’ (8.15; 9.5–7, 25; 10.8; 11.5 [all the synonymous ἐγείρω]). And the nasty subversion of the 1.21 etymology of Jesus is overcome by a deeper, positive, irony: it is precisely Jesus’ crucifixion and death (that is, his apparent failure to ‘save himself’) that will ‘save’ all ‘his people’—that is, ultimately, all people, including the Jewish ‘people’—‘from their sins’. Matthew’s extremely deft footwork again enacts profound ‘soteriology’ or ‘iatrology’—or, in a single, but meaning-packed, word, ‘Jesusology’. Here again he seems to be ‘plugging a gap’ in *Mark*. For anti-Jewishness is also a problem in the first Gospel,¹⁰⁷ and, although Mark’s anti-Jewishness is less emphatic and less developed than Matthew’s, his own text provides no obvious palliative for it.¹⁰⁸ It is Matthew who makes the necessary move: despite everything, the ‘Healer’ and ‘Saviour’ will indeed ‘save his people himself from their sins’. And in this context, that ‘himself’ acquires a distinctive further resonance: that of freely bestowed divine grace.

Like Mark, Matthew clearly connects Ἰησοῦς and ἰάομαι (and similar terms) and Ἰησοῦς and σώζειν/ἰάομαι and, again like Mark, he integrates these related puns into the most essential Jesusology. As usual, his more explicit and more elaborate treatment presumably aspires to ‘defeat’ Mark’s, although the latter’s, as we have seen, has its own virtues and power and, indeed, its own felicities. Nevertheless, on this showing, as on others, Matthew remains markedly the more intricate and sophisticated writer, as well as the superior theologian.

2.3 John

In *John*’s majestic Prologue (1.1–18), the name ‘Jesus Christ’ acquires tremendous, cumulative, weight from the characteristic hymnic and prooemial device of ‘late-naming’ (17), as commentators do not say. *John*’s account of the healing of the official’s son (4.43–54) juxtaposes Jesus’ name and the verb ἰάσθαι (47), with supportive assonance.

¹⁰⁷ Telford (1999) 234–41; Donaldson (2010) 139–40.

¹⁰⁸ This may partly be to do with his own situatedness—precisely, in 70, in the midst of the Jewish War (n. 31 above).

The healing of the man at the pool (5.1–18) demands fuller treatment.¹⁰⁹ The named Jesus (6), who already *knows* (somehow) of the man's condition, asks him if he *wants* to be made sound. He offers healing without being asked for it, though the need for reciprocal volition is stressed. The man replies that he finds it difficult to get to the pool, because he has no man to help him and others get there first. While his use of the address Κύριε (6) can mean simply 'sir', readers are bound to consider the possibility that the man speaks more truly than he *knows*, especially given the juxtaposition Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον. Jesus tells him to rise, take up his pallet and walk. The man is immediately made sound (9) and takes up his pallet and walks (9~8, 6). But this apparently strong closure is at once short-circuited when the Jews criticise the man for doing this on the Sabbath and he answers that he was told to do so by the one who made him sound. The latter phrase itself provides an exegetical etymology of 'Jesus', but the man of course does not yet *know* this. They ask who this was, 'but the man who was healed (ἰαθείς) *did not know* who it was, for Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) had turned aside, there being a crowd in the place' (13). There is the by now very familiar juxtaposition of Ἰησοῦς and ἰάομαι in the same verse. 'After these things, Jesus [again named, again juxtaposed with a naming in the previous verse] finds him in the temple and said to him: "See, you have been made sound. Go wrong no more, in case something worse is done to you (14). The man went away and announced to the Jews that it was Jesus [Ἰησοῦς] who had made him sound' (15). The man somehow now *knows* Jesus' identity, rather as Jesus himself had *known*, without being told, of the nature of the man's illness (<6), somehow now *knows* the meaning of the exegetical phrase 'who had made him sound', and in effect himself becomes an evangelist (~ 'announced') of Jesus. The Jews persecute Jesus for doing these things on the Sabbath and for calling God his own father, making himself equal to God (16–18).

Certain things are clear. There is more than enough here to establish the pun Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι, especially for readers of earlier gospels. Ἰησοῦς here sublates Jewish purity laws. Jesus' (and Christian) baptism (literal and metaphorical) trump any ordinarily therapeutic immersion in any pool. The episode puts Ἰησοῦς on a divine level, equal with God. There is some link between sickness and sin. There is some sort of testing and criticism of the healed man going on, even though he is healed and even though the healing is freely offered. The whole narrative has wide symbolic application.

More specifically, like *Matthew* 8.5–13, by which it was presumably influenced, this sharply written episode is about Jesus' identity as 'Lord' and 'Healer' ('Lord' *because* he is 'Healer') and about people's success or failure in apprehending this. The Jews understand that Ἰησοῦς is claiming divine iden-

¹⁰⁹ I thank Heather Vincent for sharp comments.

tity and parity with God; they do not understand the basis and justification of the claim. The man, object of the Healer's freely offered healing, initially responds to Jesus sufficiently at least to 'obey orders'. When challenged by the Jews for his behaviour on the Sabbath, he understands that the one who made him sound has sufficient authority to condone it but does not *know* his identity. He has some further impulse to virtuous behaviour in that when Jesus finds him he is in the temple. Nevertheless, Jesus there upbraids him. On what basis? The fact that he has been healed proves something, but what? What is the point of Jesus' adjuration, 'go wrong no more'? It is not simply a matter of a general association between illness and sinfulness: the point is that the man has not so far grasped the true identity of Ἰησοῦς as Healer and Lord, so he is still 'going wrong'. In essence, Jesus says that the man's wellness was the key to the question he missed.¹¹⁰ The man then gets question and answer right by announcing that it was Jesus who had made him sound. The whole episode also functions as a sort of metaliterary test of readers' onomastic skills, of their ability to integrate name and Jesusology, and of their grasp of just what is at stake (acceptance or rejection of Ἰησοῦς in the full meaning of the name). It is a test that (seemingly) all modern commentators have failed.

The long treatment of the death and raising of Lazarus (11.1–44) shows Jesus moving between death and life, pre-echoes Jesus' own death and resurrection, and demonstrates his powers over death and resurrection. There is etymological punning here between the repeatedly, almost incessantly, named Jesus (4, 5, 9, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 30, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44!) and 'saving' (12). From a 'pure' literary point of view, the repetitions seem altogether excessive, but they can be justified in other ways.¹¹¹ More generally, the episode reinforces the essential connection between 'resurrection' and Jesus' 'healing'.

Like *Matthew*, *John* uses the named *Isaiah* quotation with reference to Jewish unbelief, characterised in terms of defective sight and hearing, at 12.38–40, with the further gloss (41): 'Isaiah said these things, because he saw his glory and spoke concerning him'. Given that the whole question is about recognition of Jesus, who is repeatedly named hereabouts (30, 35, 36, 44), are not readers expected to connect *ἰάσομαι* and Ἰησοῦς and to see that 'the Healer' is punning on his own name? Again, why ever not, especially given (again) the naming of the cognate *Isaiah* and given *Matthew's* precedence? The gloss 'Isaiah said these things, because he saw his glory and *spoke concerning him*' functions as a not particularly subtle 'prompt'. Uniquely (seemingly) among commentators, Barrett here connects prophecy and speaker: 'John

¹¹⁰ I owe this sentence to Heather Vincent.

¹¹¹ P. 171.

may have made use of these words with an allusion to the inner meaning of Jesus' miracles of healing', though he does not connect Jesus' 'healing' with his name.¹¹²

There is the same big question with John as with Matthew: where ultimately—after the disasters of 70—do the Jews in general stand in relation to God?¹¹³ I think that John, through the Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάσομαι play, gives the same answer as Matthew, though the case is admittedly much harder to argue in his case (because of some extremely nasty elements in his treatment of 'the Jews').¹¹⁴

So far, *John's* use of the pun, though still theologically crucial, is considerably less than those of *Mark* and *Matthew*. Perhaps this reflects a desire to minimise vulgar 'Jesusology', which would be consistent with John's rather elevated concerns. But although John's narratives of Jesus' healings (in the normal sense of the word) stop half-way through the Gospel and although his exploitations of the direct pun Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι stop at 12.40, he extends the theme most richly in his long account of the Last Supper (13.1–17.26). At the start, in the washing of the disciples' feet (13.1–20), Jesus is four times named (1, 7, 8, 10), and the activity makes them 'clean' (11), in a symbolic pre-enactment of the 'cleansing' effects of the crucifixion.¹¹⁵ Here Jesus' sublation of Jewish purity laws already acquires, proleptically, its sublimation. At the crucifixion (19.17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 33, 38, 40, 42!), and in the post-resurrection appearances (20.2, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31; 21.1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25!), Jesus is insistently and repeatedly named, to a degree reminiscent of the proleptically resurrection Lazarus episode (11.1–44). John does not make explicit that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection constitute the greatest 'healing' of all and 'save' all people: he does not need to (or not to readers who have read him aright). His treatment of the pun is a mixture of the sophisticated, the profound, and the clunky (though the latter, again, can at least largely be explained and excused in other than 'pure' literary terms).

2.4 Luke

Like the other Gospels, *Luke* handles the introduction of Jesus' name distinctively and creatively. In the Preface Jesus is only mysteriously glossed as, or

¹¹² Barrett (1978) 431.

¹¹³ Discussion: Donaldson (2010) 81–108.

¹¹⁴ On which see Casey (1996) esp. 116–26; 223–26.

¹¹⁵ Barrett (1978) 436–7.

included within, ‘the word’ (1.2),¹¹⁶ and in the narrative he is only first named at the visitation of the angel Gabriel (1.31 ‘you [Mary] will call his name Jesus’), and then again at the end of the birth narrative (2.21 ‘his name was called Jesus, the one called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb’). There is therefore great initial emphasis on the name Jesus as such, though, in contrast to *Matthew*, no etymology is given. The effect is to create suspense, before the name is ‘resolved’. This sense of unresolvedness about Jesus’ full identity continues in the early episodes up to chapter 4 (the divine baby of 2.1–40, the boy in the temple of 2.41–52, the baptised Jesus of 3.21–22, the tempted figure of 4.1–13), and use of Jesus’ name remains correspondingly sparse (2.27, 43, 52; 3.21, 23; 4.1, 4, 12, 14), certainly by comparison with later developments. Then in the episode of Jesus’ reception (and rejection) at Nazareth (4.16–30), while Jesus himself is not named, there are allusions to healings (18) and cleansing (27); the question of Jesus’ identity is raised (22) and he is referred to as ‘Joseph’s son’ (22); and he himself (23) anticipates his audience’s challenging use of the proverb ‘healer [ἰατρὲ], tend [θεράπευσον] yourself’. That proverb itself exploits ‘punning by synonym’. There is surely enough here already to suggest the pun on Jesus as ‘healer’ (the more so, of course, for readers of *Mark*, and of *Matthew* and *John*, if they too precede *Luke*).

