THE TRADITION OF THE NARRATIVE MATERIAL

Mk. 11.12-14, 20 par.: The Accursed Fig Tree. We must suppose that originally the cursing of the Fig Tree and its results were reported together and that their separation by vv. 15-19 is due to editorial activity which broke up the admittedly unoriginal connection of 11.12-19 with 11.27-23, though that connection did arise in some earlier stage of the tradition (see pp. 20ff.). This editorial activity is to be ascribed to the evangelist Mark, and in that case we may also have to assume that he has edited the story of the cursing of the fig tree itself. The present story ends in an apophthegm (vv. 21-26) that is certainly secondary (p. 25); the withered fig tree is actually a ‘special proof of faith’ (Wellhausen). The end of the first section (καὶ ἔκκοψαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ v. 14) and the beginning of the second (καὶ παρατηρήσαν οἱ προφήται εἶδον τὴν συκήν ἐξεφάρμακεν ἐκ πρίζων v. 20) could be original, and perhaps the story originally ended with v. 20. There is editorial work in the beginning at v. 12, which links the section with its context, though its extent cannot be determined with certainty. I believe that Matthew had the story before him in the same form in which we have it in Mark. He has done away with the interval and, following a familiar motif, asserted the instantaneousness of the miracle.

Matt. 17.24-27: The Shekel in the Fish’s Mouth. This story is already outside the real class of miracle stories; for the miracle is a secondary consideration, and the doctrinal purpose the main thing. The apodictive side of the section and the possibility of its origin have already been discussed on pp. 34f.

3. THE FORM AND HISTORY OF MIRACLE STORIES

Jn. 20.30f. shows clearly as Dibelius (Formgeschichte, p. 18.2) quite rightly points out, that it is of the very essence of the gospel to con-


2 This miracle belongs to the category of ‘miraculous self-acts’ (M. Dibelius, THR, N.F., 1, 1929, p. 206; also Evangelium u. Welt, 1929, p. 51), a motif which is very frequent in the legends of the saints.

3 A. Friederichsen, in Le Probleme du Miracle, 1925, discusses the question what meaning the miracle and the miracle story had for early Christianity, especially for its missionary work. It is from this point of view that he interprets the N.T. (especially the Synoptic) miracle stories and says about miracles. In Friederichsen, p. 114, is a very full note of the literature on miracle stories and the whole question of miracle as such. H. Rust, Die Wunder der Bibel (1, Die Visionen des N.T.; 11, Das Tugen reden; 111, Die Weissagungen; in: Die Okkulte Welt, nos. 67/70, 105, 129, no date) seeks to establish criteria for distinguishing real happenings from products of fantasy or combination on the basis of investigation into occult phenomena.

The History of the Synoptic Tradition

New York p. 218 – 2

1963 by Harper + Row

THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN COPIED UNDER LICENSE
FRM CANONICAL, RESALE OR FURTHER COPYING OF THIS MATERIAL IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.
the miracle has been reported. In Mk. 9:16-27 neither the grateful joy of the paralytic nor that of his father is mentioned at all. It is only in Mk. 5:1, in an editorial supplement that the healed person is said to have asked Ἰησοῦς κατὰ τὸν φύσην τετελεσμένον, though that in turn was probably intended but to serve as the occasion for the injunction to spread the fame of Jesus in the Decapolis. (There is a special case in Lk. 17:11-19 where the miracle story has been given an apophthegmatic character, leaving the point in a contrast between gratitude and ingratitude.) The same applies to the other miracle stories; they lack, as it were, a conclusion. Thus the feeding stories have no indication of the impression the miracle made, as the secondary addition in Jn. 6:44 makes plain. In the same way a conclusion is lacking to the story of walking on the water, where once more John exposes the need of an apocryphal addition (6:21). And if Mark reports the impression made by the stilling of the storm (Mk. 4:41) he does it manifestly without any psychological interest in the disciples themselves, but rather for the sole purpose of focusing attention on the magnitude of the miracle. The style of the miracle story is related to that of the apophthegm (pp. 65f.) to this extent—the absence of portraiture’ (Dibelius, loc. cit.) and all that it involves—is characteristic of both. Here as there nothing but the point matters—there a saying of Jesus, here a miracle. Not until John is there any interest in the consequences of a miracle in its setting in the story of Jesus. He uses the miracle in chap. 5 to give rise to the situation for his discussion with the Jews, and finally makes Jesus’ miracles the cause of the last catastrophe (11:48ff., 12:21).2

