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The Compositional History of Greek Christian Incubation Miracle Collections:
Saint Thecla, Saint Cosmas and Damian, Saint Cyrus and John, Saint Artemios

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Introduction

The place is deserted and no one near me will hear the words, which I speak. Believe me, men, I had been dead during all the years of life that I was alive. The beautiful, the good, the holy, the evil were all the same to me; such, it seems was the darkness that formerly enveloped my understanding and concealed and hid from me all these things. But now that I have come here, I have become alive again for all the rest of my life, as if I had lain down in the temple of Asclepius and had been saved. I walk, I talk, I think. This sun, so great, so beautiful I have now discovered, men, for the first time; now today I see under the clear sky you, the air, the acropolis, the theatre.¹

These words were pronounced by a character from a lost comedy of Menandros and in a powerful image describe that sleeping in the Temple of Asclepius might have been indeed a life-changing experience, after which the individual not only woke up healed but could start seeing the world around himself as never before. Temple sleep or incubation was a religious practice with a long past and an even longer future.² In many respects it reached across the borders of religions and healing methods. It was practiced in ancient Mesopotamia and Asia Minor; in Greece and Rome as well as in pre-Christian Gaul; and found its way into to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In several parts of the Mediterranean world, usually in rural ones, Catholic, Orthodox, or Muslim, it has survived to the present day. I do not intend to suggest that we are dealing with a continuity of ritual, since the theological framework of each cult differed extremely in each case, yet the rite was ubiquitous. One of the reasons for its tenacity and popularity was that in every period and geographical zone it answered an elemental demand for healing through communication with the divine, while it required so little: a sacred place and an individual who went there intending to sleep. At the heart of the rite stands the sought dream, unrestrained by physical and social factors, available to everyone and difficult to control.

The core element of the practice was that the worshipper voluntarily went to the sacred site (a cave, a tomb, a temple, a place with relics) with the intention of sleeping there (often in special circumstances, having performed specific rites, as purification or abstinence, and wearing specific robes or invoking the dream-appearance in various other ways). Pilgrims sought a cure or an oracle during their encounter with the divine being of the place, who might have been a deity, an animal-epiphany, a lesser-grade divinity, a hero, a nymph, a living holy man, or a martyr honoured after death. Although the oracular and healing activity of the incubation cult sites often ran parallel,

¹ Menandros, Papyrus Didotiana b, 1-15 = T 419; in Emma J. Edelstein, & Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: a collection of the testimonies* 2 vols, 2nd edition (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University, 1998) All the references with T refer to this collection and mean the translation of Emma Edelstein.

² Thorough introduction of the practice is by Ludwig Deubner, *De Incubatione capita quattuor* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1900); and Mary Hamilton, *Incubation. The Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches* (London: W.C. Henderson, 1906).

for my enquiry I am concerned only with healing, and accordingly will use the term dream healing as equivalent of incubation / temple sleep. Incubation practice is most interesting in its healing aspect, since - in both the Greek and Christian contexts - the healing methods of incubation encompassed the contemporary medical, miraculous, and magical repertoires and transformed them into a curious mixture of wonderworking. In this respect especially the Christian incubation saints differ from their colleagues, the other saints endowed to some extent with thaumaturgic gifts (the popular living saints, ascetics, and the masters of martyria and relics). In non-incubation healing, the most common types of working wondrous cures were modelled after the gestures of Christ, and provided cure with words, touch, the sign of the cross, or with eulogies, sanctified objects (as those taken from the surroundings of the living saints or empowered by the relics), most of which were applied in a rather similar way for different persons, with various ills. In incubation miracles, however, with the dream as their medium, the presence of medical learning and of doctors, the miraculously altered scientific achievements in the miraculous cures allow us to point out what is not limited to these texts as sources but what may tell us about a paradigm, or a change in a paradigm. These insights into a mentality, the inner consciousness of the community or individuals may represent not only a personal point of view but also a thought world of a both spiritually and socially turbulent period.

I shall focus on the Christian incubation records only as narrative sources, while not being unaware that in order to unearth both the ancient and the Christian cult practice in its entirety, other types of sources should be analysed as well: the material, archaeological remains of a cult or the artistic representations. With the limitations given a doctoral thesis and myself being neither an archaeologist nor an art historian, I have chosen to analyse the textual sources, the factors surrounding the emergence of the stories and compositional intentions which formed the narrative records of early Christian incubation healing into compositionally structured miracle collections.

My survey focuses on the miracles of Saint Thecla, the two versions of the miraculous cures of Saint Cosmas and Damian, that of Cyrus and John and the corpus of Saint Artemios. These collections, as I shall argue, together constitute a well-defined group, differing in kind from other contemporary Byzantine hagiographical records. Focusing on the narrative aspects of these sources is justified because emerging early Christian incubation adopted not only elements of the pagan ritual but when recording it, drew heavily on the ancient narrative records of temple sleep. The development and the transformation of dream cures and its textual, literary expressions ran in parallel with each other, both being rooted in the preceding cult practice. Consequently, and rather oddly, these Christian collections of dream healing bear a closer resemblance to the incubation records of antiquity than to contemporary Christian hagiographical genres (in the form of the narrative, of course, not in its theology).

The Byzantine miracle collections, which record incubation proper (that is, those that are dedicated entirely and more or less exclusively to temple sleep), form a small but homogeneous corpus, which can be legitimately called a proper group. They were closely modelled on the Greek incubation records and also on each other. Their spatial and chronological distribution and the attested popularity of the incubation cult sites confirm beyond any doubt that incubation was a firm and deeply rooted practice, with its own unique aspects, both in regard to the cultic ritual and in the way it was recorded. A large proportion of Byzantine hagiography recorded incubation practice and incubation miracles as well, hence our sources are far from being solitary examples. That they are unique and how their uniqueness developed is the process I would like to investigate in this dissertation.

The first step will be to broadly introduce the cult practice of ancient incubation, together with records of it (Chapter 1) as well its adoption through the cult of the Christian physician saints: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Artemios and certainly in a different vein, within the cult of Saint Thecla (Chapter 2).

Hopefully, this enquiry will also demonstrate that there was not just one “cult of the saints”, an issue often ignored by scholars. The development of the Christian incubation saint cult clearly had a different development from what is generally characterized as an emerging cult of the saints, i. e. of martyrs, holy bishops, or living ascetics. Each of these groups also diverges in the patterns they represent. Just as the incubation cult practice took shape in the early church in a particular fashion, so did the incubation records, which are unlike the other specimens of Byzantine *Miracula* literature from various points of view.

Having described the collections of miraculous dreams found in incubation records, in Part II (The Sources: Compositional History) I will turn to the detectable sources and formative processes in these collections. My question is how the early Christian incubation miracles were shaped into stories, texts, recorded narratives and literary artworks, tracing what the sources themselves have to say about their background, to map out what layers of transmission can be distinguished within the collections themselves. The analysis of the sources of miraculous cure is best begun with the most important material (textual and pictorial) finds: votive tablets, the evidence that best expresses the cult experience (Chapter 3. 1: The ex voto as source). In the next step, I shall touch upon the role of images that record miracles and that were relatively often incorporated into the stories (Chapter 3. 2: The pictorial evidence). Besides looking for the images as records and hence sources for the stories, it shall also be shown how pictorial representation actually shaped the incubation dream narrative.

The next decisive element in shaping the stories was the oral tradition emerging around the cult place. These narratives were directed by temple propaganda or by the reports pilgrims exchanged with each other. Oral transmission was all the more important as it was not only a way of

transforming events into a narrative or providing material for recording, but it also played a significant part in the cultic experience itself. In this chapter of the thesis (Chapter 4: Oral tradition) the individual miracle collections will be examined in detail in order to answer the following questions: 1. What are the characteristics or direct references in the texts indicating that these miracles were transmitted orally? 2. What are the occasions (cultic or everyday events) that provided the framework for such storytelling gatherings? (Chapter 4. 1: The role of orality in the formation, transmission and performance of the compositions) 3. Who were the carriers of this oral tradition, the tellers of miracles or the immediate identifiable informants of the hagiographers? 4. What references were incorporated in the narratives that attest the spreading of stories? More importantly, how were the miraculous cures related and in the relating become part of the story itself? 5. What is the role of the presence and of the representation of orality in the narrative? (Chapter 4. 2: Orality and storytelling in the miracles) Finally, I shall address the relationship between orality and written forms (Chapter 4. 3: From oral to written records).

When the miracle collections were recorded, the purpose was not to establish an exclusive canon of texts, in contrast to the gospel tradition. To other points of view were considered in the production of a written text: to make the past events of the miraculous the possible events of the present, from time to time recreating and re-interpreting their contexts; and second, depending on the personal aspirations of the hagiographer, to produce a literary composition. Besides the internal set of variables signalling the formation of the collections in this chapter I will refer to important works on oral tradition from the fields of anthropology, classical-philology and New Testament studies. Such an inter-disciplinary approach is more comprehensive since each of these disciplines focuses on different aspects of orality.

The third part of Part II will concern direct and indirect literary traditions (Chapter 5: The literary background of the collections). Ancient and Christian aretalogies, ancient incubation records, the Gospel miracles and the early Christian miracle narratives, most often connected to the saints' lives belong here. Scholars in the past few decades has radically reinterpreted the umbrella term of aretalogy, the narrative of miracles. Mark van Uytfanghe speaks about the *chimera of aretalogy* when he re-drew the genre-thematical-theological definitions and literary traditions of aretalogy.³ His hypothesis did not aim to define a single genre and not even to demonstrate the impossibility of the attempt, but envisaged a better understanding of the literary atmosphere of Late Antiquity (both pagan and Christian). He therefore discarded the categories of genre-definition introducing instead the concept of *hagiographic discourse*. Such discourse was limited neither to Christianity nor to literature, but was emblematic of a mode of expression for the Greek, Christian and Jewish thought world of the time. A brief description of the how genre categories (such as aretalogy or even hagiography) became superseded will be followed by an outline of the tradition of Greek incubation miracle

collections (with special attention paid to the recent hypotheses of Carlo Brillante, G. Guidorizzi and Marco Dorati), and by an enquiry into the literary characteristics and requirements of the dream-cure records. A short treatment will account for the impact of Jesus' miraculous healing had on the rhetoric of the incubation narratives.

Beyond doubt there was another half-literary, half-cultic Christian precedent to the early Greek Christian incubation narratives, even if it was supposed to be an indirect one. The *libelli miraculorum*, referred to the custom of keeping a miracle-archive in churches, a phenomenon that not only secured the memory and authority of the miracle but inevitably moulded the event into a narrative. By authenticating and conserving the miracles the local community were kept aware of the presence of such records. The non-incubational miracle catalogues of the early Church will be considered in their quality of being indirect models, presenting a background against which incubation narratives should be viewed.

The five miracle collections that took shape around the four incubation cults are first examined in Part II from the point of view of the cult experience and the material they contain pertaining to written, oral and literary traditions. On the other side of the formation, in the midst of shaping the narrative and its moulding into a compositional whole, into a proper collection, we find the hagiographer – and not only him. Part III complements the previous survey by focussing on a structural analysis of the texts and on the conscious shaping of the compositions, born out of literary ambitions which often aimed high and were marked by the individual compositional style of the hagiographer. Chapter 6 (The Hagiographer) will address how the hagiographer reflected upon his own work of composition and research. Here, I will also try to find answers to questions such as what is the relationship of the hagiographer to the text, in what sense can the hagiographer be regarded as author, narrator, performer, redactor, the recorder of the texts or a creative composer? How did the hagiographer in Early Christian times depict their own role, what form did their self-display or self-characterization take, and also what emerges without his conscious emphasis. The hagiographer' personality and his literary ambitions certainly left their marks on the structural development of the collections and on their individual compositional features. (Chapter 7: Structures.)

In the impressive literature on Byzantine hagiography there are surprisingly few articles that treat with hagiographical sources from a literary point of view, and even fewer who deal with them in terms of literary theory. Without subscribing to any particular literary theory, the miracle narratives will remain at the focus of this analysis and included mapping their structure, the miracle-groups and, the narrative technique starting from the texts themselves. Thus, Chapter 7 (Compositional structures and individual characteristics of the collections) will focus on the outlines of composition,

³ Marc van Uytanghe "L'hagiografie: un »genre« chrétien ou antique tardif?" *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993): 135-188.

on its structural development, thematic groupings, and an analysis of miracle-stories in each of the miracle collections. Before turning to the structural investigations the question of establishing credibility will be briefly addressed. How did the hagiographer represent or create the reality of the narrative; the literary and concrete reality, as well as the reality of the miraculous. After analysing each collection as a whole, single narrative techniques will be considered in Chapter 8. These include story patterns, folktale motifs, narrative devices such as word play, jokes, the function of dialogues, scenic duality and “the narrative compulsion to return to expected endings,” in other words the logic of the narrative. After that Festugière raised the question of hagiographical folk motifs,⁴ in the 1970s other *topoi* also came to the attention of scholars, while recently Byzantinists have shown concern for analysing hagiographical motifs in a more literary-narrative context.⁵ In this section I shall concentrate on some of the individually developed *nuclei* of miraculous stories such as the invitation dream or finding curative objects or the narrative and theological role of repetition.

Chapter 9 (The medical in the miraculous) has two parts. The first one examines the narrative role of doctors in the miracles. The second part analyses the impact of medical knowledge on dream content of incubation patients, and by the example of the medical round it will illustrate what E. R. Dodds described as culturally dependent dream pattern.

The closing chapter of this part (Chapter 10 : The “Performance”) explores first the finality of the recording of these miracles, such as entertainment, local cult propaganda or the dissemination of theological truths. By performance I understand here the circumstances surrounding the telling and listening of the dream miracle-narratives, the place this occupied within the cult, the occasions for telling the miracles, the context, effect, purpose of storytelling and the experiencing, listening, reading, seeing of the miracles, their telling, re-telling, writing, re-writing and depicting. This communal aspect of the cult experience is all the more important since the pilgrims not only underwent the rites of the cult together, but they told and listened to miracle stories and were instructed, oriented, encouraged (or discouraged) and even entertained by them. The instances of the stories that directed our attention to their own *mise-en-scène*, help us form an idea about how “informal” this sort of performance was. How was it integrated into the customary practices of the cult place (or even into the liturgy)? One of the occasions for the performance of the miracle stories makes their entertainment function clear. The mode of expressing the expected unexpected, that is, the logic of the miraculous events, brings us back to those characteristics of the narrative which arose simply by its being told. The worshipper was psychically prepared through the entertainment function of, the “becoming an audience”.

⁴ A.-J. Festugière, “Lieux communs littéraires et thèmes de folk-lore dans l’hagiographie primitive” *Wiener Studien* 73 (1960): 123-152.

⁵ For example: Matthew W. Dickie, “Narrative Patterns in Christian Hagiography” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 40 (1999) 83-98.

In the second part (Mirroring Society) some aspects of the contemporary social reality will be addressed, as represented in the stories, which were determined by the personal credo of the hagiographer, but also by the religious context that surrounded the cult place. I shall consider purposeful and accidental testimonies and the attitudes towards pagans, heretics, Jews, explore the promotion of theological truths and contrasting orthodoxies. Certainly the most articulated of these truths and orthodoxies reveals what this sort of hagiography shows about the “other”, interpreted in its broadest terms. As a consequence of the time span encompassed by this study, most of these *others* may include not simply Greeks (pagans) in their quality as non-Christians but *others* marked by their learning (philosophical, rhetorical or - in the case of physicians - medical), the last guardians of the *paideia*, of traditional Greek education. The unbelievers of the miracle stories posed a question to these miracles and the theological message behind them, the resistant pagans, Greeks, Jews, heirs to a great cultural tradition and among them doctors especially, who presented a (perhaps more narrative than real) rivalry or simply had to be involved by virtue of their viewing healing from a different angle. Less unusual in view of later hagiography is the presence and representation of all sorts of heretics of the day, and hence the definition of orthodoxy that can be very varied indeed. In this context theological propaganda is nothing surprising – what deserves particular attention are the means the hagiographers (or the saints) chose to apply. It is worth noting the way hagiography, this apparently fixed narrative form, gave resonance to the contemporary sentiments and changes of its immediate social surrounding: the position taken relative to the Jews and the surprisingly quick accommodation of anti-Judaic rhetoric will be my key example. One of the precise aims of the collections was theological propaganda, contrasting the faith of the saints and their patients, where both parties were ready to express a neat dogmatic credo. The uniqueness arises when the patients, the saints and as it happened, the cult itself could change its theological position and thus two versions were born, naturally with two, differently interpreted orthodoxies.

Conclusion is dedicated to the more broadly interpreted hagiographical aims of the incubation narratives, their cultic and narrative uniqueness by the impact of the dream-medium. A natural conclusion is provided by summarizing that on the basis of the viewpoints analysed so far, in what aspects the Byzantine incubation collections are single among the contemporary Byzantine miracle corpora, in what they follow the hagiographical models of the time and in what they reach back and draw on the ancient paradigms of incubation practice as well as incubation literature. It may seem surprising to discover that the records of incubation healers were in several aspects closer to the (pagan) Greek narrative and cultic models than to the other Byzantine miracle collections and to the New Testament paradigms on miraculous cures. The Christian incubation miracles were the result of the survival of a pagan practice that went parallel with the survival of the way of recording it. This interrelatedness left noteworthy traces in the Christian miracle stories, elements sometimes

foreign to Byzantine hagiography (e. g. the priority of the place over the healer). But the most fascinating (and not at all a necessary development with the arrival of Christianity!) was this interconnectedness itself: that a ritual and its way of expression went on hand in hand.

History of scholarship and directions for further research

In the dissertation – unavoidably – I address the miracle collections but from a few aspects, especially from the point of their being texts, focussing on how they came into being and took shape as textual and literary artefacts. The choice, I am aware, is arbitrary. In order to fully understand incubation, and to be able to carry out a thorough analysis of this cult practice, one should also take into consideration the material milieu of incubation, the emergence of the sanctuaries, their architecture and the way they functioned. Similarly, the material objects coming from healed patients, the *ex votos*, need to be considered just like non-textual and non-hagiographical representations of the ritual healers. Even the miracle collections themselves, by virtue of the richness of the material and the multiplicity of the topics they include, suggest directions for research but nevertheless will not be dealt with in the dissertation. Having outlined the main points to be covered in the introduction to the dissertation I should like to summarise briefly some past and potential future research trends, which will be touched upon only in passing or not at all in the thesis although the arguments they use and especially the possibilities they open for further research have influenced the topics I will address. Here, I would like to signal that I am aware of important works and areas in these studies and scholarly debates to that – limited by the framework of the thesis and by my own capacities and interests – I shall not dedicate much space.