In subsequent healings (4.31–41), Jesus himself is named (34), and there are allusions to ‘uncleanness’ (33, 36) and ‘tending’ (40). 5.12–26 recounts Jesus’ healings of a leper and a paralytic. In the first case (12–16), Jesus himself is named (12), the word ‘healing’ is not used, and the process is described as ‘cleansing’ (12, 13, 14) and ‘tending’ (15). In the second case (17–26), the verb ἰάομαι is used (17). At 6.18–19, although Jesus himself is not named, there are allusions to ‘unclean spirits’ (18) and ‘tending’ (18) and the verb ἰάομαι is used twice (18, 19). As in *Mark* and *Matthew*, ‘Jesus the Healer’ sublates Jewish purity laws.

In the healing of a centurion’s slave (7.1–10), Jesus is named four times (3, 4, 6, 9), the centurion sends messengers to ask Jesus to ‘save’ the slave (3) and he himself requests: ἰαθήτω (7). Jesus, named, responds favourably (9), and the slave is found ‘in sound health’ (10). There is thus double punning on ‘saving’ and ‘healing’, as well as the now familiar association between ‘Jesus’ and ‘sound health’. In 8.43–48 (Jesus’ healing of the woman with the flow of blood), the name of Jesus occurs at 45 and 46, the verb ἰάομαι at 47, with clear punning. In 9.1–6 (Jesus’ mission to the twelve), the verb occurs ἰάομαι at 9.2. At 9.11 ‘tending’ and the verb ἰάομαι are conjoined. In the healing of the boy with the unclean spirit (9.37–43), Jesus is named twice (41, 42), and

¹¹⁶ Full quotation: n. 15; for Jesus here ~ ‘the word’ see *John* 1.1–17; Dunn (2003) 178 n. 29; Moles (2012).

name and verb *ἰάομαι* occur in the same verse (42), the punning effect here being reinforced by assonance.

In the second commission, of the Seventy-two, Jesus' instructions include 'tending' of the sick (10.9) and the returning disciples announce that even the demons are subject to them 'in your name' (10.17). In the healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath, the name of Jesus is conjoined with the verb for 'tend' (13.14).

Jesus' contemptuous message to Herod Antipas proclaims his casting out of demons and fulfilling of healings (13.32): the self-description, the self-proclaimed job description, of *Ἰησοῦς* is *ἰασις* ('healing'). The latter word acquires extra force because Luke is the only Evangelist to use it. There is a sort of 'implicit' assonance here (*Ἰησοῦς* [unstated] ~ *ἰασεις*), which assists the punning association. *Could* any early Christian who heard the noun *ἰασις*, in practically any context, but especially this one, *not* think of *Ἰησοῦς*?

The healing of the man with dropsy (14.1–6) uses the name Jesus (3) and the verbs 'tend' (3) and *ἰάομαι* (4), with, again, assonantal punning. In the healing of the Ten Lepers (17.11–19), Jesus is addressed (13), they are 'cleansed' (14, 17), the verb *ἰάομαι* is used (15), and one is 'saved' (19). There is thus double punning, on 'saving' and 'healing'. In the healing of the blind beggar near Jericho (18.35–43), Jesus is addressed (38) and thrice named (37, 40, 42), and the beggar 'saved' (42). The pun on *Ἰησοῦς* ~ 'saviour' (as 'medical' saviour) is clear.

At the crucifixion (23.33–43), the rulers mock Jesus (34), saying (35): 'he saved others, let him save himself', as, similarly, the soldiers (37) and one of the criminals crucified with Jesus (39). Their mocking *inter alia*, but importantly, denies the etymology *Jesus* ~ saviour (and specifically its medical sense). Luke helps this etymological play, by naming Jesus in the immediate context of 34, as the other Evangelists do not, and, by omitting Jesus' quotation of *Psalms* 22 and any mention of Elijah, he keeps the focus on this central pun. Of course, as in *Mark* and *Matthew*, existing Christians know, and new readers learn, that these mockings are refuted by Jesus' 'rising', the ultimate healing, just as his own healings caused others to 'rise' (4.39; 5.25; 5.23–24; 7.14, 22; 8.54 [the last three with *ἐγείρω*). Differently from *Mark* and *Matthew* (and, indeed, from most Classical biography), Luke's whole biography of the mortal Jesus is bookended by apparent failure and by apparent Jewish rejection (< 4.16–30), thus giving Jesus' 'rising' even greater weight.

Although his treatment of the crucifixion is (from the point of view of our theme) simpler than those of Mark and Matthew, Luke's general treatment of the *Ἰησοῦς* ~ *ἰάομαι* pun is much more emphatic and much more voluminous than those of the other Evangelists. One might even think it excessive and, sometimes, flat-footed, except that commentators miss it, and one might explain this greater emphasis as a riposte to the (in this respect)

more minimalist *John* (if John is earlier), or as preparation for *Acts*, where, importantly, the post-Ascension Jesus' healing continues, or indeed in other ways.¹¹⁷

In any case, readers of the second book of Luke's unified 'double-work' have already been sensitised to puns on Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι and on related terminology. Or, if they have not been, it is not Luke's fault.

2.5 Acts

Like the *Luke* narrative, *Acts* begins by emphasising the name of Jesus: 1.1 'The first *logos* I made about all the things, Theophilos, that Jesus began to do and teach'. Indeed, the *Acts* Preface is ring-structured by Jesus' name (1.11 ~ 1.1). The arresting statement that *Luke*, a biography of Jesus, concerned what 'Jesus *began* to do and teach' makes an essential *Jesusological* point: the risen and ascended Jesus is still *alive* and active in the world, both within the narrative of *Acts* and within all subsequent narratives up to the Last Judgment (17.31) and beyond. Hence, generically, *Acts* combines historiography with biography—biography of Peter, Paul and the rest, but also the *continuing* biography of Jesus himself.

The narrative begins. Peter's Pentecost speech (2.14–36) names Jesus (22) and then claims (24): 'God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be overpowered by it'. The description involves double action: an active God and an also active Jesus, who 'could not be overpowered by death'. The terminology is partly 'medical' ('raised up', 'pangs'), and re-emphasises that the resurrection was the ultimate 'healing'. The use of 'pangs' suggests also 'rebirth'.¹¹⁸ Peter continues (31–32): 'He [David] foresaw and spoke of the rising of the Christ, that he was not left behind in Hades nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, of which all of us are witnesses'. The speech also plays on the etymology of Jesus as saviour (22 ~ 21). Peter quotes an eschatological prophecy of Joel, which ends (21) 'and it will be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved', and he then begins his own 'words' with the name of Jesus (22), effecting a neat 'slide' between God as Lord and Jesus as Lord.

In the healing of the lame man at the Gate of the Temple (3.1–10), the healing powers of Jesus' followers, adumbrated in *Luke*, first acquire narrative weight proportionate to those of Jesus himself in the Gospel. This is part

¹¹⁷ P. 171.

¹¹⁸ The phrase's biblical parallels (Bruce [1951] 92; Barrett [2004] 143) do not diminish its force within the continuing imagery. The precise interpretation of the phrase (Barrett [2004] 143–44) does not affect the present analysis. On the general theme of miracles in *Acts* see now Penner (2011) with much useful bibliography.

of the general ‘succession’ pattern of *Acts* rightly stressed by Charles Talbert.¹¹⁹ The healing is effected as follows: Peter commands (6–7): “‘In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk.’” He took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made firm.’ Later (12–16), Peter states that the man walks and has perfect health because of the name of Jesus, ‘the author of life, whom God raised from the corpses’ (15). Here Jesus’ healing powers acquire cosmic significance (‘the author of life’). Peter stresses that the man has been made strong through ‘his name’ (ring-structuring with 6).

Peter and John continue ‘proclaiming in Jesus the raising, the one from the corpses’ (4.2)—‘healing’ vocabulary is maintained and resurrection is Jesus’ greatest ‘healing’—and they are therefore arrested and brought before the Council. Peter proclaims that the lame man was ‘saved’ (9) and is ‘in sound health’ (10, *ὑγιής*) ‘by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene ... whom God raised from the corpses’ (10), ‘and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among human beings in which we must be saved’ (12). While the name of ‘Christ’ also signifies here, the main emphasis is on ‘Jesus’ as both ‘healer’ and ‘saviour’. The use of *ὑγιής*, in close association with Jesus’ name, is reminiscent of *John* 5.15¹²⁰ and suggests the etymology, ‘*Jesus* makes people *sound*’. That, surely, is what *healers do*. Again, Jesus’ ‘healing’ is now, emphatically and explicitly, unique among humans, and inferior only to God’s. So much for the Caesars. And this ‘healing’ unites simple physical healing and *salvific* healing. The importance of the name of ‘Jesus’ is re-emphasised (18), and the episode closes by ring structure with a summary allusion to the ‘healing’ (*ἰάσεως*) of the lame man (22). The pun is clear, and it is structural. I have already noted Luke’s distinctive use of the noun (*Luke* 13.32). Luke’s use of language can be diamond-sharp. (Where it is not, as in the constantly repeated association of *Ἰησοῦς* and *ἰάομαι* in *Luke*, there should be other explanations).¹²¹

In the collective prayer of the Believers (4.23–31), there is an allusion to ‘Jesus, whom [God] anointed’ (27), referencing ‘Jesus’ as (also) ‘Christos’ (the ‘Anointed’), and a request that they be enabled ‘to speak your [God’s] word with all freedom of speech (29), while you stretch out your hand for healing [*ἰάσιν*] and signs and portents are done through the name of your holy servant/child [*παιδός*] Jesus [*Ἰησοῦ*]’ (30). As elsewhere, the two etymologies help each other. In the second, ‘healing’ etymology, God’s and Jesus’ healing activities are combined, and Jesus’ own are emphasised by the punning

¹¹⁹ Talbert (1974).

¹²⁰ P. 144.

¹²¹ Again, p. 171.

ring-structure ἴασιν ... Ἰησοῦ. As in *Exodus* 15.26,¹²² there is an implicit bilingual pun on Yahweh, Ἰάω, and ἴασιν, and one sees how readily early Christians who operated in Greek could connect ‘healing’ by Ἰάω with that by his son Ἰησοῦς. Here also Jesus’ healing’ seems to be connected with his wider ‘service’, in as much as παιδός equivocates between ‘servant’ and ‘child’.

In chapter 5, Peter performs ‘tending’ (16) on the ‘sick’ (15) and on those afflicted by ‘unclean spirits’ (16), and, when the High Priest reminds Peter and the apostles that they had been ordered not to teach in this name [implicitly, that of Jesus], the punning reply is that ‘God ... raised Jesus (30), who is leader and saviour’ (31).