From this standpoint we must examine the style of the miracle stories individually. Contributions to the phenomenology of miracle stories can be found in many places, especially in O. Weinreich, Antike Heiligungswunder.3 What follows is only a brief review, in so far as it is necessary for the understanding of the Synoptic miracle stories.4

1 I do not think we can interpret Mk. 5:36, as a ‘command to silence’, i.e. the healed man may recite Jesus’ deeds only in his own home, the place of secrecy; though he actually exceeded his instructions (Wrede, Messiasgesch., pp. 140f.). Even if Mark so understood the passage it cannot possibly be the original meaning of the verse (as it obviously came to Mark). O. Bauer found here quite right (op. cit., pp. 48f., 60f.) that he cannot believe that v. 36 is thought of as Jesus’ final victory over the demons (see above, p. 210 n. 3). Fritzsche, op. cit., p. 82, is right: ‘Ces paroles de Jésus après la guérison sont la voix du missionnaire, qui se sert du miracle pour propager la foi. Il en était du christianisme primitif comme de toute autre œuvre missionnaire, la propagande se faisait en grande partie par la famille.’

2 There is some sort of beginning of this point of view in Mk. 3:28; though here it is the breaking of the Sabbath rather than the miracle itself which is the essential thing.

3 Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, VIII, 1, Giessen, 1909.

4 I cannot see why just because Dibelius somewhat broadly distinguishes miracle stories from apophthegms and discovers similar motifs outside early Christianity, he has to classify them as ‘prodica’, ‘worthly’, or ‘secret’. (M. Dibelius, Formgeschichte, pp. 44f.; Geschichte der usbrit. Lit., 1, 1906, p. 28; Evangelium u. Welt, pp. 51f.)

There are characteristic features for the exposition of the miracle stories which depict the gravity of the complaint so as to bring the act of the healer into its proper light.

The length of the sickness: Mk. 5:21 (12 years); Lk. 13:11; Acts 3:2, 4, 9, 19, 14:8; Jn. 9:1; Philoso. Vit. Apoll., III, 38; Ditt. Syll., II, 802, 950; 805.5; Neugrie. Maerchen, hrgv. v. P. Kretschmer (in Die Maerhen der Weltliteratur, 1917, p. 237.

Here too must be placed details of the age of the sick person or of the dead: Mk. 5:44; Vit. Apoll., III, 38, 39.

The dreadful or dangerous character of the disease: Mk. 5:3-5, 18; 22; Act. Thom., 64, p. 81, 68; Lucian, Philopo., 11, 16 (κατασφηπνώντως πρὸς τὴν σελήνην καὶ τὸν ὀρέαν διαστρέφοντας καὶ ἀράμιν θυμοληθέντος τὸ στόμα); Vit. Apoll., IV, 20.

The ineffective treatment of physicians: Mk. 5:24; Tob. 2:10; Parallels in Weinreich, op. cit., pp. 195-7; also Neugrie. Maerchen, p. 237.


Here too we may place the motif of the contrast of the master and the disciples: Mk. 9:14f.; Matt. 14:31-32; 2 Kings 4:31; Lucian Philopo., 36; Aelian, De Nat. An., IX, 33; Cp. Weinreich, op. cit., pp. 81ff. and Bolte-Poliva, Ann. zu den K.H.M., II, p. 162 on no. 81.

It is a traditional feature of revivifying the dead for the healer to meet the funeral procession: Lk. 7:11ff.; Vit. Apoll., IV, 45; Apul., Florida, 19; cp. Weinreich, pp. 171-3. IG, IV, 952, pp. 27ff.—the God meets a sick person carried on a stretcher.

It is characteristic of the miracle itself that the actual miraculous event is almost never described, such as the actual multiplication of the bread by the miracle worker, but only the accompanying circumstances.