Connected to the transmission of the ancient incubation tradition one of the most exciting (and most frequently addressed) questions raised by these collections is the continuity of the cult along with the change of the religious climate. At the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, two tendencies were sharply distinguished in the scholarly literature. Classical philologists (Ernst Lucius, A. Maury, Hermann Usener, Ludwig Deubner, Mary Hamilton, and the medievalist Pierre Saintyves) argued for *pro forma* Christianisation but an essential continuity of the cult, often drawing a clear-cut correlation between the Christian healers and the deities of the Greek pantheon. Those who attacked this view (especially Hippolyte Delehaye, and in a more nuanced way A.-J. Festugière) saw in the Christian incubation cults only a superficial formal resemblance to the ancient practice, sometimes denying even the common links acknowledged by the Christian hagiographers. At present questions of continuity or lack of it are addressed by comparing side by side the (occasionally unquestionable) continuity and the (similarly unquestionably) radically different religious thought world of early Christianity. How did ritual sleep change in its theological emphases and in everyday practice? What new voices gained expression with the triumph of the physician saints, and what others disappeared or were reduced to silence, perhaps not within the rite but in its Christian testimonies? In one word, how did changes in the religious worldview of the time shape the tradition – before itself becoming tradition? The cult of doctor saints along with incubation was transferred

from Christianity to Islam. Exploration of this transference might contribute valuable data to our understanding of temple sleep, e. g. what aspects of incubation were – deliberately or not – suppressed in Christian hagiography although they formed part of the cult practice itself?⁶

In a like manner a bipolar debate emerged around what exactly incubation process consisted of, expecting to explain the mechanisms of healing, that of miracle and of the experiences of the believer. The positions are emblematically represented by the two, roughly contemporary, books of Károly Kerényi⁷ and Ludwig and Emma Edelstein.⁸ Kerényi delves into the mythical – archetypal (Jungian) roots of the Asclepius cult, attributing an additional meaning of a chthonic-archaic character to the incubation rite, while Ludwig Edelstein with his splendid positivism clears the Asclepieian miracles of all supernatural, offering “realistic” explanations for the healings. As Kerényi rightly saw in the incubation miracles the imprint of an authentic religious experience, Edelstein also had the merit of bringing into focus the role the physician–priests played within the temple or that of the healing equipment used in the sanctuary (e. g. curative baths). At the same time, Edelstein also pointed out the significance of the patient’s expectations in the cure. The question of the healing procedure obviously raises the issue of medical methods in the repertoire of the ritual healers,⁹ both in the case of ancient and Christian healers. He not only referred to analysis of the precisely described medical interventions but reflected also on what patients knew in any given period of contemporary healing methods (both of the medicine practiced by trained physicians and of popular medicine). In the miraculous stories of the physician saints it is worth paying close attention to the presence of physicians themselves, their hagiographical, theological role, or the image drawn of the medical profession of the time.¹⁰ Hardly ever discussed but also deserving of attention were the

⁶ On incubation in Islam (*istikhāra*) see: Michael W. Dols, *Majnun: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), esp. 234-235; 287; and T. Fahd, “Istikhāra” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* vol. 4, edited van Donzel et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 259-260. Islamic incubation was on the margins as well, since it is not found in the Qur’ān or the *hadith*, and was never approved but remained always tolerated. Incubation was practiced around the saints’ tombs and also involved ritual purification, before and during the pilgrimage, almsgiving, sacrifice, bathing in or drinking from the sacred spring, and the characteristic *ex voto* rags tied to sacred trees as proof of the visit. Healing in the dream arrived in forms of direct treatment or prescriptions while specialization in healing sites was also common. For case studies on Moroccan practices of visiting the saints’ tomb for incubation see: Vincenzo Crapanzano, “Saints, Jnūn, and Dreams: An Essay in Moroccan Ethnopsychology” *Psychiatry* 38 (1975), 145-159 and Edmond Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l’Afrique du Nord* (Algiers: A. Jourdan, 1909), 410-414.

⁷ Károly Kerényi, *Der göttliche Arzt. Studien über Asklepios und seine Kultstätten* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1948) in English: *Asklepios. Archetypal Image of the Physician’s Existence* Trans. R. Manheim, Bollingen Series 65.3 (New York: Pantheon, 1959). The other work mentioned by Kerényi side by side that of Edelstein as a similar antithesis of his own interpretation is U. Hausmann, *Kunst und Heiligtum. Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Asklepiosreliefs* (Potsdam: E. Stichnote, 1948).

⁸ Edelstein, & Edelstein, *Asclepius: a collection of the testimonies* (cf. note 1)

⁹ See e. g. the article of Henry J. Magoulas, “The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries.” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 57 (1964): 127-150; and a critique of his approach by Evelyne Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance 4-7 siècles* (Paris: La Haye, 1977), 103.

¹⁰ As analysed for example by Susan Ashbrook Harvey, “Physicians and Ascetics in John of Ephesus: An Expedient Alliance” Symposium on Byzantine Medicine, ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 87-95; Peregrine Horden, “Saints and Doctors in the Early Byzantine Empire: The Case of Theodore of Sykeon” *Studies in Church History* 19 (1982): 1-13; Alexandre Kazhdan, “The Image of the Medical Doctor in Byzantine Literature of the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 3-51; Julia Seiber, *Urban Saint in Early Byzantine Social History*.

opinions held by doctors concerning the ritual cures practiced in churches. Hagiography, from this point view is hazardous to use since doctors there have well-defined narrative roles. In the stories doctors were always persuaded or put to shame.

In the dissertation I shall touch upon further issues which await a more detailed analysis and for which the incubation miracle collections could provide excellent, hitherto hardly used data. One such theme is the culturally dependent character of dreams, of which I shall examine only one aspect, namely how the dream experience of encountering the healer is shaped by changes in medical practice and by the dreamer's familiarity with it. Another future research perspective is the study of the beliefs and changes in beliefs about the attributed causes of illness. Among these correlations I found most fascinating the relationship between illness and sin and close to this, the changes or persistence of such concepts as illness viewed as *miasma*: pollution/defilement/ritual-physical impurity and healing interpreted (symbolically or concretely) as purification. These concepts pertain not only to the past circumstances of falling ill, but examined either in the ancient or Christian sources, they actively shaped ritual (just as did magical or medical) healing methods, the conduct of the healers, as well as leaving their imprint on the prescribed cathartic or apotropaic treatments and rites.

Exactly because of their healing and ritual character, the miracle collections allow a glimpse into the realm of magical beliefs, methods and objects.¹¹ It would suffice to recall such examples from our Christian miracle catalogues where the cause of illness was harmful magic (an object concealed in the house of the patient or a miniature figure of the ill person, with its hands and feet nailed, apparently paralysed). To counter such powers there was the true, God-sent power of the saints, supported by the amulets wore by the sick or charms to be recited against all further ills, taught by the saints themselves.

By considering such points of views and by extending enquiries about the sick on the basis of information provided by the hagiographer, it proved possible to outline the social and private background of the characters, their profession, personal preoccupations and their (official or lay) relationship to the cult. Likewise, broader issues can also be explored. What financial or family problems could be caused by illness? How did generational conflicts manifest themselves in the quest for healing and in general what sort of value systems were revealed. All these factors together serve to richly characterise everyday life in contemporary Byzantium.¹²

Oxford: British Archaeological Reports Suppl. Ser. 37. 1977) 88, D. J. Constantelos, "Physician - Priests in the Medieval Greek Church" *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 12 (1966-67): 141-153.

¹¹ It is dealt with, for example, in the miracle collection of Cyrus and John by Theodor Nissen, "Medizine und Magie bei Sophronios" *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 39 (1939), 349-381; in several, mostly incubation collections by Henry J. Magoulas, "The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries A.D: Sorcery, Relics and Icons" *Byzantion* 37(1967), 228-269.

¹² Some research that rely on the miracle collections as well when addressing issues of sociology, private life, history or urban life: Evelyne Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance 4-7 siècles* (Paris: La Haye, 1977); her *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance: IV^e-X^e siècles* (London Variorum Reprints, 1981) and her Introduction to the volume,

These collections are, at the same time, precious documents for the history of the great sanctuaries as well. I do not refer only to the architectural or the material aspects of church buildings, although the contribution of the miracle catalogues cannot be neglected here either. Through these catalogues it becomes possible to see sacred space as the worshippers did: “Mais, ce qui est plus important à connaître, nous y voyons quelle place occupait dans la vie des populations chrétiennes la “maison” du saint préféré, avec quel empressement les foules y accouraient, quelle a été leur manière d’honorer le patron, maître et seigneur du lieu.” – so Delehay. ¹³ The next step is the attempt to grasp space and its functions through the eyes of the master of the house, as the saints, in a way never heard at the Western cult practice, often behaved. ¹⁴ It might be due to the intimacy of the atmosphere of healing as well as the remains of Greek concepts of the way a deity dwells inside his or her shrine. It may even be related to an exalted visual-iconic mode of observation with the saints moving easily within their “house”. Just like anyone else, they have their favourite spots. Thus, Thecla can be encountered in the lavatory (as Artemios) or be seen bodily moving from one place to another on their habitual rounds among the sick (as Cosmas and Damian, and Cyrus and John). This example is one among countless others that could serve as a starting point for comparing the Eastern and Western patterns of emerging saint cults, the formation of miracle literature or the functioning of ritual healing.

edited by herself, *Maladie et société à Byzance* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1993); John F. Haldon, “Supplementary Essay: The Miracles of Artemios and Contemporary Attitudes: Context and Significance” In V. S. Crisafulli, and J.W. Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios. A Collection of Miracle Stories.*; Julia Sciber, *Urban Saint in Early Byzantine Social History*; H. Saradi “Constantinople and its Saints (IV-VI c). The Image of the City and Social Considerations” *Studi Medievali* 36.1 (1995): 87-110; Gilbert Dagron, “L’ombre d’un doute: L’hagiographie en question, VIe-XIe siècles” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 59-69; Sergej Hackel, ed. *The Byzantine Saint*. Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (University of Birmingham, 1981); Dominic Montserrat, “Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, Ed. David Frankfurter, 257-279 (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Lennart Rydén, “Kyrkan som sjukhus. Om den helige Artemios’ mirakler” *Religion och Bibel* 44 (1985), 6-7.

¹³ Hippolyte Delehay, “Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints” *Analecta Bollandiana* 43 (1925), 65.

¹⁴ The comparison of Byzantine and Western saints regarding how and how not they are present in their sanctuary, in their “house” is splendidly carried out by Edina Bozóky, “Le miracle et ‘la maison du saint’ ” *Hortus Artium Mediaevalium* 9 (2003): 247-252.

PART I: THE CULT

Chapter 1: Dream healing in Ancient and Christian context

The ancient practice of temple sleep is closely connected to the conception that during the dream the soul, to some extent freed from physical bounds, contacts the world of the gods more freely.¹⁵ This spiritual aspect of dreams gained an important place in Greek religion. The dream-concept in literature, first formulated by Homer,¹⁶ was but one of the manifold dream-mythologies.¹⁷ The dream, at times also closely related to death,¹⁸ soon found its expression in the thought world of philosophy¹⁹ and medicine²⁰ as well. The ritual application of dreams had two main purposes including oracular dreams or dream healing. These two-natured, physical and spiritual needs found their common medium in temple sleep.²¹ The essence of incubation practice was that the sick or those who wished to receive an oracle went to the sacred place of the divinity with the explicit goal of sleeping there and experiencing in dream the epiphany of the god.²² Within the cults of Greek incubation deities and heroes there was no clear-cut division between the healing and the oracular aspects, yet in accordance with the spheres of their divine competency, it can be stated that healing incubation was primarily within the jurisdiction of Asclepius and later of Isis and Serapis. The multiplicity of other (incubation-) healing deities, heroes and locally worshipped healing cults²³ (many of whom claimed wide spread fame, such as Amphiaraos in Oropos, Trophonios in

¹⁵ An overall outline is given by John S. Hanson "Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity" In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II: *Principat*, 23,2, Ed. Wolfgang Haase. 1395-1427 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) and R. G. A. van Lieshout, *Greeks on Dreams* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1980).

¹⁶ Ann Amory, "The Gates of Horn and Ivory." In *Yale Classical Studies 20: Homeric Studies*, 3-57. Ed. G. S. Kirk and Adam Parry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); J. St. Messer, *The Dream in Homer and Greek Tragedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918).

¹⁷ For a detailed picture see A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1978); George Devereux, *Dreams in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979) and recently Ch. Walde, *Die Traumdarstellungen in der griechisch-römischen Dichtung* (Munich - Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2001).

¹⁸ Angelo Brelich, "The Place of Dreams in the Religious World Concept of the Greeks" In: *The Dream and Human Societies*, Ed. G. E. Von Grunbaum and R. Cailliois, 293-301 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

¹⁹ The dream concepts of Heracleitos, Democritos, Plato and Aristotle and their interpretation have been written about by van Lieshout, "Philosophers on Dreams" in his *Greeks on Dreams*, 64-164.

²⁰ Christine Walde, *Antike Traumdeutung und moderne Traumforschung* (Zürich: Artemis and Winkler, 2001), "Traum und Medizin", 106-126; Philip J. Van der Eijk, "Aristotle on 'distinguished physicians' and the medical significance of dreams" In: *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context*. Eds. P. J. Van der Eijk, H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, and P. H. Schijvers, 447-459, (Amsterdam-Atlanta, G. A.: Rodopi, 1995. 2 vols); On its diagnostic use see the IV. Book of Hippocrates' *Regimen* ("On Dreams"); A. M. Holowchak, "Interpreting dreams for corrective regimen: Diagnostic dreams in Greco-Roman medicine" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 56 (2001), 382-399; and also Philip J. van der Eijk, "Divination, Prognosis and Prophylaxis: The Hippocratic Work 'On Dreams' (*De Victu* 4) and its Near Eastern Background" in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* Eds. H. F. J. Horstmanshoff and M. Stol, 187-218 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

²¹ The sources of oracular dreams are collected by Dario Del Corno, ed. *Graecorum de re onirocritica reliquiae* Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antiquità 26 (Milan, 1969); cf. his two other works: "I sogni e la loro interpretazione nell'età dell'Impero" In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II: *Principat* 16. 2 ed. W. Haase, 1605-1618 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) and "Ricerche sull' onirocritica greca" *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo* 96 (1962): 334-366.

²² On incubation in Asia Minor, in the Hittite empire, in Babylon and Egypt see J.-M. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*, transl. J. M. Munro (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 46-50, 69-70; L. Gil, *Therapeia. La medicina popular en el mundo clásico* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1969), 358; on the terminology of incubation: Deubner, *De Incubatione...* **PAGES**, Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 27-28; M. Lopez Salva, "El sueño incubatorio en el cristianismo oriental" *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica* X (1976), 147-188.

²³ W. A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925).

Lebadea²⁴) cannot be neglected. The presence of water was highly significant in the cult of Asclepius.²⁵ The well or bath often lay within the precincts of the sacred temple-complex and repeatedly figures as part of the scenery or means of the miraculous cure. Its importance was so great that A. Duprez attributed a lack of water-resources to the fact that the Asclepius cult was never established in the inner parts of Syria.²⁶

The forms of invocation or epithets of Greek deities always emphasise the nature of the god. Asclepius (whose name might contain the word *epios*, gentle) was called Σωτῆρ, the Saviour, φιλοῦνθρωπος or φιλόλαος, the lover of people, at Epidauros Συγγνωμῶν, the Considerate. These epithets of the god who

heals not for reward but to gratify his own loving heart, not inaptly express the popular conviction and mark off this man-god from the older Hellenic divinities. The tender regard for children, a growing sentiment of the Hellenistic age, suggested the strange title and invocation of the god as Asklepios Παῖς, Asklepios 'the Child' [...] in accordance with a strange and often unrecognised law of Greek invocation; namely, the title whereby the deity was involved in the public prayer acted upon him somewhat as a spell, at once expressing the need of the worshipper and binding, or at least quickening the will of the higher power to fulfil that need.²⁷

The inscriptions recording the cures in the sanctuaries of Asclepius provide a colourful picture of what may have happened during incubation. The sick (often coming from afar) first underwent (ritual or bodily) purification rites specific to the cult site. They themselves might have abstained from wine, meat, certain foods (or fasted), sex, performed a ritual ablution, did not wear certain types of clothing or wore a specific type of clothing for the time of sleeping (for instance the skin of a sacrificed animal or in Pergamon white linen). To all this there was added the performing of sacrifice and making a vow concerning the tribute the patient would pay if healed. The required internal preparation was summed up in the inscription at the entrance of the Asclepieion at Epidauros: "Pure must be he who enters the fragrant temple; purity means to think nothing but holy thoughts."²⁸

The temple had a secluded hall, designed for the specific purpose of ritual sleep, the *abaton*; as a probable reference to the chthonic past of the cult, the sick person was supposed to sleep directly on the ground.²⁹ The dreams experienced here are described for the first time in a literary form in Aristophanes' *Ploutos*. There the incubation scene took place in the Athenian Asclepieion.

²⁴ For an ancient account of these cults cf. Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, see

²⁵ Cf. e. g. two orations of Aelius Aristides: To the Well in the Temple of Asclepius (XXXIX = T804), and Panegyric on the Water in Pergamum (LIII = T805).

²⁶ A. Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux*, 71; On the close associations of Occidental pre-Christian healing cults (incl. incubation) with water and on the ritual worship of water cf. A. Rousselle, *Croire et guérir. La foi en Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

²⁷ Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 276-77. The collection of the god's names are in T 266-276.

²⁸ The inscription is known from Porphyrius *De Abstinencia*, II. 19 and from Clemens of Alexandria *Stromateis* V. 1. 13 (T 318; T 336).

Within the framework of illness and healing there a concept, basically foreign to Greek religion can be grasped. This concept was one that later became essential in Christianity, that of personal religion. Reading the Epidaurian stelai however superficially, it is striking how non-Olympian is the directness and intimate conduct of Asclepius. This approachability of the god and the familiarity between the healer and the worshipper, so foreign to the ancient deities of the old religion were born out of the borderline-position of the divine – human encounter, born out of human helplessness in the face of illness.³⁰ An impression of this directness may also be found in the Asclepician epiphany itself. For an ancient Greek, a face to face encounter with a deity was rarely an auspicious event. In the language of myths catching sight of the real figure of a god or goddess most often meant death or blindness, while seeing Asclepius was healing itself. Although the medium of the dream acted as an important “filter”, it is still significant that Asclepius rarely came in disguise.³¹ (This also holds true for his appearances in the form of his sacred animals, dogs and serpents or as a young boy. These forms represent his clearly identifiable epiphanies, which rendered his sphere of action larger.)