8.7–8 records generalised ‘tending’ of ‘unclean spirits’, and in 9.17 Ananias names Jesus as commissioning Saul’s recovery of sight, which immediately occurs (18), and at 9.34, Peter heals Aeneas with the words: ‘Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you’ (Αἰνέα, ἰάται σε Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), whereupon Aeneas ‘arises’ and makes his bed. The ἰάται ~ Ἰησοῦς pun is helped by assonance. Luke is also here dramatising, proleptically, Jesus’—and Peter’s—‘healing’ of a ‘sick’ Rome. At least some of Luke’s Christian readers (and, indeed, some of his non-Christian readers) will know that, like Paul, Peter did get to Rome,¹²³ and that the ‘healing’ of Rome is part of the Christian prospectus. And, while Αἰνέα is on one level a Greek transliteration of the ‘Roman’ name Aeneas, no doubt Luke, like Virgil at *Aeneid* 12.946–7,¹²⁴ recalls the literal meaning of the original Greek name: ‘terrible’, thereby creating a novel, Christianised version of the stereotypical contrast between Roman fierceness and Greek culture. This Christian bid to supplant (or, perhaps, sublate) Greek culture acquires more flesh in *Acts* 17.

Peter’s restoration to life of Tabitha/Dorcas (parallel to Jesus’ restoration to life of several people), employs the vocabulary of ‘arising’ (40–41). Luke uses the two names, Jewish and Greek, both of which mean ‘gazelle’; the meaning ‘gazelle’ derives from the animal’s large, bright eyes; and when the dead Tabitha is told to ‘arise’, she ‘opens her eyes’ (40). The effect is lovely. Restoration of life coincides with reactivation of name. There are thus further puns on ‘Dorcas’ as ‘the seeing one’ (Δορκάς ~ δερκόμαι) and ‘Dorcas’ as ‘the living one’, because to see is to live,¹²⁵ hence, as in the narrative of Paul’s healing, ‘healing’ involves restoration of sight, in Paul’s case both literal and (surely) metaphorical or spiritual.

¹²² P. 129.

¹²³ I take this tradition—although distorted in detail—to be basically sound. The crucial evidence is *1 Clem.* 5.4–5 (90s–early 100s).

¹²⁴ O’Hara (1996) 242.

¹²⁵ *LSJ* s.v. δέρκομαι.

Peter's vision from the Lord rescinding Jewish food laws (a vision paralleling Paul's on the road to Damascus [9.1–9]) and Peter's consequent association with the centurion Cornelius (10.1–30) show that no food is 'unclean' (14, 15), nor is any man 'unclean' (29). Is this profound 'insight' of Peter's, deriving from a vision 'seen', the result of the continuing 'healing' activity of Ἰησοῦς? Many things in the text (including *Luke*) so far support the answer 'yes', and it is further supported by Peter's summary of Jesus' ministry to Cornelius (38): 'As for Jesus (Ἰησοῦν), the one from Nazareth, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing (ἰώμενος) all those overmastered by the Devil, because God was with him'. Here the statement that God 'anointed' Jesus glosses his other name Χριστός and (as elsewhere) re-alerts readers to other punning possibilities. As before, Jesus' 'healing' is further illustrated by his 'being raised from the corpses' (41, 40). The whole sequence shows Ἰησοῦς decisively sublating Jewish purity laws.

A series of instances from chs. 2 to 10 shows that allusion to Jesus' 'healing' ministry comes naturally within extended expositions of doctrine. So, in Paul's speech to the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (13.16–41), 'Jesus' is named 'Saviour' (23), with the by now familiar pun, and he is 'raised from the corpses' (30), 'raised' (33), 'raised from the corpses, no longer going to return to corruption' (34), and, as the one 'whom God raised up he saw no corruption' (37). Subsequently at Lystra, Paul's healing of a cripple (14.8–10) involves 'saving' (9) and 'standing up' (10).

Before the Jerusalem Christian Council (15.1–29), Peter argues that God has 'cleansed' the hearts of the Gentiles (9), and ascribes the 'saving' both of Christians and Gentiles to the grace of 'the Lord Jesus' (11), with double punning, on Jesus as 'saviour' and as 'healer'.

Paul's journeys include exorcism of a slave girl (16.16–18). Over a period of days she shouts: 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim ... the way of salvation'. Paul exorcises her in the name of Jesus Christ. Here the true 'healing' and 'salvation' of 'Jesus' overcome the false 'salvation' of the pagan monotheistic god, the Hypsistos.¹²⁶ In the subsequent imprisonment at Philippi and the disorder caused by Paul and Silas' miraculous release, the terrified gaoler asks (30): 'Sirs/Lords (κύριοι), what must I do that I may be saved [in the sense of 'saved from immediate death']?', and they reply (31): 'believe in the Lord (κύριον)¹²⁷ Jesus Christ and you yourself

¹²⁶ On whom: Mitchell (1999); Mitchell and Van Nuffelen (2010). Mitchell rightly emphasises the Hypsistos as *the* pagan parallel to the Jewish and Christian monotheistic god.

¹²⁷ There is something of the same play/ambiguity as in *Matthew* 8.6, 8 and *John* 5.6, as from the gaoler's point of view Paul and Silas can now, after the earth-quake, be both 'sirs' (deserving of courtesy) and 'divine men' (because obviously divinely protected), and

will be saved and your household also' ['saved' (also) in the religious sense]. Since this is one of several passages in *Acts* where the post-ascension Jesus' activity evokes the activities of Dionysus, Jesus' 'saving' activity (emphasised by etymological punning) is implicitly preferred to that pagan god's.¹²⁸

The narrative of Paul in mainland Greece builds up to his encounter with the philosophers and his speech to the Areopagus (17.1–34), which is one of the greatest sequences in *Acts* (and in *Luke-Acts*) and one of the most complicated, and which can here be treated only selectively and summarily.¹²⁹

Paul preaches about Jesus (3) to the synagogue in Thessalonica with some success, but majority Jewish hostility results in attacks, both physical and judicial, on 'Jason' ('*Ἰάσων*') and Paul and Silas. 'Jason' is introduced quite out of the blue, he is named four times (5, 6, 7, 9), and once in the same verse as Jesus (7), whose own name 'rings' the whole episode (3, 7). Any reader or listener hitherto blind or deaf to the symbiotic relationship between divine 'healing' and Jesus' name is here being hit over the head. The effect is intensified by assonance. One might even criticise Luke's technique as crude—were it not that commentators unerringly miss this connection between 'Jason' and 'Jesus'. In Luke's defence, Paul's success with a Jew named '*Ἰάσων*' illustrates the progressive advance of the '*Ἰησοῦς*' movement within Judaism, just as the naming of the first '*Christians*' in 11.26 marks their 'succession' to *Jesus* as '*Christ*'. This is part of the general 'succession' quality of *Acts*, which Luke underlines with many deft touches such as this one. Jason's responsiveness also contrasts markedly with the rejectionism of (some of) the philosophers. There may also be another point (below). At any rate, as the narrative moves to *Acts*' central engagement with rival pagan wisdom, Jesus' 'healing' is very much in the air. More particularly, the *sound* of 'healing' is already in readers' or listeners' ears—or should be.

As, Socratically,¹³⁰ Paul dialogued with chance passersby in the *agora*, 'some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him, and some said: "What would this seed-collector be wanting to say?" But others said: "He seems to be an announcer of foreign divinities"—because he announced as good news Jesus and resurrection' (18).

So the philosophers, too, are *listening* to Paul, and while one group finds his teaching in the *agora* incomprehensible, the other produces a tentative

from Christian readers' point of view, they are *Christ-like*, though the apostles themselves then (re)define '*Ἰησοῦς*' as the true *κύριος*.

¹²⁸ Moles (2006b) 67, 80.

¹²⁹ For some earlier observations, see Moles (2006b) 71–74, 80–88; recent NT treatment: Rowe (2010). I intend a general treatment.

¹³⁰ Paul ~ Socrates: Sandnes (1993); Barrett (2004) 828–89; Alexander (2006/7) 62–68.

interpretation which on one level is quite obtuse, in that they miss Paul's true Socratic credentials, but which on another level shows a dim apprehension of difficult theological truths about the ambiguous status of Ἰησοῦς.¹³¹ There is also the usual interplay between internal and external audiences, with the latter facing, yet again, the same question as the philosophers: 'What do the words/names/sounds "Jesus" and "resurrection" mean to you?'¹³² This whole emphasis on sound and its interpretation reflects alike the conceptualisation of divine action as God's 'word' (*John* 1, etc.); the orality/aurality of Christian exposition¹³³ and of Christian reading;¹³⁴ the specific requirement to interpret these particular names/sounds rightly; and the representation of human responsiveness or unresponsiveness to God's word (as focused on Ἰησοῦς)¹³⁵ in terms of seeing and hearing, that is, of spiritual health (as in the familiar *Isaiah* prophecy).

The external audience also has to decode aurally the tentative response of the less blinkered philosophers, so as to understand them better and thus speak to them better, in just the same way as Paul himself moves from his '[visual] observation that the city was full of images' (16) and from his 'discovery of an altar on which was inscribed "To the Unknown God"' (23) to his '[visual and verbal] observation' that his audience are 'completely fearful of divinities in all respects' (22). Thus 'Jesus' and 'resurrection' must be making some sort of sense to the less blinkered philosophers, even if defective sense, as sounding like foreign divinities. 'Resurrection' (Ἀνάστασις) might suggest an abstract female divinity, and there is the additional possibility that they hear the word/name as similar to, though (as being 'foreign') different from, the ἀναστατήρια, sacrifices on recovery from *sickness* attested by Hesychius.¹³⁶ More disturbingly, they might also 'hear' 'resurrection' as akin to 'insurrection', for earlier in the chapter Paul and his companions have been accused of 'overturning the world' (17.6, with the cognate active parti-

¹³¹ See further Moles (2006) 83–85 and n. 57 above.

¹³² A similar aural demand occurs at *Acts* 11.26 χρηματίσαι τε πρώτως τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς, where it is crucial that readers/listeners 'hear' Χριστιανούς as cognate with χρηματίσαι: see Moles (forthcoming). I take it this 'aurality' is Luke's particularly intense version of Thucydidean 'vividness' (ἐνάργεια), for I believe that *Luke* 1.3 'recognise [etc.] the un-slipperiness [etc.]' includes in its many resonances allusion to Thucydides' (1.22.4) 'look at the clearness': Moles (2011).

¹³³ Cf. *Romans* 10.17 'belief comes from hearing, but hearing by the word of Christ'.

¹³⁴ N. 16.

¹³⁵ The emphasis is the same as *Luke* 1.2 (n. 116).

¹³⁶ See e.g. Bruce (1951) 333.

ciple ἀναστατώσαντες).¹³⁷ What sort of στάσις, then, is this ἀνάστασις? Does it bring ‘stability’, or world-wide *stasis*? The philosophers’ interest in political theory—and law and order—is piqued. As for Ἰησοῦς, having read so much before, and being here comprehensively softened up by the four times named ‘Jason’, readers must naturally suppose the philosophers to be connecting the name, albeit, again, in some distorted way, with ἰάομαι.¹³⁸ There is, again, a more particular distorted possible association, the goddess of healing, Ἰάσω,¹³⁹ who was ‘at home’ in Athens. Is this Ἰησοῦς, then, a political ‘healer’, or is he an ‘insurrectionist’?