Further under the standpoint which determines the exposition we must include cases where the difficulty of the healing is emphasized, as in Tac., Hist., IV, 81. In the miracle stories of the N.T. that is only the case when occasionally some special manipulation is reported: Mk. 7:33, 8:21. But it is characteristic that it should occur so in-

THE TRADITION OF THE NARRATIVE MATERIAL

frantly there, and yet be a frequent feature in Hellenistic miracle stories, e.g., Jos., Ant., VIII, 2.5 where the Jewish exorcist Eleazar draws the demon out of the nose of the possessed person by means of a ring in which there is a root as prescribed by Solomon; further, Lucian, Philos., 16, where a piece of a virgin's tombstone is placed on the invalid's foot; cp. the manipulations and, as they may be called, operative interventions in IG, IV, 951, pp. 27f., 40f., 77, 99f., 125f., etc.; cp. Weinreich, 173-3. H. Jahnov has shown the probability (Z.N.W., 54, 1925, pp. 155-8) that the removal of the roof in Mk. 24 goes back to an exorcist custom (the proper way into the house must be kept hidden from the demon). But the Christian tradition either forgot or transformed the meaning of this motif, in ascribing the crowd surrounding the house as the reason for the stripping of the roof. Matthew completely omits it.

Besides this it is sometimes reported that the header comes to the invalid (or to his dwelling place): Lk. 419 (ἐφιστάσα) ; IG, IV, 951, pp. 37, 69; Lucian, Philos., 16 (ἐπιθαναν γαρ ἐπιστῇ κιμίων); Diod. Sic., I, 25; Suidas under Θεότοκος, cp. Weinreich, 11f.; G. Dehn, Arch. Jahrb., 1913, pp. 399ff.: Sarapis went to the sick bed to heal.

Very often the miracle working gesture is a touch (by the hand), and it is difficult to tell whether the primitive idea of it as a transmission of power is still active. Touching or grasping with the hand: Mk. 1, 31, 41, 51, 73, 822; Matt. 929, 20; Lk. 714, 13, 14, 45; Acts 39 (911 no longer understood here and reported at the wrong place), 28; Ber. 5b; P. Kil. 928b, 23, 24 (Strack-B. II, 2f., IV, 771); Act. Thom., 53, p. 169, 145; Vit. Apoll., III, 39, IV, 45; Weinreich, 1-7; J. Behm, Die Handanlegung im Utrechtstum (1911), pp. 102-16. The touching of garments: Mk. 519-27, 642, Matt. 14, 26, Acts (515), 19, 12.

The miracle working word: Mk. 11, 21, 35, 10, 62; Lk. 84, 13, 171; Jos., Ant., VIII, 2.5; Lucian, Philos., 7f., 10, 11, 12, 16 (ἐνθανωμένης), etc.

The miracle working word is frequently given in strange, incomprehensible sounds, or alternatively handed down in some foreign language: Mk. 511, 734; Jos., Ant., VIII, 2.5; Lucian, Philos., 9 (βίση βασιλείας); 31 (προφυτισμένος την φροίδοστητην ἐπιρροής θεον τῷ φωνῇ); Vit. Apoll., IV, 15 (καὶ τι ἄρμοντις ἐπλησίων); cp. Orig., Contra Celsum, I, 24; 45; A. Dieterich, 1

Ecclesiastical authors consequently emphasize this distinction too. Cp. Friedrichsen, Probl. der Min., p. 61.

1 The objections raised by S. Krauss, Z.N.W., 25, 1926, pp. 309-10 are not convincing.


Healing by the use of a miracle working name is not reported of Jesus himself, but cp. Mk. 928; Acts 39, 94, 168, 19; Tos. Hullin, II, 21-23 (Fiebig, Jued. Wundergeschichten, pp. 35f.); Jos., Ant., VIII, 2.5 (the name of Solomon); Lucian, Philos., 10 (ὑπὸ ἰερῶν νουμάτων), 12 (ἐπιθανάν εἰσερχομένος τοῦ ἀνασκόπος ὀνομάτος ἐρυθράς), etc.

The original idea is that the demon which has caused the sickness is threatened by the miracle working word; hence more frequently ἐπιστάσας and ἐπιστάσας are used, and, naturally, particularly where there is an expulsion of demons in the narrower sense: Mk. 14, 27, 928; Lk. 441 (ἐπιστάς ἐπιστάς καί ἐπιστάς); Vit. Apoll., III, 38; IV, 20.