Another aspect of intimacy that became manifest in the context of illness was the kindness and frequently joking tone of the healer, along with the sense of humour that runs through the miracles – this factor, entwined with the oracular-related riddles, resulted in the enigmatic dream prescriptions, often gladly applied by Christian dream-healers as well.³²

Out of the analyses regarding the healing methods of the ancient dream-experiences was born a twofold interpretation of a bipolar phenomenon. In the earliest recorded narratives of incubation healings there are experiences of cure when the mere epiphany of Asclepius sufficed to procure a cure. Most often the dreamer perceived an immediate miraculous intervention, initiated by a word or a touch of the god or as the result of a quick surgical intervention.

Independently of its medical or miraculous repertoire, in the oldest records of incubation the cure of the sick is immediate: following in the wake of the dream he or she most often left the temple healed.

Written cult records from this early stage are the Epidaurian *Iamata* inscriptions from the 4th century BC. A few centuries later the methods of divine cures experienced in dream, along with the time-span and circumstances of the miracle underwent a significant change, while the ritual of incubation fundamentally remained the same. The change can be chiefly seen as the immediate

²⁹ cf Euripides, *Hecuba*, 70-71: “Lady Earth, mother of black-winged dreams!”

³⁰ for its presentation with regard to the ancient (primarily) healing deities see: A.-J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); and A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), 56ff.

³¹ on epiphany see H. S. Versnel, “What did the ancient see when he saw a god? Some reflections on Greco-Roman epiphany” In: *Effigies Dei. Essays on the history of religions* ed. D. van der Plas, 42-55 (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

miraculous cures having been superseded by the prescriptions given in the dream. The complex therapies of Asclepius, his advice concerning concoctions, poultices, baths, gymnastics and diets all lead to cures only with time although the cures were considered no less miraculous. Exemplary for this type are the inscription of Iulius Appellas or the never-ending dream prescriptions of Aelius Aristides.

Analysts of the miraculous healing narratives spoke of two phases in the Asclepician incubation methods, in which the transformation was formulated by a phrase written by Ludwig Edelstein: “the god learned medicine”.³³ Another hypothesis was also advanced with which I myself also agree, namely that the two healing methods are not two, chronologically separate cult phenomena. The expression of the ritual did not change either but we are dealing essentially a self-same feature. In fact, there was only one healing method, of which the later, more elaborated dream prescription “was merely an extension and development of the primitive treatment.”³⁴ The archaeologist P. Kavvadias, who excavated the Epidaurian Asclepicon, identifies a different factor that became more important in the essentially single form of treatment. This was not the enriching of medical knowledge but rather the decline of belief in the miraculous: “The ancient inscriptions he takes as relating the early methods, which were rendered impossible by the rapid growth of scepticism. People refused to believe any longer in miracles and as faith is the first essential for the success of the supernatural, new methods had to be devised, if the Temple was to be supported by popular favour as in times past. The work of healing had now to be carried on by medical science and hygienic treatment, while, for evident reasons, the cult had to be preserved. Thus we find a combination of therapeutics and religious worship.”³⁵ Providing that the cultural experiences and the medical knowledge of the dreamer were broadened and became more refined, together with the methods of medical science itself, Edelstein’s idea can be reversed. That it was the patient who acquired knowledge of medicine over the centuries not the healer.

Studying the early miraculous cures, the medical expertise of Asclepius was nevertheless conspicuous; he performs complicated surgical operations, pours a medicinal liquid into the eye of a patient, releases pus, sets bones and expels bile stones. Asclepician healing since its mythical

³² I have developed this theme in an article “Gyógyító álom – gyógyító nevetés” (Healing Dream – Healing Laughter) *Ókor* 3 (2003): 38-46.

³³ L. Edelstein, *Asclepius* vol. 2. Ch. III: Temple Medicine (139-180). For today’s evaluation of his interpretations see the *Introduction* written for the second edition by G. B. Ferngren: (Edelstein, *Asclepius*, reprint, 1998; vol. 1. xiii-xxii), R. Herzog saw the impact of the medically trained temple personnel behind the success of therapies, (*Die Wunderheilungen*, 59-61, 65-71), while Edelstein emphasized the natural process of healing (*Asclepius*, vol. 2, 168-173.)

³⁴ E. Thrämer, “Health and Gods of Healing (Greek),” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, vol. 6. (New York: Ch. Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 540-553. cf. Mary Hamilton, *Incubation, The Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches* (London: W.C. Henderson, 1906) 42.

³⁵ Hamilton, *Incubation*, 42, ref. to Kavvadias. Yet it is difficult to see in the AD 2nd and 3rd centuries an era of scepticism, where rationality reigned over belief in the supernatural!

beginnings³⁶ and later in Cos and Epidauros already had a close connection with scientific medicine, marked by the name of Hippocrates. As Helen King writes:³⁷

Rather than Hippocratic medicine breaking “free” from temple medicine, there is evidence that temple medicine copied Hippocratic and subsequent secular medicine; for example in the late fourth century BCE surgery was in vogue, and the Asklepios seen in dreams duly practiced surgery. But, being a god, he kept ahead of the real world, performing operations superior to any on offer there. When compound drugs were fashionable, Asklepios used them too, but his were invariably more effective. One could argue that the success of Hippocratic medicine actually led to an increase in the Asklepios cult, with patient expectations rising and cures for a wider range of symptoms being sought.

Meanwhile it is crucial to emphasize that Hippocratic medicine also maintained and cherished this interconnection – and in its own way exploited it. Not only was Hippocrates himself a priest of Asclepius, but at this time all Greek physicians were the “sons”, cult-representatives and disciples of the god. People in such a distant era as the Christian seventh century still referred to Asclepiadai rather than doctors.

To understand how their methods intermingled, or better to say, their parallel coexistence and mutual correlation of temple healing and professional medicine, it is enough to recall the legend associated with Hippocrates (his copying of temple votives and their application in medical practice),³⁸ the “medical contests” in honour of Asclepius³⁹ or later the traditions surrounding Galen.⁴⁰ Galen, in addition to his testimonies concerning his personal experience of Asclepius’ healing methods and his respect for temple healing, has left us with an acute observation about the functioning of such god-sent medical advice:

Thus at any rate even among ourselves in Pergamum we see those who are being treated by the god obey him when on many occasions he bids them not to drink at all for fifteen days, while they obey none of the physicians who give this prescription. For it has great influence on the patient’s doing all which is prescribed if he has been firmly persuaded that a remarkable benefit to himself will ensue.⁴¹

³⁶ On this “kinship” between Cheiron and Apollo and Asclepius cf. Kerényi, *Asklepios*, 97-100.

³⁷ on the symbiosis of medicinal and ritual healing in Antiquity see Helen King, “Comparative Perspectives on Medicine and Religion in the Ancient World” In *Religion, Health and Suffering* eds. John Hinnells and Roy Porter, 276-294 (London: Kegan Paul, 1999), 281.

³⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, 29. 1. 4 called attention to this anecdote as a testimony to the fact that besides the interconnection of the two healing traditions it was important, that the requisites of temple cures were consciously and systematically archived. Thus, documentation of the religious experience was meant to serve posterity and not only the short-term situation. Cf. Marco Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi nelle stele di Epidauro e nelle raccolte cristiane di miracoli incubatori” *συγγραφ* 3 (2001), 98; although not sparing in his criticism, Artemidorus also records (*Oneirocritica* IV. 22) that in his time dream cure records were stored at Pergamon, Alexandria and other place. Many have tried to attribute the origin of medicine to such votives. His praiseworthy sober argumentation saw in these tablets the dreamer’s actual medical knowledge – or if the record was too complicated, the intentions of the recorders.

³⁹ Edelstein, *Asclepius* vol. 2, 212.

⁴⁰ I have in mind, for instance, his own recovery at the hands of Asclepius himself, on the basis of which Galen decided to become a physician: “... the ancestral god Asclepius of whom I declared myself to be a servant since he saved me when I had the deadly condition of an abscess...” Galenus, *De Libris Propriis* 2. = T 458; on the cooperation of the two fields and about the coexistence of a wide range of explanations see: J-M Van Cangh. “Santé et salut dans les miracles d’Epidaure, d’Apollonius de Tyane et de Nouveau Testament” In: *Gnosticisme et monde hellénistique* ed. J. Ries et al., 263-277 (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982), esp. 267-269; the most recent treatment and the critique of the positivist approach, citing the newest archaeological and theoretical results is H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, “Asclepius and Temple Medicine in Aelius Aristides’ *Sacred Tales*” in: *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* H. F. J. Horstmanshoff and M. Stol, eds, 325-341 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁴¹ Galenus, *Commentarius in Hippocratis Epidemias* VI. iv; Sectio IV, 8 = T 401.

This psychological factor and the view of the divine doctor standing behind it corroborates the way a Greek of the 2nd century AD would have experienced such healing, and even more, the experience for a physician — perfectly explaining how Asclepieian healing actually worked.

The divine physician was expected to make prescriptions that were the paradoxical reverse of normal human therapy, and did not disdain the use of magical drugs. But he was not required to suggest a different, essentially religious aetiology of diseases. His was secular medicine, with an injection of supernatural power. It is therefore only partially correct to see the triumphant rise of the Asclepius cult as a symptom of growing irrationalism.⁴²

Hence, it is more fruitful to see changes in curing methods as shifts of emphasis, labelled by Eric Dodds as *dream patterns and culture patterns*.⁴³ In other words, these medical cures represented a culturally dependent re-shaping of dream experiences and the expression of the renewal of cultural (and medical) knowledge of a community.

There has been a focus in modern scholarship on the three-fold, overlapping approaches to healing in Late Antiquity, i.e. magical, miraculous-religious and medical methods. These three approaches did not simply coexist and function together but were based on the thought-world of the community, in the way the healer and the sick viewed the essence of illness. Doctors and their patients defined the cause of ill health by attributing a specific significance to it.

Health, illness, and health-care related aspects of societies are articulated as cultural systems. [...] Such cultural systems, which I shall call health-care systems, are, like other cultural systems (e.g. kinship and religious systems), symbolic systems built out of meanings, values, behavioural norms and the like. The health-care system articulates illness as a cultural idiom, linking beliefs about disease causation, the experience of symptoms, specific patterns of illness behaviour, decisions concerning treatment alternatives, actual therapeutic practices and evaluations of therapeutic outcomes. Thus it establishes systematic relationship between these components.⁴⁴

This relationship towards miracle, magic as well as to medicine is determined by the interpretational context of what it means in the eyes of a healer and the sick to be ill, how they “discern some framework of meaning by which the cause of, sickness, suffering, and disability can be understood, and by which these universal experiences of frailty and vulnerability can be incorporated into a view of the world and humanity’s place within it.”⁴⁵ Thus, in order to classify that tripartite modality of the cure it is not sufficient to examine the prescribed treatment or the means conducive to health but “we should know not only the rites but [know also] about presuppositions about reality in general and the human condition in particular. If the technique is effective of itself in overcoming a hostile force, then the action is magical. If it is viewed as the intervention of the god or goddess, then it is miraculous. If it is a facilitating of the natural function of the body, then it is medical”-

⁴² Robert Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1983), 249.

⁴³ Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), Chapter IV, thought he did not intend his wording to be understood like this but indeed saw in the spread of ritual healing a sign of irrationality.

⁴⁴ Jerome H. Neyrey, “Miracles, In Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healings” In John C. Cavadini, ed. *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity. Imagining Truth*, 19-56 (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 20.

⁴⁵ Howard C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracles and Magic in New Testament Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

emphasises Howard Clark Kee.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, these approaches are not only culturally dependent, but are mostly impossible to separate from each other with shifts in accent only discernable from their symbiosis and co-functioning.

This is why the world of healing permitted multiple views in interpreting its own methods; from the same text one can unravel the magical practices of the time yet at the same time the contemporary state of scientific medicine. Just as the 4th century BC is the apex of Hippocratic medicine and simultaneously the foundation period of some 200 Asclepius shrines, similarly the AD 2nd century, the second great peak of Asclepieian type healing is the era of Galen and the initial period of prosperity of the Alexandrian medical schools. Not unlike the most intensive period of Christian incubation, Byzantine surgical methods thrived in the 6th century.⁴⁷ This triad (and apparently due to their branching-out, multiple) of ideas underpinned the position of the Church with regard to healing and within it, incubation as well.

The early Christian pattern of miraculous healing, however, was removed from the ancient scheme developed over centuries with a sudden turn towards instantaneous miracle-working. This was due, on the one hand, to healers following the model of Christ's wondrous deeds and on the other hand, it belonged to the conformities connected to the manifestations of a new, spreading faith. In the context of proselytising Christianity just setting forth on its way, miracles gained a new significance. For the newly converted, the sceptics and the yet to be convinced pagans alike miracles, and not least healing miracles, attained a novel symbolic-value. They not only proclaimed the superior truth of the new faith but miraculous cures also represented an external aspect of salvation. The plain demand for miracles, or the miracle as a sign, now endowed with theological content, impacted the methods of thaumaturgic or charismatic healers. The emerging Christian incubation was no exception from this change.

Even with this new factor, we are dealing here with an abruptly acquired communal cultural experience. In the new, changing religious climate of the Late Antique period, there was deep

⁴⁶ Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 4. Arthur Kleinmann also establishes a triple categorization, on the basis of the healer: 1: popular sector: the family context of sickness and care, the 'lay, non-professional, non-specialist popular culture'; 2: the folk sector: people credited by their neighbours with powers to combat illness; the two parties, the sick and the healer share the same worldview and health concepts; the healers treat their clients in public; 3: the professional sector, the scientifically trained physicians. Arthur Kleinmann, "Concepts and Model for the Comparision of Medical Systems as Cultural Systems" in *Concepts of Health, Illness and Disease: A Comparative Perspective* ed. C. Curver and M. Stacey, 31-32 (New York: Berg, 1986), the summary of his ideas in Neyrey, 20. cf. also the articles of J. J. Pilch "Insights and Models for Understanding the Healing Activity of the Historical Jesus" *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, 1994: 154-77; "Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model" *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 18 (1988): 60-66; "Understanding Healing in the Social World of Early Christianity" *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992): 26-33.

⁴⁷ Cf. Oswei Temkin, "Byzantine Medicine: Tradition and Empiricisms" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 97-115 and Vivian Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander: Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984), 1-14.

concern with the notions and expectations of the faithful regarding the wondrous and the art of healing.

This sort of new cultural experience in the field of miraculous healing found expression in the way the Church undertook the role of healing, a task soon to be made part and parcel of its self-definition. By the 4th century AD the process was reflected in the figure of *Christus Medicus* (known earlier but becoming popular at that time). The cults of physician saints also arose in the same period, while the same development can be perceived within science as the ancient medical traditions became Christianized.

The increasingly authoritative Church confronted the practice of temple sleep, it dealt with it not only as a question of a popular and inextirpable pagan custom. The Church also had to interpolate the custom into its own system of beliefs for each element of ritual healing, that is, the Church had to define its attitude towards miracles, dreams, medicine and magic.

Defining miracle

The spiritual atmosphere of the 2nd - 4th centuries AD, the *age of anxiety*,⁴⁸ showed a revived inclination towards the supernatural – regardless of religious affiliation. This phenomenon gave room to the more efficient and versatile functioning of the belief in miracles. Miracles, with healing miracles at the fore, answered an enormous demand – the question was only to whom or to what did each of the communities attribute their working. The issue can be clearly demonstrated by comparing the deeds of Asclepius and Christ – no Greek or Christian author questioned the other's authenticity or efficacy in working wonders; what was at risk, what was present in all debates, was the origin of the miracles, i.e. the problem of true divine vs. demonic power, and the hierarchy among the miracle workers.⁴⁹

Asclepius was a powerful antagonist of Christ. Their figures were similar with both being the child of a father-god and a mortal woman raised to god status through his own divine jurisdiction, healers who resuscitated the dead, died themselves and were resurrected.⁵⁰ The two

⁴⁸ The “age of anxiety” is an expression by W. H. Auden – his friend E. R. Dodds made it an emblem of the 4th century AD, both in his *The Greeks and the Irrational* and in his book dedicated entirely to his issue, the *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*.

⁴⁹ It was clearly addressed in the *Acta Pilati* concerning the healing works of Jesus. “They say to him [Pilate]: he is a sorcerer and he casts out the devils in the name of the Devil who rules the devils, and everything is obedient to him. Pilate says to them: it is not possible to cast out devils in the name of an impure spirit but rather in the name of Asclepius.” *Acta Pilati*, A. I, 216 = T 334.

⁵⁰ “And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, Jesus Christ, our teacher, was produced without sexual union, and that He was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing new and different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem the sons of Jupiter [...] Asclepius, who, though he was a great healer, was struck by a thunderbolt, and ascended to heaven.” Justinus, *Apologia*, 21, 1-2 (=T 335).

figures also clashed through their primary divine function, through their being *soter*.⁵¹ Moreover, Asclepius was one of the few god of the Greek pantheon, in whose regard we can speak of personal religion. An Attic inscription of the 2nd century AD preserves a prayer to Asclepius, with its wording evoking the Psalms:⁵²

These are the words of thy loving servant, o Asklepios, child of Leto's son: how shall I come into thy golden house, O blessed one, O God of my longing, unless thy heart is favourable to me and thou art willing to heal me and establish me again in thy shrine, that I may behold my God who is brighter than the earth in spring-time, Thou alone, O divine and blessed one, art mighty; thee that lovest compassion, the Supreme Gods have granted as a mighty boon to mortals, as a refuge from their sorrows.

The reality of the Asclepician miraculous cures and the importance of the role they played in everyday life were indubitable even to Christian apologists,⁵³ just as they had an impact on artistic representations as well.⁵⁴ (Artistic representations are not limited to the healing act or the healer with his right hand raised, but from the 2-3rd century AD we have records of a statue by a certain Boethos (2nd c. BC) representing Asclepius as a new-born infant.⁵⁵)

Essentially miracles as “signs” were not related exclusively (not even primarily) to healing, but soon “Christians discovered themselves to be at a disadvantage on the field of miraculous healing, they found it difficult to discredit Asclepius whose cures were abundant and whose claims were hard to match” – argues Gary B. Ferngren.⁵⁶ As a result, miraculous healing started off in the 2nd century AD more on the “sectarian or heretical fringe” (among Montanists, Gnostics and, Carpocratians) gaining a growing audience. This increasing popularity went hand in hand with the increased roles attributed to demons as causes of sickness. The fourth century witnesses a peak for exorcism and all sorts of supernatural and magical healing methods. In the Christian realm the

⁵¹ On the concept of *soter* in Antiquity see Arthur D. Nock, “Soter and Euergetes” In *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* ed. Zeph Stewart, vol. 2: 722-35 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Samuel Angus, *The Religious Quest of the Graeco-Roman World. A Study in the Historical Background of Early Christianity* (London: J. Murray, 1929), 6-24.