Within Paul’s speech to the Areopagus,¹⁴⁰ some scholars¹⁴¹ see in 28 (‘for in him we live and move and are’) a quotation from a poem attributed to the (legendary) Cretan philosopher and holy man Epimenides, and, though the arguments are complicated and often nowadays evaded, they remain (I believe) decisive. The allusion is in fact self-justifying: no allusion could be more apt, since the outsider Epimenides effected the purification of Athens from plague (a ‘medical’ activity); had contact with the Areopagus; instituted altars to unknown gods; and, in the quotation alluded to, had Minos address his father Zeus, falsely entombed as dead, as ‘alive’, thereby paralleling and anticipating the allusion to the (entombed and then) resurrected Jesus. The

¹³⁷ Similar play at 24.5, 12, 15; as far as I can see, NT scholars miss these verbal interplays, which define Christian ‘politics’ (Christians are not ‘revolutionaries’, but the ἀνάστασις ‘revolutionises’ the world).

¹³⁸ See e.g. Bruce (1951) 333.

¹³⁹ See e.g. Bruce (1951) 333.

¹⁴⁰ The question of whether this is an actual trial, undergone by the historical Paul—or whether, at any rate (whatever about actual historicity), it is so *represented* by Luke—is hugely controversial; useful surveys in Wallace and Williams (1993) 91–94; Barrett (2004) 831–32. Given the Socratic analogy, the conjecture that Paul is introducing foreign divinities, the question of ‘insurrection’, the role of the Areopagus (in whatever sense of the term), the request for elucidation of Paul’s ‘new’ religious teaching, the ‘silent’ allusion to Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* (n. 142), and Paul’s own appeal to the Last *Judgement* (32), we should agree that Luke represents Paul’s appearance before the Areopagus as *trial-like*, and that this is important on several interpretative levels; on the other hand, I think it clear (*pace* Barnes [1969]; Rowe [2010] 37) that Luke does not *definitely* represent it as a trial and there are obviously incongruous elements. The overall effect is of an iconic, ‘mythic’ trial, an effect which fits Luke’s larger narrative, theological and philosophical purposes. In any case, the question cannot be dissociated from the larger question of the historicity or fictionality of the whole episode of Paul in Athens as represented by Luke (n. 149), due account taken of the fact that the historical Paul did visit Athens (1 *Thessalonians* 3.1).

¹⁴¹ Lake (1933) 249–51 (followed by many); cf. also Bruce (1951) 338; Colaclides (1973) rejects this in favour of an allusion to Eur. *Bacch.* 506; the latter is, I believe, persuasive (see Moles (2006b) 73–74), but does not preclude the former. It will be clear from my discussion that, and why, I reject the minimalising view of Luke’s *paideia* in Padilla (2009).

last parallel creates a delicious irony, for Epimenides' championing of Zeus as 'alive' rather than 'dead' (the latter being the orthodox Christian view of the matter) is necessarily deconstructed by his famous claim that 'all Cretans are liars', a claim that was known to some Pauline Christians (*Titus* 1.12).

Paul's speech is short-circuited by the hubbub that arises when, in the context of the Last Judgement, he mentions the resurrection (31), surely (again) the healing to end all healings, as readers already know (or, by now, should know), and as the context reinforces. At this point, the philosophers again divide into two groups, and again it is a question of 'hearing'—of how one 'hears' or interprets (32): 'but when they *heard* of the resurrection of corpses, some jeered, but others said: "We will *hear* you again about this"'. In context, it is natural to take these 'some'/'others', the first group contemptuously dismissive, the second at any rate still formally open-minded, as corresponding to the original 'some'/'others' of 18, and the two groups as corresponding in turn to the there separately named 'Epicureans' and 'Stoics'. This also makes philosophical sense, as Paul's own speech implies, and it complicates interpretation of the whole encounter. Outside the philosophers' world, however, some individuals did accept Paul's teaching (34), 'among them, Dionysios the Areopagite'. The pagan theophoric name crystallises the subliminal textual presence of the pagan god Dionysus,¹⁴² just as the pagan theophoric name 'Jason' emphasises the truth of the monotheistic Jewish-Christian god 'Yahweh' and the true credentials of 'Ἰησοῦς'.

The whole episode, then, establishes the superiority of the healing of Yahweh and 'Ἰησοῦς (and also of course of the Epimenidean Paul, healer of Athens, if she responds) in the field of healing (as, of course, in all else) to a series of pagan targets.

One of these targets is 'Ἴασω, goddess of healing, whose name is so like that of 'Ἰησοῦς. Another is Dionysus, referenced both in this chapter and in chapter 16, and also a 'saving' or 'healing' god. Another is the greatest pagan god Zeus, whose apparent supreme and saving powers do not include the raising of corpses, as had been established at the very first trial before the Areopagus.¹⁴³ Another is the *poets* who celebrated those gods in this field: namely, Epimenides, Cleanthes (28), Aratus (28), Euripides (*Bacchae*) and Aeschylus (*Eumenides*). Another, surely, is Asclepius, son of Iaso, himself the most distinctive pagan healing god, and credited both in myth and in reality with raising people from the dead, and thus Jesus' greatest natural pagan rival, as Julian recognises.¹⁴⁴ Another, certainly, is the Hypsistos. As we have

¹⁴² Moles (2006b) 85–87.

¹⁴³ Aes. *Eum.* 647–8 ἀνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὴν αἰμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις / ἅπαξ θανόντος, οὔτις ἐστ' ἀνάστασις. Cf. e.g. Bruce (1951) 340 for this 'silent' allusion.

¹⁴⁴ See Appendix 2.

seen, he was referenced in the immediately preceding ch. 16 (in the incident with the prophetic slave-girl). Whatever the notorious problematics (which need not here detain us) of Paul's appeal (23) to an inscription to 'the unknown god' (or, possibly better, 'to unknown god' without the article), the description objectively fits the Hypsistos, whose followers included 'God-fearers' (mentioned as one of the groups dialoguing with Paul in the Agora [17]); the 'unknown god' is formally here being adduced as a pagan monotheistic god amidst the forest of pagan polytheism; and the Hypsistos was certainly paganism's closest approximation to the Jewish and Christian monotheistic god, while in Athens he was also a healer.¹⁴⁵ One should also presumably think of the *hero* 'Jason', whose name means healer, because of the four times named Jason in this episode, and because Jason is a hero who in various ways overcomes death, but in myth—not history—unlike Jesus (Christians claim).

What of the philosophers themselves? Philosophers in general, of course, promise philosophical therapy, healing and medicine, and the claim is naturally made both by Epicureans and Stoics, the latter of whom are further referenced by the well-known quotations from the Stoics Cleanthes and Aratus (28).¹⁴⁶ As we have seen, Paul's speech has little or nothing to offer Epicureans (nor could it have), and it is the Epicureans who initially dismiss Paul as a 'seed-collector' and then jeer at his mention of resurrection. So we should not forget that 'Epicurus' means '(divine) helper', that Epicureans celebrated Epicurus' name, and that 'Epicurean healing' is therefore one of Luke's specific targets here.¹⁴⁷ By contrast, the door is left open to the Stoics—although only if they become followers of Jesus and the Jewish-Christian God, only if, for practical purposes, they define themselves out of existence. That is why it is Paul, not the Stoics or Epicureans, who is here—and, indeed, elsewhere in *Acts*—the true heir of Socrates.¹⁴⁸

What of the political questions raised by the resurrection? Ἰησοῦς the 'healer', the man whom God 'stood up [ἀναστήσας] from the corpses' will be God's agent on the day that God 'has stood up' [ἔστησεν] for the judgement

¹⁴⁵ Mitchell (1999) 122; (2010) 176 n. 44; more generally (2010) 189–96; *OCD*³ (1996) 739.

¹⁴⁶ We should add Posidonius (Hommel [1955] and [1957]) and Luke's Stoic contemporary Dio Chrysostom, whose *Olympian Oration*, earlier than *Luke-Acts* in my view (n. 23; Moles (1995) 181), and concerned, from a pagan point of view, with analogous issues, including the value of religious 'images', contains (12.28) a close verbal parallel to 17.27, and whose *Alexandrian Oration* uses the word 'seed-collecting' of disreputable 'street philosophers' (32.9). The noble and profound *Olympian Oration* is surely a most worthy pagan 'opponent' for Paul/Luke.

¹⁴⁷ Moles (2006b) 87–88.

¹⁴⁸ Ignatius (n. 62), was presumably thinking—*mutatis mutandis*—of this aspect (false philosophers vs true) of *Acts* 17.

of the world (31). So Jesus' healing dwarfs by the widest possible margin all judicial or political 'healings' by bodies such as the Areopagus itself or by any rulers, including world-wide rulers such as Roman emperors.

The Areopagus episode poses huge and fascinating interpretative problems. But even with the focus solely on 'healing', Luke's exploitation of the pun on Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι shows enormous literary and theological creativity, as well as dazzling economy (an economy, indeed, at odds with, and enhanced by, much of the rest of his treatment of the pun, including the first sections of chapter 17 itself). His creativity will be all the greater the more fictional we believe the episode to be. Presumably, it is the natural inclination of most *Histos* writers and readers to regard this episode as being more or less fictional, and there are good arguments for this position.¹⁴⁹ 'Felt' fictionality would import further levels of implication. But such considerations take us too far from our theme.

The narrative proceeds.

When Paul is at Ephesus (19.1–41) and various healings are done, itinerant Jewish exorcists unsuccessfully attempt to imitate them by invoking Jesus' name (13–17); the episode is ring-structured by the name of Jesus (13, 17), which again emphasises, though in a more practical religious context, the contrast between false healers and the one true healer. In the second version of Paul's conversion narrative (22.6–16), Ananias tells Paul: 'rise up and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling upon his name'. Jesus is again being glossed as 'healer'. In Malta, Paul performs more 'healing' and 'tending' (28.7–9). Jesus' name is not mentioned, for the simple reason that Paul and his companions are not trying to convert these benevolent but primitive people.

Finally, we come to the end of *Acts* (28.30–31), which, like the episode of Paul in Athens, is a very great piece of writing, with many different layers of meaning and of implications, and with the challenging 'unresolvedness' that is a feature of the endings of so much of the most thought-provoking ancient historiography.¹⁵⁰ I again keep the focus on 'healing'.¹⁵¹

'And he [Paul] remained [in Rome] a whole two years in a private lodging, and he received all who came in to him, (31) heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all freedom of speech and unhinderedly.'

¹⁴⁹ E.g. Barrett (2004) 824–26.

¹⁵⁰ Marincola (2005).

¹⁵¹ I treat some other aspects in Moles (2006b) 88–94; (2012).