But this same style is employed for miracles where it is impossible to say whether the old idea of threatening the demon is still alive or not: Mk. 49 (threatening the wind); Lk. 49 (threatening a fever).

In Lk. 1311 the πνεύμα ἀσθενείας is specifically mentioned, but there is no mention of a threat; the expression is probably purely formal. Cp. Reitzenstein, Poimandres, 18, 8; an amulet in which are mentioned the ἄγγελος τοῦ ἀγωνιστοῦ and the ἄγγελος who has ἔξοντας over the ἀσθενείας and the ἀσθενείας.

2 Demon healings are distinguished by special peculiarities: the demon senses his master; he knows the exorcist's power: Mk. 14, 57, 928; Acts 161, 1518; Altoriental. Texte, edited by Gressmann, 78f. (the evil spirit addresses the Egyptian God who has been brought to the sick man, and says: 'Thou, great God, comest in peace, thou to whom the evil spirits bow down, etc.'); Pes. e. 112b/113a (Fiebig, Jued. Wundergeschichten, pp. 25f.); Lucian, Abdicat, 6. In some circumstances the demon can define himself too: Acts 1914; cp. Bauerfeind, op. cit., pp. 33f.

1 The Stilling of the Storm is also thought of as a threat to the demons in B.B. 739 (Strack-B. II, 1990): the wave was struck with a stick which had a sacred formula engraved on it.


3 It is a common notion that the demon himself speaks through the invalid: cp. Klostermann on Mn. 14.
THE TRADITION OF THE NARRATIVE MATERIAL

The demon asks a favour: Mk. 5; Act. Thom., 76, p. 190, 1885; Vit. Apoll., IV, 20, or at least the concession of some right; Altoriental. Texte, pp. 78 ff. (the spirit asks that a sacrifice be given him before he departs); Pes. loc. cit. ("Let me have a little more time to play yet!") and he was given Sabbath nights and Wednesday nights. In addition to these we occasionally find a dialogue between the exorcist and the demons Mk. 5; Lucian, Philop. 16 (ἐπιθυμίαι γὰρ... ἔρηται οὖν ἐπελεξάθασαν ἐς τὸ σῶμα, ὁ μὲν νοσῶν αὐτὸς σιωτίς, ὁ δαίμονς δὲ ἀποκρίνεται ἐλευθερίαν ἤ βασιλέαν ἤ οὖν δι' αὐτὸς ἢ, ὅπως τε καὶ οὖν ἐπιλήφη τοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων); Act. Thom., 31-33, 458, 75-77. Then it is characteristic to have a command for the demon to be silent: Mk. 1 28 (4 38); cp. E. Rohde, Psyche, II, 424; Pap. Osl. Fasc., I, 1925, no. 1, 7, 164.

It is a special feature if the public is withdrawn when the miracle is performed: Mk. 5 20, 7, 32, 22; Acts 9 10, 1 Kings 17 18; 2 Kings 4, 33, 56; Ta'an 238 (cp. Bickermann, Z. N. W. 22, 1923, p. 133.2); Life of St. Ephraem the Syrian (Brockelmann, Syr. Grammatik, 2, Christologie), 37, 197 ff. This has nothing to do with the Messianic secret, as Dibelius has rightly discerned (Formgeschichte, pp. 51 ff.), yet he misconceives the motive in thinking that it prevents Jesus from appearing like a magician on the look-out for propaganda. The original meaning is much more likely that the miracle was unobserved because it was not fitting to see the Godhead at his work. For the same reason a divine saying is received in secret, Jg. 3 11 f.; and the Godhead works by night (Gunkel on Gen. 19 14-18); Lot and his family are not permitted to see God's judgement, and Lot's wife, who looked on it, was changed to a pillar of salt (Gen. 19 26). The motif was then admitted misunderstood and further developed and became a conventional feature.