⁵² CIA 3. 171a (*Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, ed. W. Dittenberger, A. Kirchhoff, J. Kirchner, U. Koehler, (Berlin, 1873-1895) translated by Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 277.

⁵³ See in details: René J. Rüttimann, “Asclepius and Jesus. The Form, Character and Status of the Asclepius Cult in the Second Century CE and its Influence on Early Christianity” (Ph.D. dissertation Harvard University, 1986); and Antje Krug, *Heilkunst und Heilkult, Medizin in der Antike* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1985), 120-187.

⁵⁴ for the artistic borrowings for Christ's figure from Asclepius cf. Eric Dinkler, *Christus und Asklepios* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberg. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980: 2); Karl Hauck, “Gott als Arzt” in C. Meier, V. Ruberg, *Text und Bild: Zwei Aspekte des Zusammenwachsens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1980), 19-62; Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander”, 7: At Cesarea Philippi a statue traditionally supposed to represent Jesus and the woman with the issue of blood has been plausibly argued to have been either a statue of an emperor with the epithet *Soter*, Saviour, or one representing Asclepius. For the significance of the statues of Asclepius to Christians Nutton directs also to Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*. VIII, 18 and to the Passio IV SS Coronatum in *Acta Sanctorum* November 3; the interconnectedness of the representation of Asclepius and Christ is well illustrated also by Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 69-72, with images of Jesus healing in figures 35-45.

⁵⁵ T 599 (=IG XIV 967a) mentions “the divine child, [...] who has just been borne by his mother”; cf. T 600

phenomenon is often interpreted as a result of the absorption of popular pagan practices into the Church after the Constantian legalisation. However, the issue – says Ferngren – is more complex. Following Peter Brown, he sees the “rise of the holy man in the fourth century as the leitmotiv of the religious revolution of Late Antiquity.”⁵⁷ With the integration of healing practices and the re-definition of ritual healing, though the concern for the sick is present from the beginning, it was only by the fourth century that Christianity can properly be called a religion of healing.

Returning to the theological roles of miracles, the changes in viewpoints can be investigated not only to compare with Greek religious healing practice as it reflects Old Testament traditions as well.⁵⁸

In the parting of ways which took place in the late first century between the two developing movements – rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity – it was the former group which looked to miracle as confirmation of authority in the interpretation of the law, while Christians saw in miracles evidence in the coming of God’s Rule. As in the case of emergence of their respective canons of scripture, and in their differing interpretations of the law [...] there seems to have been a kind of agreement to disagree on the meaning of miracle. ... Although the primary importance of miracle in the New Testament is that of eschatological sign, it is also interpreted symbolically, especially in the gospel of John, along lines broadly analogous to Plutarch’s handling of the Isis mythology. [...] Miracle becomes in John the symbol of spiritual renewal, of mystical participation, of sustenance, of insight. The healing works of Jesus are means of spiritual transformation rather than ends in themselves.⁵⁹

Miracles can provide insights in a radically different ways. Miracle working could easily have been seen as a threat to power-structures, performed by wonderworkers estranged from society – and most often touching people who were similarly on the fringes of society. By the very demands it satisfied, miracles rendered these social as well as religious demands palpable. The healing miracles of Jesus can also be seen in this context of crossing boundaries. Jesus touched the untouchable and was defiled by touching the dead or being touched by the unclean, such as the haemorrhaging woman. These boundaries of social and ritual order were not only transgressed but by healing such persons, Jesus at the same moment re-integrated them into the social community. In contrast to these “restoration miracles” in the double sense, there was the openly provocative where no conformity is reached at the end, like healing on the Sabbath – tradition is simply contrasted. “As such it functioned as a prophetic voice or voice of reform, and may constantly interact with traditional structures – just as Jesus and Apollonius are both found in temples and centres of religion like the synagogues. But both are constantly seen as a threat by the power structure, constantly stand

⁵⁶ Gary B. Ferngren, “Early Christianity as a religion of healing”, *Bulletin of History of Medicine* 66 (1992), 10; and similarly in his “Christianity and Healing in the Second Century” in *Actes/Proceedings of the XXXII International Congress on the History of Medicine* ed. E. Fierens, Jean P. Tricot *et. al.* 131-137, (Antwerp: Societas Belgica Historiae Medicinae, 1991).

⁵⁷ Ferngren, “Early Christianity as a religion of healing”, 12.

⁵⁸ Cf. the articles in Cavadini, *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity*, Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Chapter Three: “Miracle” (67-94); Géza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 20-26, 58-82; H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, transl. T. S. Preston (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965).

⁵⁹ Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 129-130.

accused, and are finally brought into trial situations where their anti-institutional sentiments are to be exposed and punished.”⁶⁰

The hesitation the Church showed in taking definitely sides in the question of the miracle reflects well that sensing of danger: the once affirmative, once reserved position ended finally in the “institutionalisation” of miracles, with two figures, Origen and Augustine leaving a lasting influence on the question:

In Origen’s view, unlike that of most apologists, the miracles are but signs and foreshadowing of the “greater works,” which Christ promised should be done by his disciples. These works are greater than any physical miracle. The eyes of the spiritually blind are always being opened; the ears of those who are deaf to any talk of virtue now hear eagerly about God. Those who were lame in the feet of their inner man and who have been healed by the Logos do not merely leap but leap as an hart, an animal that kills serpents, so that the spiritually lame can trample on the serpents and scorpions of evil. [...] This spiritualization of miracles ... leaved the Gospel stories intact but reduces their meaning to the status of parables.⁶¹

The changes in the evaluation of miracles and the crystallization of a definite opinion can be followed in the writings of Augustine, whose nod to the miracles became a decisive factor for Christianity.⁶² Augustine at first disregarded miracles and in the *De vera religione*, which he wrote in 390, subscribed to the opinion that miracles are not necessary any more by the time the Church obtained strength.⁶³ Later, however, he recognised the theological significance of miracles and their

⁶⁰ George E. Tinker, “Medicine and Miracle. A Comparison of Two Healing Types in the Late Hellenistic World” (PhD dissertation Graduate Theological Union, 1983), 125-126; for more about the “charismatics of homelessness” from the angle of the communicated message see Gerd Theissen, “Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature” *Radical Religion* 2 (1976), 84-93.

⁶¹ G. W. H. Lampe, “Miracles and Early Christian Apologetic” In: *Miracles*, Ed. C. F. D. Moule, 205-218 (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1965), 212 (my emphasis). Maurice Wiles makes a very important remark when examining how Christian miracles became more creditable with the passing of time: “I have referred ... to the fact stressed by Professor Lampe that the transformed life was frequently appealed to as supporting evidence for the credibility of the miracle-stories. But it is easily possible to shift the balance of the argument and to make the moral and spiritual transformation of human lives not just a supporting evidence but the substance of the appeal, and at the same time to treat this as still essentially an appeal to miracle.” M. F. Wiles, “Miracles in the Early Church” In *Miracles* ed. C. F. D. Moule, 221-234 (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1965).

⁶² Ferngren, “Early Christianity as a religion of healing,” 11; a summary of research on Augustine’s attitude to miracles may be found in Sofia Boesch Gajano, “Verità e pubblicità: i racconti di miracoli nel libro XXII del *De civitate Dei*” 368, n. 2, with reference to the following works: D. P. De Vooght, “La notion philosophique du miracle chez saint Augustin dans le *De Trinitate* et le *De Genesi ad litteram*” in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 10 (1938), 317-343; idem, “Les miracles dans la vie de saint Augustin” in the same *Recherches de théologie ancienne* 11 (1939), 5-16 and also in his “La théologie du miracle selon saint Augustin”, *Recherches de théologie ancienne*, 11 (1939), 197-222; F. M. Brazzale, *La dottrina del miracolo in S. Agostino*, (Roma: Edizioni Marianum, 1964).

⁶³ The same view was formulated by Eusebius (*Demonstratio Evangelica* 3, 4 and *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5, 7) in his interpretation of John Chrysostomos and Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* Book II, 31, 2 and 32, 4). Cf. Lampe, “Miracles and Early Christian Apologetic,” 214-215. Lampe introduced the re-evaluation of the role of miracles from another aspect as well. Pagans rather than the Jews, with the backing of the state, became the main antagonists. The role of exorcism increased. In comparison to the exorcising miracles of Jesus, its character and meaning also changed, and what is more, the number of exorcisms also grew, unlike other sorts of wonderworking. “When ... Christians found themselves confronted ... by the organized force of the pagan State linked inseparably with the worship of gods whom they believed to be demons, the Christian life became a continual conflict with devils. Christians were surrounded on all sides by a civilization which devils controlled and inspired. It can scarcely be supposed that everyone imagined a sane pagan to be in the same condition as a person actually possessed by demons, in the manner of those from whom Jesus expelled unclean spirits. Yet everyone, it was held, who belonged to the heathen world needed to be exorcized, frequently and thoroughly, before he could receive baptism.” Lampe, “Miracles and Early Christian Apologetic,” 216.

role in Church-politics. Benedicta Ward summarised the conception of Augustine⁶⁴ laying emphasis on his distinction between *miracula* as *mira* and *miracula* as *signa*, signs leading men to the understanding of God's work, which is manifest also in the creation itself: "Miracles and nature were thus for centuries put on equal footing as signs from God to man."⁶⁵ This recognition led Augustine to the controlling the free formation and interpretation of miracles, and he suggested their integration into the official sphere of influence of the Church.⁶⁶ As a basis of this, he took the initiative for collecting the contemporary miraculous stories, authenticated by the approval of the local bishop. The primary layer of these stories was the personal report of the beneficiary of the miracle, and this gathered material was to establish the custom of archiving the *libelli miraculorum*⁶⁷

Pierre-André Sigal,⁶⁸ who starts out from a different classification, distinguishes two miracle-types: the first being the *miracle pratique*, the second the *miracle de transgression de l'expérience*. According to this division the miraculous cures, interventions of saints, protection in times of danger, all belong to the first group, where the emphasis is on the effectiveness of the saint's power. The literary mechanism of the "practical miracle" is as follows: the description of the original state of imbalance and difficulty; the presence and activity of the saint; and the reconstitution of the desired positive state. The essential feature of the miracles of the second type is the special connection between an individual and the Beyond: these miracles often take the form of visions and epiphanies.⁶⁹

Marie-France Auzépy⁷⁰ had examined Byzantine miracle-literature with similar sensitivity, particularly from the point of view of the social background of the genre. She distinguishes three phases in the development of miracles in the Eastern Church and characterised them in the following way: The communal consensus required for the functioning of miracles comes into being in the second half of the 4th century AD, in close connection with the cult of relics⁷¹ and the development of hagiography as a genre. She interprets the 7th century as the point of greatest change: an atmosphere of general crisis (the loss of Jerusalem and the Eastern provinces, the Arab threat), what might give currency to the faith in miracles. In the Greek-speaking areas the *vitae*

⁶⁴ Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1987), Chapter 1 "The Theory of miracles."

⁶⁵ Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, 9

⁶⁶ Augustine, *Sermones* 88, 2.3; *De Civitate Dei* 22, 8.

⁶⁷ Control over miracles has been clearly described (using Western examples) by P-A. Sigal, *L'Homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale, XIe – XIIe siècles* (Paris: Cerf: 1985) pages. On the further development of the theology of miracle see: John A. Hardon, "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics" *Theological Studies* 15 (1954), 229-257.

⁶⁸ Pierre-André. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale. (XI-XII siècle)* (Paris: Édition du Cerf. 1985).

⁶⁹ There is a miracle in the Cosmas-Damian collection (Mir. 10), where the two types overlap: the incubant, who came to the church not for bodily cure but to seek for faith) took part in a symbolic form of the Eucharist in his dream, and when the sight had passed, but still in the dream the saints told him that he witnessed the mysteries.

⁷⁰ M.-F. Auzépy, "L'évolution de l'attitude face au miracle à Byzance (VII-IX. siècle)" in *Miracles, Prodiges et Merveilles au Moyen Age*, XXXV. Congrès de la S. H. M. E. S. Orleans, juin, 1994 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995), 31-46.

⁷¹ According to Auzépy, the spread of the cult of relics "bastardised" the miracle.

become rarer over the course of the 7th century, and *miraculum*-literature spreads.⁷² During the 8th century, the period of Iconoclasm, the *miracula*-stories, as a genre, are pushed for a time into the background. In the 9th century, miracles again become an article of faith, but at the same time the genre is subjected to important changes. One of the miracles involving the pained image of the saints Cosmas-Damian⁷³ became an argument for the use of icons at the Second Council of Nicaea, held in 787; the episode reflects the process by which image and relic attain an equal status. Orthodoxy, being forced to integrate the belief in miracles, attained a degree of control over them, made them a part of the liturgy and the hagiographic tradition.

With the spread of miracles in the liturgical use (especially at the places of cult, connected to the services performed to the healer saints), the miracle-narratives received a new function beside the mere record of the events happened: a pedagogic aim, the intention of deepening the faith of the believer.⁷⁴ As a result the actual event of the miracle and its written record accord with certain criteria, for example the demand for witnesses and the need for proof of cures and of the original illnesses, special attention was paid to sacral objects and acts, and to the piety and truthfulness of the patient (a process more traceable in Western hagiography). Auzépy, discussing the treatment of miracles, speaks of “localised” and “codified”⁷⁵, Sigal of “controlled” miracles.⁷⁶

The Dream

Dream was an especially important yet the least controllable of all spheres of establishing contact with the divine. In accordance with its origin, significance and on the basis whether or not it demanded interpretation, the Greeks carefully classified the dreams, with the following categorization: *oneiros=somnium*; *horama=visio*; *kbrématismos=oraculum*; *enupnion=insomnium*; *phantasma=visum*.⁷⁷ Identifying properly the dream experience could depend on the strength of the sight, its splendour, its characters, on the time of its appearance in sleep. The correct recognition of the type of dream had its effect upon the attention paid to it; we read well in the Byzantine Christian

⁷² With the exception of Thecla all the incubation miracle collections I am addressing here are from the 7th century. The collection of such minor incubation saints as Saint Demetrios by John of Thessalonika dates cc. 610 and that of Saint Therapon by Andrew of Crete is from the 8th century.

⁷³ KDM 15 where a woman is cured by the plasters scratched from the painting of the saints.

⁷⁴ See Pierre Maraval, “Fonction pédagogique de la littérature hagiographique d’un lieu de pèlerinage: l’exemple des Miracles de Cyr et Jean” in *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés IV-XII. siècles*, Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2-5 mai 1979) (Paris: Études Augustiennes, 1985), 383-397 and also Vincent Déroche, “Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles? L’exemple des miracles de Saint Artémios,” in *Les saints et leurs sanctuaires à Byzance*, ed. Ch. Jolivet-Lévy, M. Kaplan, J-P. Sordini (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1993), 95-103.

⁷⁵ Auzépy, “L’évolution...”, 46: “Le miracle est devenu patrie intégrante de la foi orthodoxe, mais il a été contrôlé, à la manière byzantine, en agissant sur le cérémonial et non sur les institutions: il a été liturgisé [...], il est devenu l’objet de récits codifiés répétés aux offices et il a été localisé dans les églises auprès des reliques et des icônes.”

⁷⁶ P.-A. Sigal, *L’homme et le miracle...*, 149-155.

⁷⁷ Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, I. 2; Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis*, I. 3, 2; cf. Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 1; in more details: C. Blum, “Studies in the Dream-Book of Artemidorus” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Uppsala, 1936); R. Pack, “Artemidorus and his Waking World” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955), 280-90; A. H. M. Kessels “Ancient Systems of Dream-classification” *Mnemosyne* IV. 22 (1969), 389-424.

collections that the dreamer disregarded the saint's appearance, denying that what he saw was an *onar* (a proper night dream) and labelling it as a *phantasma*, and in this way discrediting its veracity. From the 4th century AD onwards the dream classification of Synesius (the one, however, he wrote as still a pagan) canonised and to some extent legitimated dream interpretation in the eyes of the Christians.⁷⁸ The first substantial Christian treatment of dreams is from the end of the second century, from Tertullian (*De Anima* 45-49d), who retained the tripartite classification of the Stoics, based on the origin of dreams (divine, daemon-sent, or from the soul), while Isidore of Seville in the 7th century speaks of a specifically Christian dream-theory.

The early Church, nevertheless, took a strong line against divination by dreams, inhibiting for example the professional dream interpreters from taking the Eucharist,⁷⁹ or by subordinating the dream interpretation to the Church hierarchy, that is, restricting theological significance to the dreams of a bishop or other higher church authorities. Partly due to the uncontrollable origin of the dream medium (viz. God-sent or demon-sent), partly because of the pagan reminiscences of the practice, that the Church did not greet with enthusiasm the Christian incubation. Official regulations, either pro or contra, are missing, the only administrative record we have is the 38. Canon of the Council of Carthage, which – on the insistence of Augustine – forbids the incubation practiced in the martyr-shrines. In the background of the provision there was not so much the incubation for healing but those dreams, which claimed to have found newer and newer relics of saints.⁸⁰

To the Greek heritages there was added the Jewish dream culture; the positive, Old Testamental way of communication Yahweh in dream provided a new layer for the Christian attitude, during its formation in the 2nd -5th centuries AD.⁸¹ The ambiguous Christian attitude to dreams was reinforced by the difference between dreams and prophetic visions:

⁷⁸ A few works on the Christian concepts on dreams cf. J. S. Hanson, "Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity" In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II: *Principat*, 23, 2, Ed. W. Haase. 1395-1427, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980); P. Courcelle, "La postérité chrétienne du Songe de Scipion" *Revue des Études Latines* 36 (1958): 205-234; the excellent articles in *I sogni nel medioevo*, ed. Tullio Gregory (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985); and M. T. Kelsey, *God, dreams and revelation: a Christian interpretation of dreams* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991).

⁷⁹ G. G. Stroumsa, "Dreams and Visions in Early Christian Discourse", in *Dream Cultures. Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming* eds. D. Shulman and G. G. Stroumsa, 189-212 (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 193-194. In the background of why Christianity distanced itself from professional dream divination lay also in the conviction – just as the pagan Synesius wrote – that everybody should be able to interpret his own dreams.