The end follows Paul's attempt—largely unsuccessful—to persuade the leaders of the Roman Jews about Jesus (28.23–8; 28.17–22). This attempt culminates in Paul's quotation of the familiar passage from *Isaiah*, cited by name; he has already twice alluded to it before unresponsive Jewish audiences (13.46–47; 18.6); and he now quotes it *in extenso*:

‘Go to this people [the Jews] and say: “You shall hear with your hearing and you will not understand; and seeing you will see, but you will not see. (27) For the heart of this people has thickened, and they have heard with their ears heavily, and they have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and turn and I [God] will [or: would] heal them”.’

It is unnecessary to rehearse manuscript detail here: suffice that at 27 there is a massive textual split between *ἰάσομαι* and *ἰάσωμαι*.

To the *Isaiah* quotation Paul adds (28): ‘Be it known then to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the races (= Gentiles); they themselves will listen’.

Undoubtedly, Luke is here justifying the Christian Gentile mission, but for us the key interpretative question, which, as we have seen, also arises with *Matthew* and *John* and which has again prompted endless scholarly debate, is whether Luke (writing, we have agreed, after 70) represents the Christian mission to the Jews as finally over and whether he is in some strong sense of the term anti-Jewish or even anti-Semitic,¹⁵² because in the disasters of 70 (foreshadowed in *Luke-Acts* and only a few years after the present dramatic situation) the Jews receive divine punishment for their rejection both of Jesus himself and of the renewed Jesus movement after his death. That was how the early Christian Fathers understood the Jewish War,¹⁵³ and their understanding was underpinned by an interpretation of the Gospels, including *Luke-Acts*, which I think essentially right (though beyond our scope here).

The reading of 27 has recently attracted scrupulous technical debate.¹⁵⁴ On the one hand, Martin Karrer upholds *ἰάσομαι* and claims that Luke constructs a ‘Bollwerk gegen jeden Anti-judaismus’. On the other hand, Enno Edzard Popkes regards the textual problem as insoluble.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the mas-

¹⁵² Recent survey: Donaldson (2010) 55–80; useful bibliography in Popkes (2009) 614–15.

¹⁵³ Lampe (1984); the fact that this theology—or theodicy—is ridiculous and disgusting is no reason for denying its existence.

¹⁵⁴ Karrer (2000); Popkes (2009).

¹⁵⁵ Karrer (2000) 271; Popkes (2009) 615.

sive textual split presumably reflects (some) early Christians' dubiety about how to read the scene. The textual split in fact goes back to the Septuagint itself, where *ἰάσομαι* is the majority reading but V has *ἰάσωμαι*, and the majority reading is itself a 'softening' of the uncompromising Hebrew. But there is a crucial situational difference between *Isaiah* and *Luke-Acts*. Neither Jews who used the Septuagint version of *Isaiah* nor Jews who used the original Hebrew can have regarded God's alienation from the Jewish people (which, after all, is a consequence of their 'turning away' from him) as irremediable. That possibility (whether from a Christian or Jewish point of view) only becomes acute with the rise of the Jesus movement, with its rejection by the majority of Jews, and with the disasters of the Jewish War, including the destruction of the Temple. So the difference between *ἰάσομαι* and *ἰάσωμαι* is of *some* import in the present context.

Expert linguists such as Karrer and Popkes debate the nuances of the difference. It seems, *mirabile dictu*, that within such subjunctive clauses (some) Hellenistic Greek can adopt a 'vivid' indicative, and there are even parallels for this in the NT.¹⁵⁶ Presumably, however, the general associations of the indicative make the possibility envisaged less 'remote' and more real. Presumably also, it is possible to regard *καὶ ἰάσομαι* as an admittedly very abrupt main clause. My own view (for what it is worth) is that, however one construes the Greek, the indicative is the better reading, for the following reasons: (a) it is always the *lectio difficilior*; (b) it is the majority reading in the Septuagint; and (c) *Matthew* and *John* both read the indicative.¹⁵⁷ They are using the passage from *Isaiah* in essentially the same context as *Acts*, that is, the question of where the Jews in general stand in relation to God, when they have rejected Jesus, although the *dramatic context* is even more acute in *Acts*, in that the Jews have now rejected the *continuing* Jesus movement, and the Jewish War is only a few years away, as all readers know and as *Luke-Acts* has frequently reminded them.

But there are also important considerations *beyond* the textual problem.

First, Luke is explicit that *some* of the Jews who heard Paul were persuaded by the things being said (28.24). There is, then, *some* sense of a repetition (albeit with differences) of his reception by the philosophers in Athens (17.32, 34). If that episode leaves some 'openness' about future responsiveness, so also should this one.

Second, Paul's own martyrdom (which informed readers know about anyway) has been heavily foreshadowed in the text,¹⁵⁸ and with the implica-

¹⁵⁶ Including (I believe) *Philippians* 2.10 (p. 162 below).

¹⁵⁷ See pp. 140 and 145.

¹⁵⁸ Discussion, with references and bibliography: Moles (2006b) 88–94; (2012); few scholars resist this implication.

tion that this martyrdom, while great and glorious and the gateway to heaven, like Stephen's explicitly described martyrdom (7.55–59), is also the just punishment of his own earlier murderous persecution of the followers of Jesus, including Stephen.¹⁵⁹ Thus Paul himself seems to furnish an inspiring parallel for the Jews in general, whose punishment in the Jewish War is indeed here foreshadowed but also, proleptically, already discounted, as not being God's last word for the Jews.¹⁶⁰ We have seen (I believe) similar thinking in *Matthew* and *John*.

Third, not only does the emphasis on 'all' in 28.31 logically include (some) Jews, as well as Gentiles, but the 'all' is proleptic of the Christification of the whole earth. Obviously, I cannot argue that now,¹⁶¹ but note that in 30–31 'all' comes twice, reinforcing the sense of 'all-ness'.

Fourth, seemingly no commentator registers that the entire sequence is book-ended by the name of Jesus (28.30; 28.23). That name gets even greater emphasis on the second occasion: the very last sentence of *Acts*, where it both ring-structures with the start of *Acts* (1.1) and contrasts eloquently with Jesus' 'namelessness' in the *Luke* Preface, at the very beginning of the double work *Luke-Acts*. The name of 'Jesus' sounds and resounds through this sequence and, as often elsewhere, chimes also with the cognate 'Isaiah'. As in *Matthew* and *John*, Jesus' name must interact with 28.27, *irrespective* of whether *ἰάσομαι* or *ἰάσωμαι* is read (even though I have argued the superiority of the former), especially given (once again) that Jewish unresponsiveness to Jesus is characterised in terms of visual and aural impairment: of spiritual *sickness*.

By contrast, the thrice named Jews (28.17, 19, 21) are 'not of a united voice [*ἀσύμφωνοι*] to one another' (28.25). The word *ἀσύμφωνοι* itself gains tremendous force from being *hapax* not only in Luke but also in the whole of the NT. I translate it thus, because, although the sense of social or political (or musical) 'discord' is important, even more important, as we shall see, is the notice of 'voice'. The Jews' 'lack of a united voice' is the present lamentable reality—and 'present' alike in the sense of the 'present' dramatic situation within the text, in the sense of 'the present' of Luke's time of writing, and, even, in the sense of all 'presents', until ...? Is there an 'until'? Will the 'present' *always* be 'present', or will it be replaced by some different reality? It seems to me that it would be incompatible with the tremendous and *all-enveloping* emphasis on the 'healing' powers of 'the Healer', if the implication were: 'The Jews have had their chance and "the Healer" won't heal *them*'. Rather, like Paul himself and like Tabitha/Dorcas, they will get their

¹⁵⁹ Barrett (2004) 457 on 9.16: 'Patitur Paulus quae fecerat Saulus'; Moles (2012) develops this.

¹⁶⁰ I do not suggest this theology is tenable: see n. 153.

¹⁶¹ Moles (2012).

‘sight’ back: ‘Jesus’ is the ultimate ‘healer’ of ‘all’ (28.30): his ‘healing ministry’ has universal and timeless power, including the still un-persuaded and (from the points of view of writer and readers) already heavily punished Jews.

And fifth and last, when the Jews here are described as ‘not of a united voice to one another’, the formulation makes one of many ring-structures linking the end of *Acts* to the beginning.¹⁶² Christian mission in Jerusalem began with Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus’ followers’ speaking in different tongues which were comprehensible to Jews from all over the known world and yet caused general perplexity as to the meaning of the event (2.1–12). Mission is there confined to Jews, but universal mission is projected, both because the Jews concerned come from all over the world and because the event proleptically reverses the curse of Babel (*Genesis* 11.1–9):¹⁶³ before that curse ‘the whole world was one lip, and there was one *voice* to all’ (1); after it, ‘each [could not] hear the *voice* of his neighbour’ (7).

At the end of *Acts*, the Jews in Rome are ‘not of a united *voice* to one another’ in their response to Jesus. Here again (as in *Acts* 17), what is at stake is one’s ‘response’ (a verbal term) to the ‘word’ of God, as here *said* by Paul (24), and as instantiated in *Jesus*, the *name* of the divine ‘word’. But the universal Christian mission, having got as far as Rome, centre of the temporal world, is now well under way. Jewish disagreement over Jesus is unfinished business within this universal mission—but it is business that will be finished, and not by the Jewish War, but by the universal and timeless power of the Healer. At that point, the Jews will ‘assent’ to ‘Jesus’ as ‘Lord’. As the (probable, and, probably, pre-Pauline) hymn in *Philippians* 2.9–10 (written shortly after the dramatic situation at the end of *Acts*) puts it, ‘God has exalted him above and graced him the name [‘Lord’] above every name, (10) in order that every knee should bend at the name of Jesus, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth, (11) and every tongue will say out loud together [ἐξομολογήσεται] that Ἰησοῦς *Chreestos* is Lord, to the glory of God the Father’. Almost inevitably, it seems, there is here a textual question as to whether ἐξομολογήσεται (future) or ἐξομολογήσεται (subjunctive) should be read, but the hymn itself reworks *Isaiah* 45.23 ἐξομολογήσεται, where we note the straight, uncontested, indicative. Thus the hymn, like the end of *Acts* when read in combination with the Pentecost episode at the beginning, undoes the curse of Babel, and anticipates a future where ‘all’ ‘together’ will ‘say’ or ‘voice’ that ‘Jesus is Lord’.

Now there are interesting parallels between the end of *Acts* and this *Philippians* passage: both base themselves on *Isaiah*; both exhibit crucial textual

¹⁶² See again Moles (2012).

¹⁶³ Bruce (1951) 86.

confusion between subjunctive and indicative; both use the word ‘all’ twice (‘every’ and ‘all’ being the same word in Greek); and both have a ‘prison’ context (in *Acts*, Paul is currently under house arrest in Rome and proleptically in prison; *Philippians* was written shortly afterwards when Paul was actually in prison in Rome).