Traditional features are also used to describe the successful accomplishment of a miracle. The success seldom comes by degrees: Mk. 8 21; Neugriech. Maerchen, p. 237 ('... thus the blind man ... could

1 Cp. K. Muellenhoff, Sagen, Maerchen u. Lieder der Herzogtum Schleswig-Holstein u. Luxemburg, 1885, p. 195: "The slain spirit had only one more request, that he might take his place under the drawbridge"; p. 259: "The evil spirit was also ready to yield, he only asked that he might be exiled on dry land and not to the waters in the bay.

2 It is somewhat different when Jesus commands the demons to be silent Mk. 1 24, 3 11 f., so that they should not reveal him as the Messiah. These passages are literary compositions by Mark on the basis of his theory of a messianic secret. Baurer's explanation of Mk. 3 11 (op. cit., pp. 56-67) appear to me to be quite impossible.

3 In folk-tales and fairy stories the motif is very frequent: cp. H. Guttmann, Volkische Wadgeschichte, 1914, p. 77 (while the dog practices magic, the master must shut his eyes); p. 106 (Dance of the seventh dance). From the "Vossische Griesen" of the Wolf. African, M., pp. 95 ff. (Magic disturbed is ineffective); Indier, aus Sudamerika, pp. 270 ff.; Indier, aus Nordamerika, pp. 21, 25; Finn. u. Esth. M., p. 121, 179; Zigeuner, M., p. 138; Nord. M., I, pp. 116 ff., etc. Cp. Wundt, Völkerspech, IV, p. 93; V, p. 174.

4 The demon asks a favour: Mk. 5; Act. Thom., 76, p. 190, 1885; Vit. Apoll., IV, 20, or at least the concession of some right; Altoriental. Texte, pp. 78 ff. (the spirit asks that a sacrifice be given him before he departs); Pes. loc. cit. ('Let me have a little more time to play yet!') and he was given Sabbath nights and Wednesday nights. In addition to these we occasionally find a dialogue between the exorcist and the demons Mk. 5; Lucian, Philop., 16 (ἐπιθυμίαι γὰρ... ἔρηται οὖν ἐπελεξάθασαν ἐς τὸ σῶμα, ὁ μὲν νοσῶν αὐτὸς σιωτίς, ὁ δαίμονς δὲ ἀποκρίνεται ἐλευθερίαν ἤ βασιλέαν ἤ οὖν δι' αὐτὸς ἢ, ὅπως τε καὶ οὖν ἐπιλήφη τοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων); Act. Thom., 31-33, 458, 75-77. Then it is characteristic to have a command for the demon to be silent: Mk. 1 28 (4 38); cp. E. Rohde, Psyche, II, 424; Pap. Osl. Fasc., I, 1925, no. 1, 7, 164.

It is a special feature if the public is withdrawn when the miracle is performed: Mk. 5 20, 7, 32, 22; Acts 9 10, 1 Kings 17 18; 2 Kings 4, 33, 56; Ta'an 238 (cp. Bickermann, Z. N. W. 22, 1923, p. 133.2); Life of St. Ephraem the Syrian (Brockelmann, Syr. Grammatik, 2, Christologie), 37, 197 ff. This has nothing to do with the Messianic secret, as Dibelius has rightly discerned (Formgeschichte, pp. 51 ff.), yet he misconceives the motive in thinking that it prevents Jesus from appearing like a magician on the look-out for propaganda. The original meaning is much more likely that the miracle was unobserved because it was not fitting to see the Godhead at his work. For the same reason a divine saying is received in secret, Jg. 3 11 f.; and the Godhead works by night (Gunkel on Gen. 19 14-18); Lot and his family are not permitted to see God's judgement, and Lot's wife, who looked on it, was changed to a pillar of salt (Gen. 19 26). The motif was then admitted misunderstood and further developed and became a conventional feature.

Traditional features are also used to describe the successful accomplishment of a miracle. The success seldom comes by degrees: Mk. 8 21; Neugriech. Maerchen, p. 237 ('... thus the blind man ... could

1 Cp. K. Muellenhoff, Sagen, Maerchen u. Lieder der Herzogtum Schleswig-Holstein u. Luxemburg, 1885, p. 195: "The slain spirit had only one more request, that he might take his place under the drawbridge"; p. 259: "The evil spirit was also ready to yield, he only asked that he might be exiled on dry land and not to the waters in the bay.