⁸⁰ cf. G. G. Stroumsa, "Dreams and Visions", 194; G. Dagron, "Rêver de Dieu", 40; about relics indicated by dreams: P. Maraval, "Songes et visions comme mode d'invention des reliques" in: *Sogni, visioni e profezie nell'antico cristianesimo. XVII Incontro di studiosi dell'Antichità cristiana*, Roma 5-7 Maggio, 1987 = *Augustinianum* 29 (1989), 583-599.

⁸¹ Old Testament dreams: Gen. 15; 20:3; 26:24; 28:10; 28:29; 31:10-13; 31:24; 37:5-10; 40; 41:1-13-15; 42:9; 46:1-5; Lev. 19:26; Num. 12:6-8; 22:8-21; Deut. 13:1-6; 23:10-12; Judges 7:13-15; 1Sam 3; 18:15; 1 Kings 3:5-10; 18:15; 2Chon. 33:6; Esth. 1:1; 10:3; 2 Macc. 15:11-16; Job 4:12-21; 7:13-14; 20:8; 33:15-17; Ps. LXXXIII 52:20; (Eccl. 5:2, 6) Sag. 18:17-19; Eccl. 34:1-8; 40:5-7; Isa. 29:7-8; Jer. 14:14; 23:25-32; 27:9-10; 29:8-9; Daniel 2:1-13; 4; Joel 2:28; Zach. 1:7 - 6:15; 10:2. cf. J.-M. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* transl. J. M. Munro, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); idem, *Le songe et la parole. Etude sur le rêve et sa fonction dans l'ancien Israël* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); on possible incubation dreams in the New Testament (for example, 1 Kings 3 : 4-15 or Isaiah 65:4) cf. J.-M. Husser, *Le songe et la parole*, "Première partie: Le songe royal et l'incubation" 27-125, and his *Dreams and Dream Narratives*, 172-176.

Early Christian discourse on dreams and visions was shaped by two closely connected phenomena – on the one hand, the encouragement given to larger numbers of people to seek visions, and on the other hand, to attempt to discourage, repress, and limit the world of dreams. These are the two sides of a consistent effort to domesticate dreams and visions, to transform them into the instrument of a direct link with God after the Biblical canon: revelations after the age of Revelation, as it were.⁸²

It is indeed very instructive what Origen says about the important role of dreams producing conversion,⁸³ a phenomenon again not a novelty of the Christian thought world, as in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius the dream appearance of Isis had the same aim and effect.⁸⁴ The rabbis however, did not regard dream as sufficient for converting to Judaism (yet Christian hagiography has a wonderful story, contradicting to that, about the monk who in his dreams repeatedly saw the apostles, the saints and martyrs in horrible state, while Moses and the prophets always in their splendour and this urged him to become a Jew).⁸⁵

The variants of incubation: the *incubatio vicaria* and the dream invitation

Both in the Greek and the Christian dream culture there are variants of the incubation cult practice, alternations that can be due to exceptional circumstances or on the contrary, local cult versions which within their territory are applied regularly. One important and well-spread variant was the substitutional dreaming, the *incubatio vicaria*, when it was not the patient but an intermediary who went to sleep and communicated in dream with the healer. It is worth quoting Strabo for two such cases: in the incubation practice at the sanctuary of Serapis in Canopus he simply attests that sending a substitute was an option,⁸⁶ in the relation to the Mosaic approval of temple sleep, however, it is alleged that there are people who “sleep better”: “people who have good dreams should sleep in the sanctuary, not only themselves on their own behalf, but also others for the rest of the people; and those who live self-restrained and righteous lives should always expect some blessing or gift or sign from God, but no other should expect them.”⁸⁷

This variant was practiced in cases when the sick was unable to perform incubation, for instance with small children, hence parents were often recorded as incubating on the behalf of their child. A similar process was necessary if the patient was too ill to reach the shrine or in extreme cases even unconscious. (A further variant of this case when the sick receives the dream-visit while at home, either following an invocation or visited by the healer without asking for it. (Though Asclepius

⁸² G. G. Stroumsa, “Dreams and Visions”, 195.

⁸³ Origen, *Contra Celsum* I, 46.

⁸⁴ Cf. A. D. Nock, *Conversion*, Chapter IX: The Conversion of Lucius, 138-140; and Stroumsa, “Dreams and Visions”, 193.

⁸⁵ *De monacho qui Hebraeus factus est*, BHG 1448, cf. G. Dagron, *Rêver de Dieu*, 46; and Stroumsa, “Dreams and Visions”, 207, note 30: “This is in contradistinction to the thought of the rabbis, for whom the dream of a gentile does not count as a legitimate motive for conversion.”

⁸⁶ “The temple of Serapis [...] is honoured with great reverence and effects such cures that even the most reputable men believe in it and sleep in it – themselves on their own behalf or others for them.” XVII. 1. 17.

⁸⁷ Strabo, *Geographica*, XVI 2, 35, transl. H. Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library, (London: W. Heinemann, 1936).

also performed healing at distance, occasionally on the way *back* from his temple, this type of miracle working was more characteristic of the Christian healers, as a result of a new conviction, that that are palpable, transportable objects transmitting the thaumaturgic effect of the healer.)

The examples above show varieties of voluntary incubation, mostly by family members. The healer, however, can decide to manifest himself in his own accord to other than the patient, the medium thus is an involuntary one. This arbitrary appearance of the gods or more often of the saints served to put the faith of the incubants to test. The chosen medium can be among the fellow-pilgrims, the neighbour sleeping next to the sick, the accompanying doctor or friend or the temple personnel. For the latter we have a curious record from Strabo, who describes a cult to where the worshipper indeed ought to make his pilgrimage, yet practicing incubation on his behalf was also among the privileges of the priests:

On the road between the Tralleians and Nysa is a village of the Nysaeans, not far from the city Acharaca, where is the Plutonium, with a costly sacred precinct and a shrine of Pluto and Core, and also the Charonium, a cave that lies above the sacred precinct, by nature wonderful; for they say that those who are diseased and give heed to the cures prescribed by these gods resort thither and live in the village near the cave among experienced priests, who on their behalf sleep in the cave and through dreams prescribe the cures. These are also the men who invoke the healing power of the gods. And they often bring the sick into the cave and leave them there, to remain in quiet, like animals in their lurking-holes, without food for many days. And sometimes the sick give heed also to their own dreams, but still they use those other men, as priests, to initiate them into the mysteries and to counsel them. To all others the place is forbidden and deadly.⁸⁸

More common than the substitutional incubation was for ancient and Christian dream healers as well sending an invitation dream: the arrival at the cult place was often preceded by the healer's previous appearance, in which he might have called the patient's attention to the existence or relevance of the cult site. The occurrence of the invitation dream mostly was a promise of the cure, rarely, however, it could be the very condition of approaching the ritual healer: into the shrine of Isis at Tithorea nobody was allowed to enter if not invited by the goddess in a dream beforehand.⁸⁹

Dreams were also connected in a radically different way to healing: the Greek medical tradition observed the dream experience in order to define the physical and physical state of the patient, for diagnostic purpose. The Hippocratic author of the *Epidemics* lists also dreams ("of what kind and when") among the features to be observed (I, 23); Book IV of the *Regimen* is dedicated entirely to dreams, describing the method of interpreting dreams for diagnosis, establishing some

⁸⁸ Strabo, *Geographica*, XIV 1, 44, cf. M. P. J. Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 152, listing other sources as well on entrance taboos at shrines.

⁸⁹ "For the Tithoreans deed it not lawful to dwell round about and there is no admission to the shrine except for those whom Isis herself has favoured with an invitation in a dream. The same is done also by the underworld gods in the cities on the Meneander: they send visions in dreams to whomsoever they wish to enter their shrines." Pausanias X. 32.13; cf. Nock, *Conversion*, 153-154; and Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage*, 152. Compare with the practice at Lebena: "A Lebena, prima che il malato fosse ammesso alle cure nell'*adyton*, era necessario un consulto presso il santuario: consulto che poteva avvenire anche in assenza del paziente" through the intermediary of a family member or a friend. Maria Girone, *Iamata: guarigioni miracolose di Asclepio in testi epigrafici* (Bari: Levante, 1998), 82.

correspondence between certain dream phenomena and malfunctions of the body, together with an outline of preventive therapy based on the dream-diagnosis.⁹⁰ Christianity also had its psychosomatic dream interpreters: Gregory of Nyssa, in the 4th century maintained that dreams reflect the sickness of the soul,⁹¹ and Euagrius Ponticus identified in the similar way the state of the soul and the emergence of illnesses on the basis of the dreams.⁹² The use of dreams in medical practice leads us towards the positions the Church took in the face of scientific medicine and its own healing activity (spiritual or medical) as well as its attitude regarding doctors.

Christianity and healing, Christianity and medicine⁹³

In a well-formulated argument Gary B. Ferngren gave voice recently to a new scholarly opinion: that Christianity became a healing religion was in great part an answer given to the Asclepian (Isean, Serapicain etc) healing cults, viz. in order to fulfill a social demand for healing, which so far was addressed towards the healing cults of pagan deities of immense popularity and importance. This view does not regard healing as an inherent essence of Christianity right from its start.⁹⁴ In this context, miraculous healing is to be interpreted primarily as miracles and as miracles: signs, not aims in themselves: “they represent the external aspect of salvation, the physical manifestation of a new spiritual order.”⁹⁵

That the healing ministry of the Church was incorporated into a theological framework and became an important element of the self-definition of the Church, presupposes a nuanced attitude towards lay medicine and professional doctors in general. Healing being a charismatic gift and that the power to heal was given to Christian elders according to James, Ep. 5:13-18, consequently presented the faithful to be obliged to consult first (or for the zealots solely) the holy men or healing relics. This priority of spiritual healing always served as a test of faith, yet the enmity of the Church towards medical science is far from being true. Within the attitude of the Church to medicine two factors are to be distinguished: medical science and physicians. The judgement over medical healing in the early Church in part represented the standard of the Jewish tradition, by then itself undergone a radical change. In the Old Testament there is a decisive turning point in the *Book of Sirach* (38: 1-15):

⁹⁰ Cf. P. J. van der Eijk, “Divination, Prognosis and Prophylaxis: The Hippocratic Work ‘On Dreams’ (*De Victu* 4) and its Near Eastern Background” in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine*. Eds. H. F. J. Horstmannshoff and M. Stol, 187-218 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁹¹ Stroumsa, “Dreams and Visions”, 200-201.

⁹² Euagrius Ponticus, *Capita practica ad Anatolium*, II. 54-56 in: PG 40, coll. 1245-1248. cf. Dagron, “Rêver de Dieu”, 44.

⁹³ “...nor there was anything that might be called *the Christian attitude* toward Hippocratic medicine and physicians.” O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in the World of Pagans and Christians*, 171.

⁹⁴ That Christianity was from the start a *par excellence* religion of healing was perhaps most influentially expanded on by Adolf Harnack in his *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Translated and edited by James Moffatt, 3 vols (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1940), vol. 1. 121-151; for a similar view cf. Shirley Jackson Case, “The Art of Healing in Early Christian Times” *Journal of Religion* 3 (1923), 238-55.

⁹⁵ Ferngren, “Early Christianity as a religion of healing,” 3.

the physicians, so far showed almost exclusively in negative light, became regarded as tools of God. The explanation of this new attitude was that Judaism was captured by the fascination of Greek medical tradition in the Hellenistic period, and as a result, it re-evaluated its conceptual framework in regard to curative methods, the art of healing and to healers as well. The chief difference of the two theological worldviews within which the earlier and later Old Testamental traditions interpreted medicine was that on the one hand with time “medicine comes to be viewed as a positive contribution to human welfare”, while on the other hand starting to regard “human suffering as the work of Satan and of his cohorts”.⁹⁶

The basic thesis that definitively shaped the standpoint of the early Church was that, since the material world itself is God’s creation, the body merits not to be despised, hence the remedies of nature, together with the medical science are the result of God’s loving care. There were few exceptions, who did not share this view, Arnobius, for instance, but his rigid enmity towards medicine was in all likelihood radicated in his personal conviction, not in a traditional theological heritage.⁹⁷ Darrel W. Amundsen, who dispelled the false notion about the negative approach of the Church, speaks of a “double standard”, namely that bodily cure was viewed with more severity by monks, who profited its benefits less frequently, and only in a case emergency, when the previous prayers and spiritual healing were to no avail. Yet in the mirror of the sources even Amundsen’s hypothesis is challenged: the monastic community could view bodily healing also from a moral – allegorical angle – as it is interpreted by Roberto Fusco, when analysing on one hand the spiritual atmosphere of hagiographical literature which discuss (among others) healing as well, and on the other, the early Christian approach towards the ancient medical tradition.⁹⁸

One element of the ancient Greek heritage in the positive judgment of early Christianity was a complex of similes, borrowed from medicine, and indirectly, from Greek philosophy, “the positive metaphorical value of the idea of the physician as one who unselfishly succours the ill, enduring unpleasant tasks, administering painful means for effecting a cure.” The borrowing of ideas and vocabulary between medicine and philosophy was by no means in one direction: not only the medical

⁹⁶ Howard C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Chapter One: “Healing in the Old Testament and Post-Biblical Traditions” see for all the biblical references for Yahweh as healer, Yahweh and the physicians, Physicians as agents of God, Sickness and the demonic.

⁹⁷ A. Harnack, “Medizinisches aus der ältesten Kirchengeschichte” in his *Texte Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1892) vol. 8. 4, pp 37-152; Oswei Temkin, *Hippocrates in the World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); on the basically positive attitude of the Church: Darrel W. Amundsen, *Medicine, society and faith in the ancient and medieval worlds* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996); for an extensive bibliography see Ferngren, “Early Christianity as a Religion of Healing.”

⁹⁸ R. Fusco, “La cura del corpo nella tradizione monastica bizantina tra V e VII secolo” In: *Cultura e Promozione umana. La cura del corpo e dello spirito nell'antichità classica e nei primi secoli cristiani* a cura di E. Dal Covolo e I. Giannetto, 377-418 (Troina: Oasi, 1998).

literature applied the repertoire of philosophical argumentation,⁹⁹ but shared definitions of the disciplines were also born: “philosophy is the medicine of souls” – “medicine is the philosophy of the bodies”¹⁰⁰, and accordingly, the philosophers, helped with the spiritual office of ethics, became the *medici animarum*.¹⁰¹ The history of these analogies reaches back to Greek philosophical borrowings from medicine, ideas, which were to arrive, through the intermediary of philosophy into Christianity. That philosophy itself is medicine, draws back to the Cynics; in its purest it was expressed by Diogenes of Oinoanda in the 2nd c. AD, applying the same vocabulary which is familiar from the inscriptions written in order to eternalise the merits of doctors of excellence.¹⁰² The affinity between the figures of the doctor and that of the philosopher, at times taking shape in the same person, and connecting the two fields of learning

becomes increasingly frequent, not to say regular, in the last stage of Alexandrian science (i.e. in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D.); a last stage that is at the same time the beginning of a new expansion in many directions: to the West, by way of Ravenna and South Italy, to Constantinople, to Armenia, and especially to the Syrian and Arabian world. The figure of the physician and philosopher, so familiar with the Moslems and of frequent occurrence in Byzantium also, has originated in this period.¹⁰³

Besides these connections between the disciplines and their shared ideas and terminology, I have in mind other concepts with a great carrier in Christianity, such as the causality hold between sin and illness,¹⁰⁴ or viewing illness as pollution, uncleanness, healing as cleansing,¹⁰⁵ (in which case it is sustained that the concerning vocabulary originated from religious terminology, was taken over by medical language and from there it found its way into philosophy).

⁹⁹ “It is in the first place the influence of the philosophical teaching routine that is noticeable in the prolegomena to the separate writings of Hippocrates and Galen...”; the 5th century AD medical writer Palladius applies also the four dialectical methods (division, definition, demonstration, and analysis) L. G. Westerink, “Philosophy and Medicine in Late Antiquity” *Janus* 51 (1964), 169-177, (represented in his *Texts and Studies in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Literature*, Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1980, 83-91); 170-171.

¹⁰⁰ Westerink, “Philosophy and Medicine”, 173.

¹⁰¹ D. W. Amundsen, “Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 56 (1982), 326-350; cf. Amundsen, *Medicine, society*, 133: Ludwig Edelstein was the first to point out the significance of medical analogies in his “Relation of Ancient Philosophy to Medicine” In *Ancient Medicine. Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein* Ed. Oswei and C. Lilian Temkin, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 360.

¹⁰² Diogenes of Oinoanda Fr. V. col. II. in A-J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1932), 74: ἡ ἀρετὴ ὡς σῶσις, ὡς ὁδὸς, τὸ φιλοσοφῆσαι σχολάζειν. οὐ δὲ ὡς σῶσιντας ἐξελεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὡς σῶντας – The *soter* – philosophy was dear to the Epicureans. Festugière suspects that there was also a wordplay involved in another fragment of Diogenes of Oinoanda (fr. II. col. V): ἡ πικουρος - πικουρεῖν. About the “delivery” offered by Epicurus cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* I. 48; *De Finibus* I. 44; and Lucian, *Alexandros*, 61. On an inscription dating to AD 121 Epicurus himself was called *soter*, while the wording of Lucretius (III. 1043) is identical to the praise of that deliverer, who protected Thebes in Egypt during the epidemic of 42 BC (still Festugière, *L'idéal religieux*, 74).

¹⁰³ Westerink, “Philosophy and Medicine”, 169.

¹⁰⁴ R. Parker, *Miasma*, Chapter 8: “Divine Vengeance and Disease”; W.v. Siebenthal, *Krankheit als Folge der Sünde* (Hanover: Schmorl & Von Seefeld, 1950); and in the rather poor article of Innocenzo Mazzini, “La malattia e metafora del peccato nel mondo antico, pagano e cristiano” In *Cultura e Promozione umana. La cura del corpo e dello spirito nell'antichità classica e nei primi secoli cristiani*, a cura di E. Dal Covolo e I. Giannetto, 377-418 (Troina: Oasi, 1998).

¹⁰⁵ See esp. Parker's *Miasma*, referred to above and L. Moulinier, *Le pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1952); E. Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1921), Chapter VIII: “Dirt”, 145-156; for healing sickness and sin: Harold Remus, *Jesus as Healer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 32.