Whether Luke knows, uses or alludes to any of Paul’s epistles is disputed among scholars, with perhaps a majority arguing the contrary. There are, however, sensible positive arguments,¹⁶⁴ and subtle evocation of the *Philippians* hymn is an extremely attractive possibility, made even easier if the hymn existed independently of Paul. The hymn’s sentiments would trump the current unresolvedness of the Jews being ‘not of a united voice to one another’ in their response to Jesus. One might even say that the hymn *qua* hymn is the universal divine ‘music’ which will overcome current Jewish ‘discord’ (which can be a musical term) about Jesus. In any case, there is a sense here (as in *Acts* 17) that the name/sound of ‘Jesus’ transcends all sounds.

Having gone so far, we may revisit the actual Philippi narrative in *Acts*. Paul and Silas’ imprisonment was miraculously ended in response to their ‘hymning God’ (16.25). What ‘hymn’ were they singing in prison? There may (especially just before chapter 17) be Socratic resonances,¹⁶⁵ but they would be a bonus, not a main explanation. A smart suggestion¹⁶⁶ is that, just as the narrative is a foundation narrative of the Philippian church, so the ‘hymn’ is an aetiology of the great *Philippian hymn*. And the Philippi narrative culminated in the Gentile gaoler’s being ‘saved’ through his ‘believing’ in ‘Jesus as Lord’ (31–34). That is the ‘gap’, on the Jewish side, that remains to be filled at the end of *Acts*, but it is a gap that will certainly be filled.

One may speculate still further about the sources of Luke’s stupendous creativity, alike literary and theological, at the end of *Acts*. As we have seen with Paul and the Athenian philosophers, the historicity of much of the *Acts* narrative polarises scholarly responses, some regarding it as extremely historical, others as more or less fiction. In this case, one should hardly doubt that, on his arrival in Rome as everywhere else, and despite his being under house-arrest, Paul did attempt to preach to non-Christian Jews, and that, if he did, his success was at best mixed.¹⁶⁷ And on the conservative view (with which on this issue I happen to agree), Luke was with him (28.14 ‘that was

¹⁶⁴ See e.g. Witherington (1998) 430–438, 568, 610–617; Mason (2005) 264; Dunn (2009) 77–79.

¹⁶⁵ Barrett (2004) 793 and others.

¹⁶⁶ Which I owe to a sermon by the Reverend Jonathan Roberts; the hymn’s focus on Jesus does not prevent its being a hymn addressed to God and directed, explicitly, to his glory.

¹⁶⁷ Measured discussion: Barrett (2004) 1237.

how we came to Rome’), hence an eye-witness of Paul’s attempt(s).¹⁶⁸ It is possible that Paul would have used the famous *Isaiah* passage on that occasion (or those occasions), especially as the historical Paul uses a truncated version of it in his letter to the Romans (*Romans* 11.8), precisely in the context of the discussion of the majority of Jews being ‘hardened’ against acceptance of Jesus. It is also possible—and, I would say, altogether likelier—that Luke, knowing of the importance of this *Isaiah* passage from the earliest days of Christianity, having read Paul’s use of it in *Romans*, and (I believe) having also read how it was used in *Matthew* and *John*, ‘transferred’ it to the present context to achieve the effects here discussed. On this interpretation, his engagement with *Matthew* had particular point. Whereas Matthew used the beginning (1.21), middle (13.13–17) and end (27.32–50) of his Gospel to convey the notion that the Jews as a people would be ‘saved’ and ‘healed’ by ‘Jesus, Saviour and Healer’, Luke kept this notion to the end of his unified double-work, thus elucidating that this ‘healing’ would take place even after the apparently crushing divine punishment of the Jewish War, a punishment that came less than a decade after the end of his narrative.

The possibility that Paul is among Luke’s direct inspirations here again deserves consideration. The complicated and difficult *Romans* 11 argues that the Jews in general will be saved after the full complement of the Gentiles comes in (25, 30–32).¹⁶⁹ That seems consonant with the end of *Acts*, as here interpreted. The two writers use the same *Isaiah* quotation and stress God’s ‘all-ness’ (11.26, 32). Paul supports his claim (26) that ‘all Israel’ will be ‘saved’ by another passage from *Isaiah* (59.26): ‘The Deliverer [ὁ ῥυόμενος] will come from Zion. He will turn away irreverence from Jacob’. Paul does not then name ‘Jesus’ but he is making an *implicit* pun on Ἰησοῦς ~ ‘saviour’. Thus broad consonance between the end of *Acts* and *Romans* 11 is supplemented by detailed parallels. *Acts*’ use of the ‘healing’ etymology instead of the historical Paul’s ‘saving’ one partly reflects the overall economy of Luke’s punning on ‘Jesus’, partly his need to clarify *Matthew* (above), but also the intrinsic needs of the post-Jewish War situation, in which ‘healing’ was more appropriate than ‘saving’, especially as compared with the situation faced by Paul in the early 60s.

Thus *Acts*’ use of the pun on Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι is wholly organic to the developing narrative of early Christianity in all its expansions and complexities, and Luke brings the Jesusology of the pun to a triumphant climax at the very close of his unified double-work. His use of the pun is undoubtedly

¹⁶⁸ I discuss the notorious (and endlessly discussed) ‘we’-passages and their implications for authorship and other interpretative matters in Moles (2012).

¹⁶⁹ I am aware there are other interpretations.

both richer and subtler in *Acts* than it is in *Luke*, with the latter's almost excessive collocation of Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι.

3 Conclusions

Of the texts under consideration, *Mark*, *Matthew*, *John* and *Luke-Acts* all exploit the pun on Ἰησοῦς and ἰάομαι (and on cognate and related terms), and they all derive profound 'Jesusology' from it. All the others do well, but Luke uses the pun the most extensively, the most illuminatingly and the most creatively, gives it its widest application, and takes it to its greatest heights (especially in *Acts* 17 and 28). Those who believe 'Luke' to be 'the beloved physician' may find a personal interest here (as have many), and they may speculate on some sort of psychological affinity between Luke the healer and this aspect of 'Jesusology'. But that is cod psychology, and in fact Luke's interest is far more in 'the cure of souls'. He is interested in physical healings primarily because they validate Jesus' wider 'healing' credentials and because such healings always have eschatological import (for Luke). But since I myself am one of those who believe Luke to be 'the beloved healer', I would not exclude the possibility that Luke's greatly increased emphasis on 'healing' functions (also) as a sort of subtextual autobiographical *sphragis*, in something of the same way as the constant puns on 'hours', 'flaccidity' and 'ears' in the poetry of the Roman poet Horatius Flaccus,¹⁷⁰ or the Russian composer Shostakovich's inscribing his own initials in some of his symphonies and string quartets. Alternatively, one might hypothesise that the extreme Lukan emphasis reflects both a time (at the end of the sequence of the canonical gospels) and a cultural context in which Jesus' healing (and general Christian healing) was coming into increasing competition with Asclepius', although there seems little or no control over such a hypothesis.¹⁷¹

As for the datings of the pun and for the religious and cultural contexts in which it was deployed, the examples of *Mark*, *Matthew*, *John* and *Luke-Acts* indicate widespread Christian awareness of it, by, say, the last third of the first century. I say 'widespread', because it is not a matter only of the authors involved but also of their readers and listeners, nor is it a matter only of direct punning (Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι) but also of 'punning by synonym'. Those readers and listeners (in contrast to modern readers and listeners) cannot possibly have been blind or deaf to the insistent phenomenon, which was evidently thoroughly embedded in early Christian consciousness. *Mark* spe-

¹⁷⁰ Moles (2007a) 168, 169, 171, 173.

¹⁷¹ For the parallel (suggested here by Todd Penner): Wells (1998) 227–28; Telford (1999) 90; Penner (2011); and, indeed, Julian (Appendix 2).

cifically takes the pun back to c. 70. But these findings must be further retrojectable. The occurrence of the pun in *Matthew* and *Luke* in common source contexts independent of *Mark* indicates its presence already in Q, in, say, the 40–50s. Even if one does not believe in Q, these shared contexts indicate some sort of past material, older than *Mark*, which had the pun. And if one admits a written Greek *narrative* about Jesus before *Mark*,¹⁷² that narrative must also have had it.

Further back again, given Jesus' tremendous reputation for healing, the punning association must have been made as early as the first use of the Greek-Jewish form of his name, whether already in Jesus' lifetime (by Greeks or Romans or by monoglot Hellenist Jews or in communication with Greek-speakers in Greek),¹⁷³ or soon after his death, as the renewed Jesus movement began its mission in Greek-speaking contexts. Indeed, it is likely that Jesus himself would have known of it, even used it: there are good grounds for supposing that he knew and spoke (some) Greek;¹⁷⁴ he surely referred to himself as a 'healer'; he was fond of puns; and he seems to have been capable of making bilingual ones.¹⁷⁵

The whole area of 'active' bilingualism (as opposed to passive knowledge that Ἰησοῦς was the Jewish-Greek form of a name that in Hebrew meant 'Yahweh saves') opens up further perspectives. Just as there must have been Jews who saw a bilingual pun behind the Septuagint translation of *Exodus* 15.26,¹⁷⁶ and who found piquancy in the same translation's version of *2 Chronicles* 16.12–13 ('in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, *Asa* developed a serious foot disease. Yet even with the severity of his disease, he did not seek the Lord's help but turned only to his *healers*. So he died in the forty-first year of his reign', because 'ásê' is Aramaic for 'healer' and 'Asa' is generally supposed to be derived from it),¹⁷⁷ so there must have been educated bilingual Jews who heard of Jesus' self-representation as an ἰατρός in the apophthegm recorded in *Mark* 2.17 and then thought: 'Is that not uncannily like the apophthegm attributed to the Greek Cynic philosopher Antisthenes?'.¹⁷⁸ If so, not only does the potential for the dissemination of the basic pun on 'Jesus' ~ 'healer' increase, but so also does the potential for 'competition' between

¹⁷² See n. 34.

¹⁷³ Note *John* 12.20–22, where 'Greeks' (certainly 'Greek-speakers', whatever their other identity) negotiate with Philip and Andrew (both Greek names) about 'seeing' Jesus.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. e.g. Dunn (2003) 315; Moles (2006a) 98, with references; cf. also p. 138 above.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. e.g. Keener (2011) 180, with references.

¹⁷⁶ See p. 129.

¹⁷⁷ And of course one then wonders about a bilingual connexion between 'ásê' and ἰάομαι, especially in its aorist and future forms; cf. n. 59 above.

¹⁷⁸ D.L. 6.6 (with Collins (2007) 195–96).

‘healing’ by Ἰησοῦς and that by other groups (in this case, Greek philosophers). Of the canonical Gospels, it is *Mark* that most registers this bilingual (even trilingual!) context, but it is also present in *Matthew*, *John* and *Luke-Acts*.