2 It is somewhat different when Jesus commands the demons to be silent Mk. 1 24, 3 11 f., so that they should not reveal him as the Messiah. These passages are literary compositions by Mark on the basis of his theory of a messianic secret. Baurer's explanation of Mk. 3 11 (op. cit., pp. 56-67) appear to me to be quite impossible.

3 In folk-tales and fairy stories the motif is very frequent: cp. H. Guttmann, Volkische Wadgeschichte, 1914, p. 77 (while the dog practices magic, the master must shut his eyes); p. 106 (Dance of the seventh dance). From the "Vossische Griesen" of the Wolf. African, M., pp. 95 ff. (Magic disturbed is ineffective); Indier, aus Sudamerika, pp. 270 ff.; Indier, aus Nordamerika, pp. 21, 25; Finn. u. Esth. M., p. 121, 179; Zigeuner, M., p. 138; Nord. M., I, pp. 116 ff., etc. Cp. Wundt, Völkerspech, IV, p. 93; V, p. 174.

4 The word characteristic of certain miracle stories (E. Pete, Act. Thom., 76, p. 190, 1885) is not found in N.T. stories of healing, though it is used in the epiphanies of Lk. 2:24; Acts 9 9, 22 and is used in Lk. 5 12 of an attack by a demon.
healed, as to recognize the miracle as such. This is the case in the healing of the deaf mute Mk. 7:31-37 and its clear variant, the healing of the blind man Mk. 8:22-26. The healing of two blind men etc. are the dumb man possessed of a devil Matt. 9:27-31 and Matt. 8:22-26 are only variants of Markan miracles. And Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 13:10-17, 14:5-8 are likewise but variations on the theme of Sabbath healing. The miracle of healing the ten lepers in Lk. 17:11-19 is a heightened version of Mk. 1:40-45, as the command in Lk. 17:14 particularly shows: ἐπερεδέστε ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς ἵερεσιν. The distant healings in Mk. 7:24-29 and Matt. 8:5-13 par. are variants (see pp. 38 f). Accordingly it is not safe to say that Matt. 8:5-13 par. and the raising of Jairus’ daughter Mk. 5:21-24 are variants (K. L. Schmidt, Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu, p. 73); but it is quite likely that the raising of the widow’s son at Nain Lk. 7:11-17 is a counterpart to the raising of Jairus’ daughter in the Synoptic tradition.

The course of the development and change of motifs becomes particularly clear if the Johannine healings are included. In Jn. 5:1 ff., the motif of the lame man who has to carry his bed is combined with that of Sabbath healing. The manipulation at the healing of the man born blind in Jn. 9:7 ff. derives from Mk. 8:23, and again the motif of Sabbath breaking provides a secondary element in combination. With this we may compare how the miracle of the bird made out of soil is combined, in the Nativity Gospel of St. Thomas 2:11 ff., with the motif of Sabbath breaking. Jn. 4:46-54 is a heightened version of the story of the Centurion from Capernaum: the healing is at an even greater distance; its occurrence at the precise moment is expressly established by witnesses.2

The same sort of considerations apply to the nature miracles. The two feeding miracles are clearly variants Mk. 6:34-44, 8:1-9, and even in their formulation they agree fully in structure and in part even verbally. The motif is used also in Jn. 6:1 ff., though here σπολαγχεῖσθαι has dropped out at the beginning and the question asked by Jesus serves only to put the disciples to the test, αὐτὸς γὰρ ἕδει τι εἰμέλαιν τοιοῦτον. The stories of stilling the storm and walking on the water in Mk. 4:37-41, 6:45-52 are admittedly not properly variants, but the motif of the first is used in the second (see above). And how another motif can be added to a miracle story is seen in the expansion of Matt. 14:22-33 by vv. 28-31. On the other hand in Jn. 6:17-18 the motif of stilling the storm has been left out of the story.

1 Whether originally all Jesus’ healings were exorcism is a fair question, see J. Weiss, R.E.3, IV, p. 413; H. Jahn, N.Z. 4.5, 24, 1925, p. 198. It is not probable that they were, though it is noteworthy that the healings in Mk. 7:34, 8:3 are also thought of as exorcisms as can be seen from the use of spit.