There was no expression with a wider range of influence and more decisive in the shaping the theological judgments over medicine than contemplating Christ as physician. The wording *Christus medicus* first appears in a letter of Ignatius of Antioch, written before 117,¹⁰⁶ yet owed its lasting popularity to Augustine.¹⁰⁷ Yet this metaphor was influenced by Greek medical tradition to such extent that the medical writer George of Picida calls Christ a second (and rather neglected) Galen,¹⁰⁸ while at Jerome Jesus is called *verus medicus, solus medicus, ipse et medicus et medicamentum, verus archiater, quasi spiritualis Hippocrates*.¹⁰⁹

The Church, besides the spiritual and thaumaturgical healing, took a prominent part in the establishment of institutional health care as well.¹¹⁰ Following the wake of social demands¹¹¹ and the newly found theological tenets of healing, the first hospitals were born, of monastical and ecclesiastical foundations. (The emergence of the institutions of charity was backed by the decree of Constantine the Great, who in 332 offered part of the incoming tax for these purposes of the Church; during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395) there were already a number of charitable organizations in Constantinople.) Among the *xenones* and *xenodocheia* mentioned by Leontinos, bishop of Antioch (344-358) with great probability there was already a hospital as well, yet the first firm evidence of founding a proper hospital dates to the 370's, by Basil of Caesarea, himself being a trained physician and as such took care of the professional quality of the personnel. The example was soon followed by Eustachius in Pontus and John Chrysostom, with his hospital-foundation as a bishop of Constantinople (398-404).¹¹² By the 5th century hospitals function in Hippo, Ephesus,

¹⁰⁶ Ε[ς] α[α]τ[ρ]α[ς] σ[σ]τιν... η[η]σο[ς] Χρισ[τ]ος, Κ[α]ριος μ[υ]ν Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Ephes.* 7 (PG 5.650); cf. J. Schouten, *The Rod and the Serpent of Asclepius: Symbol of Medicine* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1967), 67; G. Dumeige, "Le Christ médecin dans la littérature chrétienne des premiers siècles" *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 47 (1972), 115-41, 118; cf also H. Schipperges, "Zur tradition des 'Christus Medicus' im frühen Christentum und in der älteren Heilkunde" *Arzt und Christ* 11 (1965), 12-20.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. *De doctrina Cristiana* I. xiv. 13, cf. R. Arbesmann, "The Concept of 'Christus medicus' in St. Augustin" *Traditio* 10 (1954), 1-128.

¹⁰⁸ George of Picidia, *Hexaemeron* I. 1588. in: V. Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander; Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity" in Symposium on Byzantine Medicine. ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 1-14, 4.

¹⁰⁹ A. S. Peace, "Medical Allusions in the Works of St. Jerome" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 25 (1914), 73-86. Peace might have been mistaken; the *quasi spiritualis Hippocrates* in the Letter To Pammachius Against John of Jerusalem, does not refer to Christ.

¹¹⁰ About the Christian *xenones* and *nosocomeia*, about the 4th – 7th century sources of treating the sick as well as about the hospitals of Byzantine cities: cf. Timothy S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); idem: "Byzantine Hospitals" Symposium on Byzantine Medicine. ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 53-65 and A. Harnack, *Medizinisches...* 35-40; Vivian Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander" 1-14 and recently his *Ancient Medicine* (London – New York: Routledge, 2004); in the outline of Byzantine hospitals above I follow Miller and Nutton.

¹¹¹ At the end of the 3rd century AD, several social and political boundaries changed and a new system of authority and power-networks emerged. The old role of patronage by the former pagan aristocracy, which included attending sick household members as well - as this role also altered, leaving its impact on local-regional health care. Their immediate role in this area was taken over by bishops in the eastern Mediterranean such as Gregorios Thaumaturgos, Cyprian or later Basil the Great. On the social aspects see Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital*; and D. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N. J: Rutgers University Press, 1968), 152-221.

¹¹² Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander", 9, underlining here, just like other historians of ancient medicine, that hospitals in Byzantium resembled far more to the modern hospital than to the dwellings of misery known from the medieval West. Besides having trained doctors and nurses, the Byzantine hospitals also fulfilled a manifold role: a "combination of medical center, poorhouse, old folks home, hotel and meeting-place".

Ancyra, and still the influence of the hospital of Basil can be suspected around the foundation of the first hospitals of Jerusalem,¹¹³ in the following century they reached the smaller towns of Egypt just as they were established in Antioch or Edessa. The activity performed in hospitals became so well known and soon made part and parcel of the theological vocabulary inspired by practical life, that a contemporary of Chrysostom, the ascetic writer Neilos of Ancyra in a metaphor assimilates the world and its sinners and Christ working on their salvation to a huge hospital, a *nosokomeion* in which the sinners are the patients, and Christ is the doctor on duty of the souls. And just as a good physician, he does not offer the same remedy to all, but examining each patient, he adjusts the treatment to the spiritual demand of the sinner.¹¹⁴

To the criteria of urban culture besides city walls and splendid churches, hospitals also joined by the 5th -6th centuries AD (in Constantinople only there were five hospitals by this time, with a specialized eye-surgery department in one of them), and doctors could belong to the highest elite of society.¹¹⁵ Soon the benevolent Christian volunteers were replaced by specialists, professionally trained doctors, and the traditional medical knowledge of Antiquity became embedded into the Christian art of healing. In Rome and in Constantinople a “prince of chief-physicians” (*comes archiatrorum*) was appointed on the top of medical hierarchy and in a 7th century *Vita of Theodore of Sykeon* the saint is called “the doctor-disciple of the real Chief Physician, Christ our Lord”.

This is the milieu in which the wondrous healings of the Byzantine incubation saints receive their form as miracle-collections whose cults flourished primarily in the vicinity of the two centres of medical learning: near Alexandria and in Constantinople. In the Lives of the saints and in the *miracula* literature, nonetheless, the reader is from time to time astonished by sharp invectives against medical science – yet this is not a theological – ecclesiastical standpoint but on the hand akin to the genre, a topos of the efficacy of the saint over his rival healers, an enmity largely dependent on the personal experiences of the hagiographer. On the other hand it is more directed against the physicians themselves than against the methods of lay medicine, which were, we are to mind, often resorted to by the doctor-saints as well.

¹¹³ At the end of the 5th century, a monk called Theodosios, originating from the vicinity of Caesarea, made built three buildings near Jerusalem: one for sick monks, one for poor patients and one for well-to-do laymen who needed medical care. A few decades later the emperor Anastasios himself made built a large hospital in Jerusalem, on the initiative of Saint Sabas.

¹¹⁴ S. Nilus of Ancyra, *Epistles* III. 33. PG 79, 248-249; cf. also Miller, “Byzantine Hospitals” 55; Latinul idézi Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander”, 9-10; “Sed magnus animarum nostrarum medicus modum, quo absconditis medicinam afferat, optime callet. Ne itaque indignemur, neque animum despondeamus, neque inique feramus, quae nobis, uti addecet, infert Dominus. Multi namque in hujusce aevi valetudinario degunt infirmi saucique, nec una eademque omnibus mensa conducit: diversa etenim omnibus et circuitus temporum, et dietam medicus indicit. Hic, ait, male sanus melle saepius consoletur; alius absinthii amarore tristetur; alius insuavi elleboro communicet; alioque modo alteri providet et medicinam affert. Eadem ratione Deus singulis nostrum conducibilia ordinat.”

¹¹⁵ Cf. B. Baldwin, “Beyond the House Call: Doctors in Early Byzantine History and Politics” *Symposium on Byzantine Medicine*, 15-20 and R. C. Blockley, “Doctors as Diplomats in the Sixth century AD” *Florilegium* 2 (1980): 89-100.

It should not be disregarded that the Greek medical tradition was kept alive among physicians – scholars, a circle the least inclined towards Christian faith; they often were not only the repositories of medicine but men traditionally educated in Greek learning. The great doctor-figures of the 4th- 5th centuries, Oribasius, Agapius of Alexandria, Asclepiodotus of Aphrodisias, Jacobus Psychrestus openly held their pagan religion. Until as far as the 5th – 6th centuries, groups of pagan intellectuals, doctors, philosophers, professors of rhetoric, sophists and aristocratic men of letters and scientific learning gathered around the prominent cult sites of healing, the temples of Asclepius-Isis-Serapis,¹¹⁶ while the other factor that raised suspicion was the connection of doctors with the early heretical movements. In Christian hagiography doctors were sharply attacked also for their exorbitant fees; and an additional cause for denigrating them might have been that among physicians Jews were in great number.¹¹⁷

The rivalry among healing methods was nevertheless an integral part of the division of the healing market, and accordingly, the hagiographer occasionally expressed his esteem for the representatives of the medical profession, or it is more precise to say, often established a subtle distinction for illnesses within and beyond the doctor's competence. The presence and the role of physicians in Christian hagiography were greatly altered by the changes of hagiography itself,¹¹⁸ – while the non-hagiographical records depicted them from a different angle: doctors as diplomats, imperial envoys, politicians, and leaders within the social – ecclesiastical elite.¹¹⁹

Another important sphere of the healing options was the recourse to magic; doubtlessly not only the most problematic issue in regard of the ecclesiastical attitudes towards it, but by far the most complex phenomenon in itself.¹²⁰ Instead of trying to formulate a definition (in all account inevitable incompetent, because impossible) of what was or could have been called or considered magical in Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period, I would like to orient the reader towards the two basic trends of the otherwise immense scholarly literature. The older and traditional approach, represented by such scholars as A. A. Barb, Luck, recently M. Dickie, views magic as a cultural construct, with a definable yet changing meaning, encompassing under this vast term of magic “a subversive realm of

¹¹⁶ For doctors as representing a stronghold of paganism and heresy cf. Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes* II.5, and Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander”, 6-7.

¹¹⁷ That the Jews were renowned physicians quite early on, called to the bedside by Greeks and Christians alike, was illustrated by John Chrysostom's castigation of Christians who turned to Jewish doctors, “speaking in Antioch [...] had made it a clear-cut issue, saying, in effect: Would you heal your body, even if you thereby lost your soul?” PG XLVIII, 855 quoted from Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204* (Athens: Verlag der Byzantinisch-Neugriechischen jahrbücher, 1939), 90.

¹¹⁸ A. Kazhdan, “The Image of the Medical Doctor in Byzantine Literature of the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries” Symposium on Byzantine Medicine. ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984):43-51.

¹¹⁹ Cf. B. Baldwin, “Beyond the House Call: Doctors in Early Byzantine History and Politics” Symposium on Byzantine Medicine. ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 15-20.

ritual involving exotic and ambiguous powers or as rituals practiced alone or with a demon's help...[or] an alternative, sub-scientific rationality”¹²¹ The other group of scholars, influenced greatly by anthropologists and social theories, (H. S. Versnel, Gager, Fritz Graf, David Jordan, and David Frankfurter himself), avoid the subjective formulation of the magical and instead use the term in a comparative approach as means to create a framework of meaning. For the present, I am interested only in the way magic was present in the context of healing and in the way it was (or was not) identified as such by the concerning parties, healers and patients.¹²² Inclined for the latter approach, which finds impossible to draw a sharp dividing line between the magical, miraculous or scientific, I tend to interpret the recourse to magic in the field of cure as one alternative (often not clearly marked for the patient either) in an essentially one world of healing, where – with our modern notions – all parties seem to borrow from the repertoire of the rival healer, viz. saint can use “magical” which thus turns to be accepted as religious or miraculous, or magic in the doctor’s hand indeed can function as if working medically.¹²³ The medical manual of Alexander of Tralles, renowned physician of the 6th century, contemporary to the miraculous cures wrought by the incubation saints, attests how a doctor saw the issue in view of the well-being (and expectations concerning healing) of his patients: “I know that anyone using the methods just mentioned would need no other help from the outside. However, since many patients, and especially the wealthy ones, object to drinking medicine and to treating their bowels with enemas, they force us to cure their pain with the help of magical amulets. That is why I have thought it worthwhile to give you an account of those also, both the ones which I know from my own experience and those whose effectiveness is vouched for by trusted friends.”¹²⁴

What was, however, acceptable for a Byzantine physician, was questionable for Hippocrates and Galen and to the traditions following them, but it should not be taken for granted that what Hippocrates attacked in his *De morbo sacro*, was essentially the same notion of the magical, that Alexander conceded to use. What is more likely, that Hippocrates defended the authenticity of the medical method and the affiliation between medicine and the real piety of ritual healing in contrast to what he in fact perceived as pseudo-science and false religiosity:

My own view is that those who first attributed a sacred character to this malady were like the magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks of our day, men who claim great piety and superior knowledge. Being at a loss,

¹²⁰ D. E. Anne, “Magic in Early Christianity” *ANRW* 2. 23.2. 1507-1557; H. Maguire, ed. *Byzantine Magic* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995).

¹²¹ in the words (and in fact critique) of David Frankfurter; *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2002. 02. 26, (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/>), on whose article I rely, following the sensible distinctions he made in introducing the two viewpoints in classical scholarship.

¹²² Cf. G. Lanata, *Medicina Magica e religione popolare in Grecia, fino all'età di Ippocrate* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1967); L. Gil, *Therapeia. La medicina popular en el mundo clásico*. Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1969; and (with reservations) L. Edelstein, “Greek Medicine and its relation to Religion and Magic” in his *Ancient Medicine*, 205-246.

¹²³ On this argument cf Mathews, *The Clash of Gods*, 66-67.

¹²⁴ Alexander of Tralles, *Libri doudecim de re medica* (Therapeutica). ed. T. Putschmann, *Opera. Original-Text und Übersetzung nebst einer einleitenden Abhandlung. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Medizin*. 2 Bände; reprinted in Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1963, (Vienna, 1878-79; quoted by John Duffy, “Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: Aspects of Teaching and Practice” Symposium on Byzantine Medicine. ed. John Scarborough, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984), 26 in his translation.

and having no treatment that would help, they concealed and sheltered themselves behind superstition, and called this illness sacred, in order that their utter ignorance might not be manifest. They added a plausible story, and established a method of treatment that secured their own position. They used purifications and incantations; they forbade the use of baths, and many foods that are unsuitable for sick folk ... the wearing of black (black is the sign of death); not to lie on or wear goat-skin, not to put foot or hand on hand (all which conduct is inhibitive). ... In making use, too, of purifications and incantations, they do what I think is a very unholy and irreligious thing. ... All such [patients] they ought to have treated in the opposite way; they should have brought them to the sanctuaries, with sacrifices and prayers, in supplications to the gods. As it is, however, they do nothing of the kind, but merely purify them. Of the purifying objects some hide in the earth, others they throw into the sea, others they carry away to the mountains, where nobody can touch them or tread on them. ... Nay, even should it [the body] have been defiled or in any way injured through some different agency, a god is more likely to purify and sanctify it than he is to cause the defilement. At last it is godhead that purifies, sanctifies and cleanses as from the greatest and most impious of our sins...¹²⁵

Hence it was the question of piety that primarily disqualified the unholy practices, here labelled as magical; a concept that presupposes also the role of piety or that of the divinity himself as a factor of inspiration for the medical science, the functioning of which was articulated by Galen in his commentary on the Hippocratic Oath.¹²⁶

In the relationship of magical practices to ritual healing¹²⁷ I would only point to the question, what a change Christianity effected in forming a judgment about whether a healing method was acceptable or not. In the interpretation of Vivian Nutton the Christian position was rather concessive: “There is an obvious shift between Galen’s time and that of Alexander [of Tralles – i. e. between the 2nd and 6th centuries AD] in the definition of what is or what is not medically and socially acceptable as a type of remedy. ... Christianity, by its emphasis on prayers and spiritual songs, gave a sort of sanction to this white magic, within limits.”¹²⁸ In this article Nutton was also the one to enlighten another important factor, on the basis of the *Letters* of Libanius and the *Life of Damascus*: that the pagan healing cult places and those of theurgy were correspondent to Christian miraculous healing in the fifth century AD.¹²⁹ Barb, on the other hand, attributed the allowances to the state orders which -for a time being- left the opinion of the Church out of consideration.¹³⁰ Nevertheless,

¹²⁵ Hippocrates *The Sacred Disease*, Chapters I, II, IV, in vol 2 of the Loeb edition, transl W. H. S. Jones, (Cambridge, The Loeb Classical Library, 1923), 140-143; 148-151 for the through discussion of the text see: R. Parker, *Miasma*, 216-233; for a recent analysis of practical medicine, magic and religion from the starting point of the *De morbo sacro* see: J. Laskaris *The Art is Long. On the Sacred Disease and the Scientific tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

¹²⁶ cf. Vivian Nutton, “God, Galen and the Depaganization of Ancient Medicine”, in *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, eds. P. Biller and J. Ziegler, 17-32, (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 27. The saving intervention of gods, often even in cases of illness, „differs, however, from Christian and Jewish miracle in one important, and for Galen crucial way: the god works within his own creation, he obeys his own rules, and his cures, we might say, are scientifically explicable” *ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Byzantine Magic*, ed. Henry Maguire, (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1995) esp his own chapter in it an Ernst Kitzinger “The Cult of Images in the Age before the Iconoclasm” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83-151.

¹²⁸ Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander”, 8-9.

¹²⁹ Cf. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 283-311.

¹³⁰ “while the church consistently and uncompromisingly refused to make any distinction between magic and paganism, the emperors half-heartedly tolerated the old religious institutions which had been part and parcel of Roman public administration, but turned savagely against the prevalence of sorcery. ... Constantine the Great also found it necessary to decree that no *haruspex* should enter a private house, not even that of his best personal friend, on penalty of being burned alive, while the householder faced proscription and deportation. ... he remarks somewhat contemptuously that if anybody wanted to make use of these superstitious practices he might do / so by all means as long as it was done openly, at one of the public shrines and according to the official rites. However, hardly a year later,

it is to be remembered how severely the Roman emperors – when still unattached by the influence of Christianity – took measures against practices stigmatised as harmful. Yet Barb underlined another aspect, namely

that some kind of specifically Christian magic had in fact developed is clear from the rulings of the Synod of Laodicea in the middle of the [fourth] century when it was found necessary to forbid Christian clerics in major or minor orders to be magicians, charmers, soothsayers, or astrologers, or to fabricate amulets; wearers of such amulets were to be banned from the Christian community. Incidentally, this same council of Laodicea had to forbid the exaggerated cult of angels, which had apparently assumed the forms of magic.¹³¹

In this respect the first imperial order issued under the influence of Christianity was that of Theodosius I (379-395) at the end of the 4th century AD, against non-Christian practices in their entirety.