Similarly, even on a minimalist acceptance of continuing oral traditions about Jesus, there must have been plenty of such material about his ‘healing’, and about its intrinsic link to his name, in the years following his death, and for as long as the lifetimes of those oral witnesses, lifetimes which in a few cases seem to have extended to the end of the century.¹⁷⁹ This circumstance supports both the actual historicity of the link between name and activity and the historicity of at least some of the material bearing on that link in the Gospels and *Acts*, texts which admit of *some* influence from oral traditions. More generally, Allison’s sensible criterion for broad historicity, ‘the larger pattern’ (of which the Classical equivalent is Chris Pelling’s equally sensible criterion of ‘true enough’),¹⁸⁰ supports both the persistence of the tradition linking Jesus’ healing and his name and some degree of historical reality behind it.

All this, so far, of Greek, or Jewish-Greek, or bilingual contexts. But some such punning would have been possible already in Jesus’ lifetime even in purely Jewish contexts and with the Jewish form of Jesus’ name, because ‘saving’ can include ‘healing’. If, as is generally supposed, the popularity of ‘Joshua’ as a name in Jewish Palestine reflects Jewish patriotism (the biblical Joshua having originally conquered the land of Israel),¹⁸¹ then emphasis on ‘salvific’ healing would suit Jesus’ (and the first Christians’) general ‘redefinition’ of ‘salvation’ from *political* salvation in a narrow sense to *eschatological* salvation.¹⁸² Such considerations provide further grounds for supposing that the basic pun goes all the way back to Jesus’ lifetime. Thus this paper supports Geza Vermes’ central claim about the historical Jesus: that he was a Jewish charismatic, the core of whose activity was healing.¹⁸³ ‘Jesus the Jewish charismatic’ does not, however, exclude other models, readings or interpretations, for example, ‘Jesus the eschatological prophet’, ‘Jesus the Suffer-

¹⁷⁹ *John* 21.24–25; Bauckham (2006) 384–411 on ‘the Beloved Disciple’ (of whom Casey [2010] 524–25 is over-hastily dismissive).

¹⁸⁰ Allison (2010) 18–19, and the whole of the first chapter; Pelling (1990).

¹⁸¹ E.g. Bauckham (2006) 76.

¹⁸² This distinction can, of course, be exaggerated. As Casey (2010) 444 (cf. 215) nicely puts it: ‘Jesus was at Passover hoping that God would finally establish his kingdom. Where would that leave the Romans? Not in the land of Israel, and perhaps not on the earth at all’. The degree to which Jesus—and the different works of the NT—are ‘accommodationist’ or ‘oppositionalist’ is currently—and rightly—a topic of intense interest in NT studies.

¹⁸³ Vermes (1973) 58–82.

ing Servant', or 'Jesus the eschatological King', in *all* of which Jesus' healing plays an essential proleptic role.

Of these other Jesuses, 'Jesus the Suffering servant' introduces another telling factor. One particularly rich and insistent context of the pun within the Gospels and *Acts* is *Isaiah* (itself, as we have seen, a significantly cognate name), a book which seems to have been used both by the early Christians (and from very early) and by Jesus himself.¹⁸⁴

We may conclude, then, that the pun is very early, and I would say as early as Jesus' own life-time.

As for the significance of the pun, there are many things to be said, as we have seen, and the topic is a very large one, which touches on practically all aspects of Jesus' ministry and of his religious significance as seen by himself, by his disciples and by early Christians. I here attempt as brief a summary as I can, sticking to punning contexts, building up from basics, and moving from the relatively secular (none is absolutely so) to the religious and the divine, and from Jesus' lifetime to the next, Christian, generations.

The pun emphasises Jesus' key role as healer. Within Jesus' life-time, and in the next generation and subsequent generations, when Christians perform healings 'in the name of Jesus', the pun connects in the first instance with Jesus' actual or perceived healings of physical maladies. Even in this category, however, Jesus is not just any healer: he is 'the Healer'. The union of name and healing gives an extra dimension to the stories of the key encounters between Jesus and the various demoniacs: the responsible demons intuitively know that they are going up against 'the Healer' himself (in which respect their theology surpasses that of most of Jesus' human contemporaries). The fact (presumably) that few or no *Histos* readers believe in demons is irrelevant: Jesus and his contemporaries did. Similarly, Ἰησοῦς is the polar opposite of 'disease'. The struggle between the Devil and the healing God (as represented by Ἰησοῦς) could hardly be more elemental. Jesus' healing role in this physical sense already has eschatological implications and already forges a necessary connexion between Ἰησοῦς ('Yahweh saves') and Yahweh himself.

The Jesus-healer pun necessarily overlaps with the Jesus-saviour pun. Again, within Jesus' life-time, and in the next generation and subsequent generations, the latter pun connects in the first instance with healings or perceived healings of physical maladies, and Jesus' saving role in this physical sense also already forges a necessary connexion between Ἰησοῦς and Yahweh.

¹⁸⁴ Endless discussion: e.g. Bellinger and Farmer (1998); Dunn (2003) 448–50, 516–17; Childs (2004) 1–31; Moyise and Menken (2005); Boring (2006) 33–41; Allison (2010) 113–15, 263–66.

Both the Jesus-saviour and the Jesus-healer puns occur in the *Isaiah* material, thus already in Jesus' lifetime creating the claim that he was to be the saviour/healer (in some senses) of Israel (in some senses).

Mark and *Matthew* have Jesus *qua* healer sublating the Jewish purity laws, and this is also an important concept in *Acts*. It naturally justifies the exemptions granted by Jewish Christians to the new Gentile Christians in the post-Jesus generations. Does the concept go back in any form to Jesus' own lifetime and might it then apply even to Jews? Jesus' attitude to, and practice of, the Jewish purity laws have been much discussed, but it seems at any rate obvious that he was at the liberal end of the wide spectrum of possible attitudes and practices, and that *qua* eschatological prophet who thought that the end was imminent and who may even have supposed that death in Jerusalem would accelerate that end¹⁸⁵ he cannot have attached much importance—or much permanence—to the purity laws. On the other hand, the disputes among post-Jesus Christians about the applicability of those laws indicate either that Jesus did not clarify the question in his lifetime or that he was not remembered as having done so. As in other areas, the non-Parousia forced new clarifications of earlier ambiguities.

Both the Jesus-healer and the Jesus-saviour puns necessarily put Jesus, already in his lifetime, into competition and opposition with other individuals or groups who claimed powers of healing and saving. After Jesus' death, and as the renewed Jesus movement grew and expanded geographically, these competitors increased in numbers and in kind. In general, they included other Jewish healers and exorcists; official 'doctors'; pagan philosophers; Roman emperors; pagan healers, whether religious or secular, whether professional or kingly; and pagan healing gods. There can be debate about which particular competitors go back to Jesus' lifetime. Other Jewish healers and exorcists and 'official' doctors, surely, yes. I would also include pagan philosophers, both because of the close parallel between Jesus' apophthegm at *Mark* 2.17 and that attributed to Antisthenes (above) and because I believe (unfashionably) that there is *some* truth in the 'Jesus Cynicus' model.¹⁸⁶ Post-Jesus, as we have seen, the competitors certainly included other Jewish healers and exorcists, pagan philosophers, pagan healing gods, and Roman emperors, of whose salvific and healing claims followers of the true Healer are wholly dismissive (*Acts* 4.12).

In the post-Jesus phase, the Jesus-healer and the Jesus-saviour puns also underpin the claim that the ultimate healing, saving and cleansing is the resurrection. There are natural accompanying claims—that baptism

¹⁸⁵ Serious historical Jesus scholars argue this: e.g. Dunn (2003) 818–24; Allison (2010) 221–304; Casey (2010) 377–81.

¹⁸⁶ Critical discussion in Moles (2006a).

cleanses and heals, that the resurrection brings rebirth, that Jesus is the author of life. Many Christian scholars have of course argued that the historical Jesus foresaw his own resurrection, in which case Jesus himself would have made the connection between healing and resurrection and might have told his disciples (though, if so, they did not in the first instance understand it). This is not a road I wish to pursue in a scholarly context.

All the material surveyed so far yields another important conclusion: while scholars hitherto have thought of Jesus as the name and then the assorted titles as predicates: Son of Man, Son of God, etc., for the early Christians Jesus the name was also a title: Healer and Saviour. This may conceivably also be true of Jesus himself.

Alike the related names of Ἰησοῦς and Yahweh, their shared activities (healing and saving in various applications), the union in Ἰησοῦς of name and activities, and the frequent sense that Ἰησοῦς looks and acts very like his father Yahweh: all these factors bring Ἰησοῦς and Yahweh into a very close relationship.

In this connexion (as in others), the prophecy of *Isaiah* must have played a crucial role: when the early Christians read *ἰάσομαι* at *Isaiah* 6.10 and *τῷ μῶλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν* at *Isaiah* 53.5, they must have felt (*mutatis mutandis*): ‘Eureka!/Bingo! Our Ἰησοῦς is (in some sense or senses) the instantiation and fulfilment of Yahweh’. This may conceivably also be true of Jesus himself (although in Hebrew or Aramaic).

All of this material yields another important conclusion: the name of Jesus,¹⁸⁷ with all the implications so far surveyed, was crucial for Christian self-definition. Much recent scholarship has argued the indeterminacy, or multiplicity, of ‘early Christianity’.¹⁸⁸ The argument can be overplayed: from very early on, ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’ is a Christian confessional and self-definitional formula, as we have seen. In this context, the name of Jesus actually made Jesus more useful than Yahweh, the supposedly unpronounceable divine name.

Given the links between the bearer’s name and his characteristic healing activities (characteristically viewed as miraculous); given the power attributed to the name; given the repetitiveness and emphasis of its deployment both in relevant religious narrative (the Gospels and *Acts*) and in cult practice (as in the *Philippian* hymn); given the ways in which the name is used to blur Father and Son, it seems implausible to deny that ‘Jesus’ effectively functions as a divine name (although it is sometimes also, of course, just a ‘narrative name’).

¹⁸⁷ As also, of course, the name of ‘Christ’, though Christians themselves avoided the precise form of ‘Christians’ till later on (p. 121 above).

¹⁸⁸ E.g. King (2008/10); Lössl (2010) 13–24.

But it was even more than a divine name: for the early Christians the name 'Jesus' was a 'transcendental signifier'.¹⁸⁹ The early Christians 'knew' that Ἰησοῦς would 'heal' (and 'save') everything and everyone. They also 'knew' that the curse of Babel would finally be undone by universal acceptance, and proclamation, of the name of Ἰησοῦς (cf. *Philippians* 2.9–10). 'Jesus' was the 'name' above all names; 'Jesus' was also the incarnate 'word' of God; 'Jesus' was the *sound* that would resolve all discord. Again, the totalising linguistic unity of 'Jesus' as supreme 'name' and 'Jesus' as *logos* generated a religious energy and intensity quite unavailable through 'Yahweh' or through Greek or Latin words for 'G/god'.

Consequently, 'Jesus' had irresistible 'healing' power to 'heal' the Jews beyond their historical rejection of him, beyond their rejection of the renewed Jesus movement, beyond their punishment in the Jewish War, beyond all their future rejections of him. Thus the early Christian historiographical theodicy of the Jewish War is both like and distinctively different from the theodicy of Josephus, Jewish historian and (eventual) supporter of Rome.¹⁹⁰

All of the above observations are the more paradoxical for the very commonness of 'Jesus' as a male Palestinian Jewish name. This paradox itself requires explanation. The explanation must be that those of his followers who accepted *Jesus'* resurrection (some, of course, did not) found in it decisive validation of his entire *healing* ministry.

So much for the significances of the pun on the level of meaning. But the phenomenon also illustrates things on the level of praxis.

Not least is the effect of the sheer repetitiveness of the naming and the associated punning: like Classical education, Jewish and Christian education emphasised the importance of memorising tags as a way of dinning in basic truths. No reader or listener of *Luke-Acts* or of the other Gospels should come away without knowing that Ἰησοῦς is 'the Healer' and 'the Healer' of everything. Such repetitiveness of naming is also part of religious ritual. But even for the already Christian reader or listener the texts are not only commemorative and ritualistic: at every reading and listening, they challenge the reader to encounter 'Jesus' and accept him (as 'Healer' and 'Saviour') anew. Our texts also illustrate the early Christians' immense linguistic resourcefulness, as, within their overall mission, they energised and invested with deep meaning one of the commonest of Jewish male names and made the name of 'Jesus the healer' into a distillation of all that he represented.

¹⁸⁹ I say 'a', because the name/title 'Chreestos' was too: see Moles (forthcoming).

¹⁹⁰ Roughly, that the catastrophes of 70 were God's punishment for revolt against Rome; cf. Mason (2005) 21, 85–86.

And they also illustrate the early Christians' eagerness to engage with, and persuade, the pagan world, including educated pagans. In the specific context which I hypothesised at the beginning of this paper, that of the public, Christian-pagan, partly textual and historiographical debate about the merits of Christianity, how would pagan readers react to the Jesus-healer punning of these texts? They would certainly see it and hear it. They would register its organic and its structural significances, its especial appropriateness to histories of beginnings and its sheer expansiveness and range of application. They would recognise its totalising religious and political claims—especially its competitiveness with the healing claims of Rome and the Caesars, especially as articulated in public media and in Greek and Roman historiographical and biographical texts.¹⁹¹ They could hardly fail to grant all these Christian writers some skill in the deployment of the pun. They might find the insistence of the phenomenon in *Luke* and in parts of *John* a little trying, though they would understand its didactic purpose and its religious significance, but they would find also much to appreciate in its deployment and progressive expansion of range in *Acts*. They could hardly fail to admire Luke's handling of Paul among the philosophers or the end of *Acts*. In none of these Christian writers would they find anything as neat as (say) Herodotus' punning on 'Themistocles' or on 'Socles', as dense and probing as Thucydides' punning in Book I of his *History*, or as clever and multi-layered as (say) Tacitus' punning in the Cremutius Cordus episode of *Annals* 4.¹⁹² But, overall, they would be impressed—and so should we be, as connoisseurs of ancient historiography in all its richness, flexibility, range and moral demandingness.

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¹⁹¹ E.g. Livy, *Praef.* 9; Tac. *Ann.* 1.9.4, 4.17.3; Plut. *Brut.* 55.2; Sen. *Ad Polyb.* 13.1; 14.1. Weinstock (1971) 167–74, 238–9, 317 n.; Cotter (1999) 39–42; Carter (2000) 123–27; 200–204.

¹⁹² See Moles references in n. 42.

Appendix 1

‘Jesus’ Elsewhere in the New Testament

At Manchester Gerald Downing asked the inevitable question: what of Paul, who puns on ‘Jesus’ ~ ‘saviour’,¹⁹³ but not obviously on ‘Jesus’ ~ ‘healer’? That he puns on ‘Jesus’ ~ ‘saviour’ (as do other NT letter-writers) weakens—without altogether refuting—any ‘genre defence’ (that, arguably, such ‘healing’ punning is likelier in biography/historiography than in epistolography). A radical defence to the question would be that this ‘healing’ punning is a phenomenon of the last third of the first century and later. But not only would that jettison the bulk of my conclusions (which I would not wish): it also seems itself untenable for reasons there given. So my reply was: that one does not need Paul because one has the earlier Q,¹⁹⁴ and that in this respect, as in others, Paul may be allowed to be different, especially as his energies are so hugely engrossed in exploring the implications of Jesus’ ‘other name’, that of ‘Christ’; also, that one could find *some* punning on Ἰησοῦς ~ ‘healing’ in Paul.

It must be admitted that, outside the Gospels (and behind them, Q) and *Acts*, active NT punning on ‘Jesus’ as ‘healer’ is not so easily demonstrable, but for comparative purposes here is a brief and, I am sure, incomplete survey.

If my analysis of the Gospels and *Acts* is right, practically any allusion to the ‘resurrection’ of Jesus will include a punning allusion to the ‘healing’ of, and by, Ἰησοῦς. That applies to *First Peter* 3.21: ‘baptism ... now *saves* you, not as a putting away of dirt from the flesh but as a request to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ’. Here the pun on ‘Jesus’ as ‘saviour’ is latent, and there is an allusion to Jesus’ ‘cleansing’ power via his ‘resurrection’. Should the reader/listener not also ‘hear’ ‘healing’ by Ἰησοῦς ‘the Healer’? While some conservative scholars defend the authorship of Jesus’ disciple, *First Peter* is best dated towards, or at, the end of the century.¹⁹⁵ A similar pattern appears in Paul himself, in *First Thessalonians* 4.14 (date: early 50s): ‘for if we believe that Ἰησοῦς died and rose again, so also God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep, through the agency of Ἰησοῦς’. Again, in *Romans* 5.6–21 (date: 57), when Paul discusses Christ’s death on behalf of human beings, ‘when we were still *infirm*’ (6 [medical imagery]), and argues its role in bringing *life out of death*, should we not ‘hear’ the Ἰησοῦς of the repeated ‘Jesus Christ’ (15, 17, 21) as ‘healer’? In *First John* 1.7.5 (end first century/beginning of second) ‘the blood of Jesus his

¹⁹³ N. 46.

¹⁹⁴ And possibly early written narratives about Jesus: n. 34.

¹⁹⁵ Conservative: Dunn (2009) 1148–57, with adequate bibliography on the other side.

[God's] son cleanses us from all sin'. The long disquisition on 'sound doctrine' in *Titus* 2.1–15 (last third of the first century) climaxes (13) in the naming of 'our saviour Jesus Christ', with (surely) the double etymology of 'Jesus': 'saviour' and 'healer'. In *Hebrews* (post-Paul), 'we see Jesus, for a little while made inferior to the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that he might taste death for every man by the grace of God' (9). Is not this 'Jesus' 'healing' death itself?

More generally, since Ἰησοῦς, to Hellenising Jews and Greek Christians, actually *means* 'healer', the puns I have argued for throughout this paper will *always* be there, whether actively or only just below the surface. The category of 'material where the pun does not occur', which must of course form part of the initial analysis,¹⁹⁶ is finally illusory.

Appendix 2 Julian on Jesus

I discuss two cases.

The first is from Julian's *Against the Galileans*, preserved in excerpts by Cyril of Alexandria. Reconstruction of the text is not certain, but there was clearly a sustained comparison between Jesus and Asclepius. At 191D–E 'Jesus has been *named* for little more than three hundred years and during the time he lived he worked nothing worth hearing about, unless any one supposes that *to heal* cripples and blind persons and to exorcise demoniacs in the villages at Bethsaida and Bethany are among the greatest works'. By contrast (200A–B), 'Asclepius, having visited earth from the heavens, appeared at Epidaurus in the body of a man ... but afterwards he multiplied himself by his visits and reached out his *saving* right hand over all [the earth].... He is present everywhere on earth and sea... he *raises up* afflicted souls and sick bodies.' Then (235B–238D), 'Asclepius *heals* our bodies, and with his and Apollo's and Hermes the learned's help the Muses train our souls ... consider then whether we are not your betters in the art of *healing* derived from Asclepius, whose oracles are everywhere on the earth. ... He often *healed* me when I was *ailing*, prescribing *cures*'.

The etymology of 'Asklepios' is obscure. One modern conjecture is the Hittite *assula(a)* ('well-being') and *piya* 'give'.¹⁹⁷ Whatever the objective truth,

¹⁹⁶ P. 132.

¹⁹⁷ Szemerényi (1974) 155.

it is possible that ‘Asklepios’ was ‘felt’ as meaning *something* like this, which would reinforce Julian’s statement that ‘the art of *healing*’ ‘derives’ from Asclepius and his sustained contrast between ‘Asclepius’ and Ἰησοῦς. For Julian accepts the Jesus ~ healer etymology and is prepared to concede that Jesus did perform some healings and exorcisms in villages in Palestine, but he claims that Asclepius is much the greater ‘healer’, so that the vocabulary he applies to the latter systematically undermines Jesus’ claims: see the italicised words and add ‘oracles’ (because *χρηστήρια* trumps ‘Chreestos’).

The second case comes at the end (336A–C) of Julian’s *Caesares*, Menippean satire with historiographical elements,¹⁹⁸ hence part of the wider Christian–pagan historiographical debate about the merits of Christianity. When the various emperors are told to choose their guardian god, with whom henceforth to live, Constantine, unable to find the archetype of his life among the gods, runs to Luxury (Τρυφή), who dolls him up and leads him to Profligacy (Ἀσωτία), where he finds Ἰησοῦς proclaiming to all: ‘He that is a seducer, he that is a murderer, he that is sacrilegious and loathsome, let him come with confidence. For, washing him with this water [of baptism], I will show him forth as clean, and, even if he be guilty of those same things a second time, I shall grant him, if he strikes his breast and beats his head, to become clean’. Constantine and his sons gladly join Jesus but are punished by the avenging gods for their atheism, until Zeus gives them a respite for the sake of Claudius and Constantius. As for Julian himself, Hermes has granted him to know his father Mithras, who, if he keeps his commandments, will provide him security in life and good hope in the afterlife.

Here the pun Ἰησοῦς ~ ἰάομαι is implicit (~ ‘washing’, ‘clean’ x2). So also is the pun on Ἰησοῦς ~ ‘saviour’, for Jesus’ protection of Constantine and his sons is thwarted by the avenging deities; it is Jesus’ great rival Mithras who will grant Julian security in life and good hope in the afterlife; and Jesus himself associates with Ἀσωτία, Profligacy, the ‘inability to save’ in a financial or material sense, but also, proleptically, his own ‘inability to save’ those (such as Constantine) whom he claims to protect: Julian out-puns those notorious Christian punsters.

Thus the apostate Julian was a maliciously good reader of the first Christian biographers and historians, though by his time the pagans had substantially lost the debate.

¹⁹⁸ For historiography within Menippean satire see Damon (2010).

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