A further distinction may lead to a better understanding of the mechanism of both magical as well miraculous healing: the difference in the perception of *disease* as a natural or “scientific” set of symptoms by the doctor’s definition and that of *illness*: the structural and traditional concept of being ill as experienced by the patient.¹³²

possibly under the pressure of the Romans conservatives, Constantine turns the full rigour of the law only on those who contrive to injure their fellow men by magical arts or corrupt the innocent by love charms. The ‘remedia humanis quaesita corporibus’ are no longer a criminal offence (no execution for the wearers of, say, malaria-amulets, as under Caracalla before or under Constantius II after him), nor it is a criminal offence in agricultural regions to take measures against thunderstorms and the like, which may threaten the harvest. This is a concession to ‘white’ magic which the Church would not have tolerated...” A. A. Barb, “The Survival of Magic Arts”, 105-106.

¹³¹ A. A. Barb, “The Survival of Magic Arts”, 107; and *ibid.*: “...there is not, it must be stressed, a single imperial decree before Theodosius [I] at the end of the [4th] century which under Christian influence prohibits any institution of the established pagan religion of the Roman state, as far as – and this is important – genuine public institutions, defined and ordered by sacred law, are concerned.”

¹³² Helen King, “What is Health?”, Introduction to the volume *Health in Antiquity*, ed. H. King, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 6, where she continues: “Health can, however, be seen from the patient’s point of view not as the opposite of ‘disease’ but as opposed to the experience of ‘illness’.”

On Christian Incubation: Survival of Cult Practices and Cult sites

Theodosius' grandson, Theodosius II (408-450 AD), issued an edict that determined the fate of incubation temples – together with other pagan cult sites – as well. The edict of 435 ordered the destruction of those pagan temples and cult buildings which were still partly standing or even intact. Although the actual impact of this edit is dubious, the edict itself employed significant phrasing leaving the fate of the edifices to the discretion of the executing magistrates:

cunctaque eorum fana templa delubra, si qua etiam nunc restant integra, praecepto magistratuum destrui conlocationeque venerandae Christianae religionis signi expiari praecipimus.¹³³

Other considerations were probably added to this condition, depending on the geographical, topographical locations of the buildings, on their material value or their state of preservation as well as factors such as the way the cult site was used or the presence of cult statues. Thus, the fate of the cult buildings could be varied: on the rarest occasions the buildings, left in their original state, came to be used as Christian place of worship.¹³⁴ However, the complete and systematic destruction of temples was similarly exceptional (such as with the Asclepieion in Corinth and Pergamon, or the infamous plundering of the Alexandrian Serapeion).¹³⁵ More often temples which had already ceased to be used as cult places and begun to fall into ruin were transformed into Christian cult sites (this could happen long after they were abandoned. Even in such cases the Christian buildings were mostly erected near the former cult places and not directly above them, often using the building material of the previous sanctuary).

Two exceptions to this use and re-use of cult places are worth mentioning since in all likelihood they attest the continuity of healing cults and perhaps in both cases the continuity of healing incubation. The first example is that of the Athenian Asclepieion on the Acropolis, which from the beginning had an exceptional status among the cult places of Athens. Christian architects seem to have deliberately avoided the city centre and especially the sites of previous temples. With the Christian takeover of, as the city, a Byzantine church, probably dedicated to Saint Andrew, was erected on the site of the Asclepieion in the 5th century AD. The Christian construction incorporated the entire temple precinct, with the former incubation hall, along with the sacred spring

¹³³ *Codex Theodosianus*, XVI. 10. 25, in my analysis I follow Alison Frantz's article: A. Frantz, "From Paganism to Christianity in the Temples of Athens" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965): 187-207. She sees the phrase *praecepto magistratuum* "as a loophole to allow the magistrates to exercise their discretion", who, "as good Athenians, [...] would have had no great enthusiasm for performing their duties." (ibid., 200).

¹³⁴ for examples from Greece for all the variants cf. J.-M. Speiser, "La cristianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce" in: Ulf Jantzen, ed. *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern* 309-320 (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1976).

¹³⁵ Speiser suggests that Christians were particularly hostile to *soter* deities like Asclepius, Serapis and Isis exactly because of the characteristics and importance of the cult. Cf. also Frantz' reference (p. 195, note 50): "...the idea of the Christians savagely attacking all sanctuaries of Asklepios because of their addiction to magic arts (cf. E. J. De Waele, "The Sanctuary of Asklepios and Hygeia at Corinth," *American Journal of Archaeology* 37 (1933), 435-437) is unconvincing."

and the *kategogion*. Andrew himself was regarded by the late Antique Greek Christians as a patron of healing.¹³⁶ Albeit the opinions concerning the fate of the Asclepieion differ, scholars agree that the Christian practice replaced the ancient cult, more or less, over a single generation. T. Gregory has suggested that both the healing aspect as well as the incubation practice survived without interruption.¹³⁷ Between the 6th and 7th centuries, a large basilica of the *Hagioi Anargyroi* i.e. Saint Cosmas and Damian was erected over the place of the former Asclepieion, replacing the smaller church. Another church dedicated to Cosmas and Damian was likewise erected over the Asclepieion another in Piraeus.

Another example reveals its relevance seen from another point of view. The Christian basilica of Dor, located on the coast thirty kilometers south of Haifa, was established in the mid-fourth century after the town itself had lost its commercial significance.¹³⁸ Its excavator identified an incubation hall in the western part of the church related to a cult of two “unnamed” saints. The excavation also revealed that the church had been deliberately erected and precisely over a Greek temple, which fell victim to a fire (and, in the excavator’s opinion, to the devastation of the angered Christians). The foundation of the pagan temple may reach back to the 7th – 6th century BC; at the turn of the 5th – 4th centuries BC it had been transformed into a cult place of Apollon, which, with time passing, might have come under the jurisdiction of Asclepius.¹³⁹ Even if continuous incubation practice cannot be demonstrated the re-use of the site by Christians as a bishopric and pilgrimage stop-over on the way to holy places began soon after the preceding cult came to an end.¹⁴⁰

The cult of Asclepius and the features of his cult, with dream-healing among them, could make their contact with Christianity not only directly, but it could happened that by then the practice had been absorbed by the figure of another, in this respect intermediary, deity. This was the case at the fusion of the Hellenistic healing deities with the ancient Semitic deities. The cult of Asclepius spread rapidly especially in Syria and Phoenicia, assimilation to the cult of the Phoenician healing god, Esmun, under whose jurisdiction belonged the thermal baths of Gadara, where

¹³⁶ Tullio E. Gregory, “The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece” *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986): 229-242; Gregory claimed that Christians destroyed the temple, while A. Frantz saw a gradual process in the fate of the Asclepieion: “More probably, the Temple of Asklepios, under pressure of the imperial edicts, was deconsecrated, but not yet destroyed, shortly before Proclus’ death in 485, and its destruction, whether at the hands of the Christians, by earthquake[yet this is refuted by Frantz herself], or from natural decay, occurred toward the end of the fifth century or the beginning of the sixth, to be followed after the closing of the schools in 529 by the construction of the church in the midst the temple’s ruins.”, Frantz, “From Paganism”, 195.

¹³⁷ And although his argumetn concerning incubation seems rather weak, his conclusion is convincing: “Chronological considerations allow us to be certain that the pagan associations of the place were still alive when the church was built and the architectural and epigraphic evindence suggests that healing was still carried out in the same place.” Gregory, “The Survival,” 239.

¹³⁸ See <http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dor/>

¹³⁹ C. Dauphin, “From Apollo and Asclepius to Christ. Pilgrimage and Healing at the Temple and Episcopal Basilica of Dor” *Liber Annus* 49 (1999) 379-430. (Yet how she identifies the Asclepician takeover, remains unclear.)

¹⁴⁰ On the fate of healing divinities in Christianity see Pierre Saintyves, *Les saints successeurs des dieux* (Paris: E. Nowrry, 1907).

incubation was also practiced (though it is uncertain, whether on Asclepieian influence).¹⁴¹ It is also supposed that it was a result of the Greek influence that incubation became part of the cult of Serapis, god of prophesy. The two deities were so closely related, that in the Serapeion of Memphis daily libation was performed for the honour of Asclepius, while in the Serapeion of Alexandria straightaway an Asclepius cult-statue was placed.¹⁴²

The impact of the Asclepius cult on Judaism is reflected in Jerome's reproach against the aping of pagan customs and in his repudiation of incubation:

Nihil fuit sarcilegii quod Israel populus praetermitteret, non solum in hortis immolans et super lateres thura succendens sed sedens quoque vel habitans in sepulcris et in delubris idolorum dormiens, ubi stratis pellibus hostiarum incubare soliti erant ut somnis futura cognoscerent. Quod in fano Aesculapii usque hodie celebrat error ethnicorum multorumque aliorum, quae non sint aliud, nisi tumuli mortuorum.¹⁴³

In the vicinity of Jerusalem, near Lake Bethesda, there was a temple dedicated to a healing deity in the AD 2nd century. On the evidence of coins and *ex votos*, the cult was identified as the one dedicated to Asclepius-Serapis. During the reign of Herod, there was a Roman military fort nearby, the presence of which facilitated the functioning of the healing cult. In all likelihood this ancient healing cult site functioned in the time of Jesus as well, “en marge du judaïsme officiel strict” – the healing of the sick at Lake Bethesda in John 5 encourages a new interpretation of the superiority of the True Healer over the previous healing cult.¹⁴⁴ There were some attempts to interpret some Old Testament descriptions of dreaming as incubation. The most sensible suggestion concerns Samuel's sleeping in the church and Psalms 17, 63, 91.¹⁴⁵ An odd source of information on Judaic incubation practices may be found in Strabo attesting Moses' approval of incubation: “He [Moses] taught that those who made fortunate dreams were to be permitted to sleep in the temple, where they might dream both for themselves and for others.”¹⁴⁶

In his seminal book Peter Brown outlined the emergence of the saints' cult, especially the birth the cult of the martyrs in the Western Mediterranean.¹⁴⁷ However apt and influential his model

¹⁴¹ André Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs. À propos de Jean V* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970), 68-69.

¹⁴² Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs*, 82-83, here Duprez also quotes the ancient testimonies and modern interpretations concerning this entanglement: Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, VII. 26-27; Tacitus, *Hist.* IV. Lxxxiv: Deum ipsum Serapim multi Aesculapium quod medeatur aegris corporibus coniectant); “le nom d'Esculape semble mis ici [in the Serapieion of Memphis] pour celui de Sérapis. Ces deux divinités dans le temple desquelles les malades venaient chercher remède à l'aide d'incubation et de songes se confondent souvent dans l'esprit des Grecs” quoted from Brunet de Presles, *Mémoire sur le Sérapéum de Memphis*, (Paris, 1852), 562. (Serapis amalgamated in the same way other healing and non-healing deities as well, Zeus, Hades, Osiris, Dionysos and Helios Asclepius.)

¹⁴³ Jerome, *Ad Isaiam* LXV 4 (PL XXIV. col. 632C).

¹⁴⁴ Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs*, 94, 127, 178; on the continuity of cult and on their attachment to the cult space, especially in the cases of healing cults: 95.

¹⁴⁵ a good bibliography on biblical studies of dreams and supposed incubation practices: André Caquot, *Les Songes et leur Interprétation*, Sources Orientales (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1959); see also V. McCasland, “The Asclepius Cult in Palestine” *Journal of Biblical Literature* LVIII (1939), 227ff.

¹⁴⁶ Strabo, *Geographica*, XVI 2, 35, transl. H. Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library, (London: W. Heinemann, 1936).

¹⁴⁷ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function of Latin Christianity*, (London: CSM Press, 1983).

is, it cannot be applied to the cult of the incubation saints. Incubation in the Greek-speaking Mediterranean was very much linked to the preceding pagan cult practices, simply because in this cult the place was essentially more important than the figure of the healer. In case of Greek incubation healers, among them heroes, as Amphiaraus and Trophonios, “tomb and altar were joined” – what Brown saw as typical only for the Christian cult of the martyrs.¹⁴⁸ In Epidaurus, Asclepius’ tomb was near his sanctuary, while Amphiaraus and Trophonios died being swallowed by the earth that opened, just as Thecla, and their cult practice evolved around the place of their “tomb”.

Moreover, the Christianized cult places were related to urban centres and not even at the beginning of their cult were they on a cultic or geographical periphery, as many of Brown’s examples.

Furthermore, none of the Christian incubation saints was a proper martyr, though with time passing they became called and venerated as such. Thecla, a historical figure, the companion of Saint Paul, though tried in front of ferocious animals, was saved and died a peaceful death. According to the earliest layer of their legend, Cosmas and Damian also died a peaceful death and it was a sort of hagiographic necessity that they were shaped into martyrs, because they had to be forced into one of the larger categories of saints. Their historical character is dubious, their legendary traits offer a valuable insight into the making of saints (both in the cult as well in hagiography). Saint Artemios, undoubtedly a historical figure, was executed as a criminal, but as it was ordered by the Emperor Julian, he also ended up as a martyr. Cyrus and John were imaginary beings, invented for the sake of their cult and there was not even a martyrdom tale elaborated around their figures. What is more significant, that the close link of these saints with healing connects them to their pre-Christian cultic predecessors and hope to illustrate in the following chapter how they were even more linked to the cult places itself. Except for the latecomer Artemios, all of these incubation healers replaced a previous pagan healing deity.

“Christianity took over from pagan healing cult not only its function as a source of medical treatment but also its language, its imagery, even its sites”- nothing illustrates Vivian Nutton’s statement better,¹⁴⁹ than the miracle records of Byzantine dream healer – saints. In the following chapter I will introduce those main incubation healers who form the basis of my enquiry. The key considerations in the selection of the sources were to include only those who were primarily incubation healers, in 5th – 7th century Byzantium, with a surviving miracle catalogue. Since I am interested in the cultic and structural unity of these incubation sources, miracles of saints in whose collection incubation occasionally occurred, will not be addressed. I shall proceed in the chronological order of the recording, starting thus with Saint Thecla (5th century), then Saint Cosmas and Damian (6th century), Cyrus and John (early 7th century) and ending with Saint Artemios (second

¹⁴⁸ Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 9; in contrast to that “the forms of cult for heroes and for the immortal gods tended to be kept apart” (*The Cult of the Saints*, 5) see Lewis Richard Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921), esp. 238ff on the great resemblance between rituals at a hero’s tomb and of earth-deities.

half of the 7th century). I am describing first their person and their cult, together with their cult place where incubation was practiced and finally their dream miracle collections. In the factual description of the sources I shall emphasise those aspects of each of these cults and collections that render them unique, side by side with their shared characteristics.

¹⁴⁹ Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander", 7.

Chapter 2: The Christian incubation saints: their cult sites and their collections

The Cult of Saint Thecla

Saint Thecla was probably the most celebrated female saint of early Christianity.¹⁵⁰ She was a noble virgin in the 1st century in Iconium and having heard Paul preaching, she left her family and became Paul's follower. She was called the female apostle and the protomartyr among women. Twice she was miraculously saved from being burned and being eaten by wild beasts. She travelled with Paul and met a peaceful death. Her companionship with Paul, the stories of her wanderings, forsaking marriage for an ascetic and missionary life, her trials and miraculous escapes all took form in *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, composed in the 2nd century AD, in the likeness of Hellenistic novels.¹⁵¹ Her figure is exceptional for many reasons, most obviously because she was a woman. Thus she was qualified for particularly feminine tasks, both in her lifetime as well as in her posthumous miracles.¹⁵² The veneration of her cult started in Asia Minor, in places where she stayed during her life and which figure in the *Acta*: Iconium, her hometown, Antioch, what she visited with Paul, Myra and Seleucia, her resting place before that her cult spread further in Byzantium, Egypt, and the West.¹⁵³ Her role was equally significant by virtue of being connected to the figure of Paul and as such she has been considered in ascetic literature a female hagiographical model for women opting for saintly life.¹⁵⁴ She is also extraordinary with respect to her miracleworking capacities. She often seems to have acted independently so that in we do not find the emphasis on the saint's being the servant or intermediary of God in miraculous events, something ubiquitous in other hagiographical records. The same singularity characterizes the cult practices surrounding Thecla, as she is not a clear-cut incubation healer (nor exclusively a healer) but more a *soter*. In Seleucia and in Aegae she inherited temple sleep

¹⁵⁰ For her cult, her Life and her miracles, together with the description of the surrounding social milieu see Gilbert Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle: texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1978) and Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁵¹ *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, BHG 1710-1716; critical edition: *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, eds. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, 3 vols, repr. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1959); English translation: *The Apocryphal New Testament*, M. R. James, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

¹⁵² In scholarly literature Thecla is often a starting point for medieval women-studies; among the numerous examples see Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts*, Studies in Women and Religion 23 (Leviston and Queenstown: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987) and M. Misset-Van De Weg, "Magic, Miracle and Miracle Workers in the Acts of Thecla" in Anne-Marie Korte ed. *Women and Miracle Stories*, 29-52 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹⁵³ Cf. Stephen J. Davis, "Pilgrimage and the Cult of Saint Thecla in Late Antique Egypt", David Frankfurter, 303-339. *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

¹⁵⁴ Athanasius (4th century AD) *On Virginity*, on the significance of this gender-balance Stephen J. Davis wrote: "In the minds of ancient male authors, a woman could imitate a male exemplar only in a partial and generic sense because she would always be encumbered by the differentiation of a female body and the assumed weakness of the female will. In this context, writers would present women as the most suitable ideals for other women, while rarely (and reluctantly) citing them as examples for men." "Pilgrimage and the cult of Saint Thecla," 312. This attentive distinction effected (as Davis argues in this same article) that Thecla as a thaumaturgic saint was paired to the male thaumaturgic saint of the highest rank, Saint Menas, as a result of the segregation of the sexes at the healing shrines. Accordingly to this, in

from the preceding pre-Christian cults. If incubation was adopted together with the cult site at these locations, it would explain why Thecla never became completely associated with incubation elsewhere in general, like Cosmas and Damian, a saintly pair whose cult brought along dream healing to their various places of worship. Besides her other places of worship, (in Aegae, Alexandria, Mareotis, and Egypt) Thecla had a church in Constantinople, located in the Blachernai quarter.¹⁵⁵

The capital of Isauria in Asia Minor, Seleucia (Silifke / Meriamlik in today's Turkey) was described the *Acta Theclae* as the place where the saint died peacefully and was buried in her tomb. Besides this detail in the *Acta*, (in contrast to the sources concerned with the incubation sites of Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, or Artemios), about Thecla's cult place we have at our disposal both archaeological evidence¹⁵⁶ as well as textual sources. The diary-keeping pilgrim Egeria visited the site in 384 AD and recorded in her *Travels* her favourable impressions of the church on a hill and the entirety of the cult site. She wrote of the presence of "innumerable monastic cells for men and women" and the beauty of the shrine located there, encircled by a wall.¹⁵⁷

From the 4th century AD the cult site witnessed an immense development. Because of its favourable geographical position, Seleucia was a significant stop on the eastern trade-route, its prosperity contributing not only to splendid feasts and grandiose buildings but also a blooming intellectual life. The numerous miraculous cures affected by Thecla are in part the cause, in part the result of the thaumaturgic fame of the place, perhaps connected to the thermal baths surrounding the site. After the time of Egeria, the church precinct was enlarged and relocated into a small basilica constructed over a cave, a place of great importance for both Thecla and her pilgrims. In the miracle collection this cave was described as a favourite dwelling place of the saint (probably before the time the church was built) and a centre of devotion within the cult place from the 4th century onwards. Fortunately the earliest parts of the miracle collection extend back into this layer of time.

The growing popularity and significance of the cult site effected the re-working of Thecla's legend. The *Acta Theclae* became independent from the *Acta Pauli*, with which it was previously paired and received a new ending, conforming to the demands of the new cult site. In the new ending, instead of dying peacefully, Thecla disappeared astonishingly into the ground over the cave. That the rock opened and swallowed the saint naturally explained the absence of the relics, meanwhile providing the odd blend of a saint dead and yet not quite dead. This cave church was further enlarged in the 5th century AD (probably shortly after 476) at imperial expense. Behind this

iconographical representation, male and female pilgrims approach the saint in separate groups, from each of his sides. (Davis, *ibid.*)

¹⁵⁵ Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 108, note 5;

¹⁵⁶ E. Herzfeld and S. Gruyer, *Meramlik und Korykos* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930), 38-46; cf. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla*, 36-39. For geographical references of the cult site, for the plans of the cult buildings and for a detailed description of the sacred precinct, with a summary of the results of the excavators Herzfeld and Gruyer: Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 55-73, with abundant bibliography and drawings.

¹⁵⁷ Egeria, *Travels*, 23. 2-4.

financial support lay both Thecla's general popularity as well as her "promise" to the dethroned Emperor Zenon that he would recover his imperial power from the usurper Basiliscus. Shortly afterward the prophecy was fulfilled in AD 476, the emperor had a large church erected in honour of Thecla replacing the small basilica.¹⁵⁸ The expansion and embellishment of the cult buildings continued in the 6th century as well, (with two other churches and a public bath and cisterns) to meet the continuous demands of the numerous pilgrims.¹⁵⁹ The splendour of the cult site in Seleucia arising from the sanctuary of Thecla not only lay in the architectural beauty so admired by Egeria but also in a concept – foreign to Western hagiography – that the saint, in fact, inhabited the cult place and moved in it as about a house.¹⁶⁰

On ne peut souligner plus énergiquement cette conception populaire qui fait habiter le saint, invisible à l'ordinaire, dans sa basilique, comme dans un palais. A Séleucie, le peuple avait le vif sentiment de la présence de Thècle. On savait que elle aimait à se tenir dans une sorte de vestibule un peu écarté... ou dans la grotte voisine de la fontaine. Car elle aime le calme et la solitude...¹⁶¹

The soon-to-be-written collection of her miracles would empower Thecla with the characteristics of the divinities formerly associated with the site. Her 'being-swallowed-by-the-earth' may well have been related to the chthonic feature of her cultic predecessor, a local hero named Sarpedonios.¹⁶² The miracles themselves reveal that Sarpedonios was also credited to perform cures through incubation and some pagan supplicant arriving at the site held him the author of miraculous cures also after the establishment of Thecla's cult. These events took place in Thecla's incubation shrine near the town of Aegae, long famed for the incubation sanctuary of Asclepius.¹⁶³

Thecla's other cult predecessor, who exercised her function as *soter* – not so much a deliverer of individuals but rather the community/town under her protectorate, was Athena.¹⁶⁴ It was her features that could be seen on a Thecla who took to arms and fought for Seleucia when it was in peril, hand in hand with her patronage of literature and the typically feminine tasks of a virgin-warrior. Hence the complexity of Thecla's incubation cult, that fact that she was not only a healer-saint but a

¹⁵⁸ A three-naved church, longer than 80 meters, for the plans cf. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla*, 211-212.

¹⁵⁹ cf. Euagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 8; ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, 107-108; the emperor was also on good terms with Saint Daniel the Stylite, who foretold him in person the calamities awaiting him and his successful overthrow of the usurper. A detailed description of the events may be found in the *Vita Danielis* 68. c. ff, in English in E. Dawes, and Norman H. Baynes, transl. *Three Byzantine Saints. Daniel, Theodore of Sykeon, John the Almsgiver* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948).

¹⁶⁰ Bozóky E. "Le miracle et la maison du saint" *Hortus Artium Mediaevalium* 9 (2003): 247-252.

¹⁶¹ Delehaye, "Les recueils antiques", 54.

¹⁶² On the figure of Sarpedonios and the variants of his name cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 85-88 and Scott F. Johnson *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: a literary study* (Washington DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006), 123-126.

¹⁶³ There are two miracles in the collection connected to Thecla's cult place at Aegae, MT 9 and MT 39.

¹⁶⁴ For Dagron (*Vie et Miracles*, 84-85) Athena was a literary *topos*, the real rival being was Sarpedonios, while E. Lucius regarded Thecla much more the heir to Athena cf. Ernst Lucius, *Les origines du culte des saints*, trans. J. Jeanmarie (Paris: Fischbacher, 1908, 286). Athena clearly had connections with healing, as her name Ὑγία ἰατρίη also attests (cf. *Suda* sv Athena Hygieia and Pausanias, *Guide of Greece*, I, 23, 5.). Athene of Health was represented as a running figure with a serpent on her shield (Peter Levi, Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 1, page 65, note 134). One sculpture of Athena Hygieia is known from the 5th century BC Athens, and three Roman replicas are in the Museum of Naples (the Athena Farnese), in the Hope Collection in England and in Cividate Camuto (Museo Archeologico della Valle

soter in a wider sense of the word. Although she took upon many other “saving” roles from the cultic environment, her name and her cultic function was associated with healing as an grave-inscription of “Thekla, the physician” from Seleucia may attest.¹⁶⁵

The features of Athena attributed to Thekla by the hagiographer had a rather personal aspect as well. It was not so much a matter of cultic replacement. The hagiographer, apparently shedding light on his own person, emphasized an image of Thekla not just as patron but as a bit of a Muse.¹⁶⁶ In his eyes, both he and the bishop of the cult place were similar to Diomedes, guided by the protection of Athena.

The miracle collection of Thekla

The collection of Thekla’s 46 miracles was written around the year AD 468 and surely before AD 476 in several phases. Additions by the same hagiographer can be clearly traced. The miracle collection is a pair to the saint’s *Vita*, written somewhat earlier by the same hagiographer.¹⁶⁷

Both Thekla’s *Vita* and the *Miracula* were transmitted through the works of Basil of Seleucia – but the real hagiographer, in fact, was Basil’s antagonist, a rhetor from Seleucia, still Greek taught, who as a priest or already as a layman came into close contact with Thekla and her sanctuary.¹⁶⁸ After becoming a beneficiary of Thekla’s thaumaturgic miracles on several occasions and profoundly experiencing the saint’s protection over various affairs in his life, – and probably also urged by a friend, he recorded, collected and redacted the miracles as a gift of thanksgiving.

By the thematic arrangement of the miracles the hagiographer produced a true artistic composition. The collection at one point had come to an abrupt end (with MT 44) and yet the hagiographer undertook the task once again. Although he called Thekla his sole source of inspiration, he let us know that while collecting these miracles he carried out systematic research, including fieldwork in neighbouring places, interrogation of eye-witnesses and relatives of the healed, along with an exploitation of textual material kept in the church. The core of the narrated miraculous events was formed by those miracles that at most took place over a century, what the hagiographer estimates as memory stretching back roughly three of generations. The literary cultic records

Camonica). About the importance of Athena in the town in the 4th century on the evidence of coins see Lucius, *Les origines du culte des saints*, 279.

¹⁶⁵ CIG IV, 9209, (*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. A. Böckh and B.G. Niebhur, Berlin: 1825-1859), Linda Honey called attention to this testimony in her Review of Scott Johnson’s book: *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2006. August, 19, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2006/2006-08-19.html>

¹⁶⁶ She was labelled as φιλόλογος καὶ φιλόμουσος.

¹⁶⁷ The *Vita* and the *Miracles* are compared by Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 19-23; the *Vita* is analysed extensively in Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla*, 15-66.

¹⁶⁸ On the person of the hagiographer and on his work see G. Dagron, “L’auteur des Actes et des Miracles de Sainte Thècle” *Analecta Bollandiana* 92 (1974), 5-11; and *idem* in the introduction of his edition of the collection: “I. Une œuvre et son auteur” *Vie et Miracles*, 13-30.

available at the cult place, just as the oral tradition surrounding it, related not only to the way Thecla's cult functioned up until the time of the collection, but reached also back to the activity of her predecessors at the site, Athena and Sarpedonios. In contrast to the other incubation collections in my survey, the geographical radius of the saint's action was more limited. The the majority of the beneficiaries of the miracles came from Seleucia or from the province of Isauria. One patient also came from Constantinople, another one from Antioch and yet another from Tarsus. Two patients came from Cyprus. It appeared that the saint did not favour long-distance miraculous interventions.¹⁶⁹

In the question of incubation dreams, the hagiographer drew a conscious line between the dream-advice of Thecla and those of the ancient divinities. "Such are, to quote but a few examples from the many, the oracles of demons: misguiding, malvolent, of bad faith, mere apparitions, tricks, full of obscurity and lies. Contrary to this, what are the remedies and predictions of the saints? They are clear, they tell the truth, they are simple, holy, perfect; indeed worthy of God who grants them."¹⁷⁰ The paragraph merits attention for two reasons. The adjectives seem to refer explicitly to dream-phenomena. In addition the hagiographer made reference to the great incubation cult sites.¹⁷¹ Even if he did not possess intimate familiarity but only superficial information he surely could have heard about dream-oracles received through ritual.

Apart from its "author" being on equally good terms with Greek and Christian learning, a marked feature of the corpus was that it often made contemporary ecclesiastical events the core of the miracle story. To this are grouped Personal conflicts, contrasting theological positions, and the individual character of the bishops of Seleucia may be grouped within this "Realpolitik." The hagiographer took a position in issues of heresy and orthodoxy and at the same time portrayed himself as an eyewitness to the society of the town and its festive and everyday face. Thecla's intervention was made manifest in the case of the stolen wedding ornament or a cattle epidemic in the same way as when the enemy menaced the town.

The factor that determined the fate of the miracle collection, as noted before, was its attribution to Basil of Seleucia, that and the fact that it was transmitted together with the *Acta Pauli et Theclae* until the 10th century. Afterwards, the *Vita* and the *Miracula* were treated independently from each other in the manuscript tradition.¹⁷² The *editio princeps* – together with the *Vita* of Thecla by Simeon Metaphrastes – was produced by Pierre Pantin in 1608 in Antwerp and dedicated to Philip III, King of Spain; this text (with a lacuna of 10 miracles) was to be adopted into the *Patrologia Graeca*

¹⁶⁹ All of these aspects are described in detail in Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 24.

¹⁷⁰ In the Prologue to the miracles, Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 288-289.

¹⁷¹ Even if Dagron labels it as *purement littéraire et conventionnelle*.

¹⁷² In details see: "La Tradition manuscrite et les principes de l'édition" Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 140-151.

as well.¹⁷³ Its classification among the works associated with a great name meant that the miracle corpus with its 46 miracles was transmitted in, more or less, unadulterated version.

Perusing the Byzantine collections of miraculous healings, the corpus of Thecla's miracles strikes the reader as being most intimate in its tone – the picture emerging out of the personal character of the work, the writer's thorough knowledge of ancient literature, philosophy and religion, his references to the details of his private life and from his personal piety towards the saint, reveals perhaps the most congenial of the Byzantine hagiographers. All pieces of information pertaining to his person we learn from himself. The richness of his ubiquitous remarks originated from the intimate character of the corpus, its being a votive gift, and from the intention of the hagiographer, not at all veiled, to commemorate himself as a rhetor and literary virtuoso. By using frequent references to Classical authors he probably tried to establish a Greek Christian *paideia* on the level of hagiography and to secure a place for Thecla's miracle collection within it.

The cult of Saint Cosmas and Damian

The trajectory of the cult of this pair of physician-saints was a multifaceted one. Their figures and the way they could be worshiped proved extremely flexible. Additionally, as their cult spread quickly over the entire Mediterranean, subsequent features complemented their legend in each of the major emerging cult places.¹⁷⁴ One of the most unusual things with regard to these saints is that there are three pairs of Saint Cosmas and Damian, the so called Asian (that is, from Asia Minor), Roman and Arab pairs, with three *Passiones*, three *Vitae*. Each pair has a different place of birth and its own feast day.¹⁷⁵ The starting point to the question of how and why this pair of saints became tripled,

¹⁷³ While the 17th century Vaticanus codex that – by virtue of its antiquity and good quality – had been the most frequently copied, had a large lacuna: ten miracles were missing from its beginning, from MT 1.18 to MT 18.18 (cf. Dagon, *Vie et Miracles*, 142-143) – the edition of Pantin, the text of the Patrologia Graeca and Festugière's translation as well were prepared from this incomplete manuscript.

¹⁷⁴ *Acta Sanctorum* Septembris VII. 27. 428-499; Ludwig Deubner, *St. Kosmas und Damian. Texte und Einleitung* (Leipzig: L. Deubner, 1907); A.-J. Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean* (extraits), *Saint Georges* (Paris: Edition A. et J. Picard, 1971); G. Luongo, "Il dossier agiografico dei Santi Cosma e Damiano" Offprint from: *Sant' Eufemia d'Aspromonte* a cura di Sandro Leanza (Catanzaro: Soveria Manelli, 1997); Ernst Rupprecht, ed. *Cosmae et Damiani sanctorum medicorum vita et miracula e codice Londinensi* (Neue Deutsche Forschungen 20. Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt, 1935); Anneliese Wittmann, *Kosmas und Damian* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1967).

¹⁷⁵ According to the first, the so-called *Asian Vita*, the mother of the saint-pair was a certain Theodote. (On the motif of the missing father in the Saints' Lives see G. Guidorizzi, "Motivi fiabeschi nella agiografia bizantina" in *Studi Bizantini e neogreci*, a cura di P. L. Leone, pp. 457-467 (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1983), 467); these "Asian" (that is, from Asia Minor) saints decided to heal both men and beast for free. They were buried at a place called Pheremma. They are not described as martyrs. Their feastday is Nov. 1. The saints in the second pair, from the *Passio Romana*, were Christian doctors in Rome who healed and converted the Emperor Carinus, but suffered martyrdom because of the jealousy of the court physicians. Their feastday is July 1. This *Vita* was not accompanied by miracles. The saints in third pair from the *Passio Araba*, by way of their Arabic origin, were wandering doctors who praised Christ through their medical practice. During the reign of Diocletian and Maximian they arrived to Aegae, in Cilicia and there they were led to the prefect Lysias, where they suffered martyrdom together with their three brothers. To the versions of this *Vita* altogether seven miracles belong. A detailed list of the different versions with their manuscripts, including the Oriental ones, is in van Esbroeck, "La diffusion orientale", 69-70.

may be found in Deubner's coherent answer in his monograph:¹⁷⁶ The Asian pair of saintly physicians met a peaceful death and formed the basis for the various versions of the legends. The absence of a martyrdom motif indicates that it is likely that at the time imagined for the legend, Christianity was already a state religion. They were moulded into martyrs by hagiographic necessity. As Deubner put it, there was a need to place the thaumaturgic saints into a larger category and since they fit neither among the ascetics nor among the confessors, they were claimed as martyrs.¹⁷⁷

Some scholars¹⁷⁸ have explained the tripling of the saints by the fact that their cult sprouted in different locations: *ex diversitate locorum, scilicet natalium, martyri et venerationis maioris diversitas parium videtur introducta*, or *ex multitudine cultorum et festivitatum et actorum varietate*¹⁷⁹ we are dealing with parallelly emerging cults, *ut ex diversitate lectionum possit deinde in eadem etiam ecclesia suspicio oriri de diversitate sanctorum*, while Ehrhard¹⁸⁰ accounted for this multiplicity chiefly by virtue of their various feast days. According to Ernst Lucius the reason for the diversity lay in the efforts of three different localities to claim the tomb of the saints for themselves.¹⁸¹ As Deubner demonstrated, the three pairs can be immediately reduced to two since the Arabian martyrs had no real cult in the Eastern Church and only the Roman and the Asian pair had essential feast days on 1st of June and 1st of November respectively. In contrast, only the Arab pair of saints had a cult in Rome and in the western Church.¹⁸² Posthumous miracles belonged mostly to the Asian pair.

Cult places, cult predecessors and texts: Aegae, Rome, Cyrus – Pheremma

Although the saints' cult did not originate in the town of Aegae in Cilicia in Asia Minor, this place was of key significance for the saints' cult. Aegae was famous for its temple of Asclepius. Eusebius wrote "...with thousands excited over him [sc. Asclepius] as if over a savior and physician, who now revealed himself to those sleeping [in the temple at Aegae], and again healed the diseases of those ailing in body."¹⁸³ Thus, incubation could have combined with the worship of the saints here. From Libanius we learn that the miraculous dream cures of the god were stored in the temple on inscriptions,¹⁸⁴ while Philostratus informs us that Apollonius of Tyana also established a place for his wonderworking together with the incubation cult of Asclepius.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁶ Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 60.

¹⁷⁷ And using a somewhat circular argument: as a consequence, the Asians must have been the first of these saint-pairs, since it is less likely that martyrs would have been replaced with non-martyrs in the miracle collections.

¹⁷⁸ B. Mezzadri, *De actis ss. Martyrum Cosmae et Damiani* (Roma, 1750), 14; Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 40.

¹⁷⁹ According to Stilling (AASS Sept. VII, 428b).

¹⁸⁰ *Römische Quartalschriften* 11 (1897), 109.1

¹⁸¹ Ernst Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904), 256.

¹⁸² Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 71.

¹⁸³ *De Vita Constantini* III 56 = T 390.

¹⁸⁴ *Epistulae*, 695, 2 = T 388.

¹⁸⁵ *Vita Apollonii* I, 8.

Christians were never the less aware of the Asclepieian associations of the place. In addition to Eusebius, Sozomenos also made mention of the healing cult¹⁸⁶ and the site soon obtained its Christian thaumaturgic adherents. Two of the miracles of Saint Thecla (MT 9; 39) took place in her church at Aegae, through the practice of incubation. Even more noteworthy is the pair of brother and sister martyrs, Saint Zenobius and Zenobia.¹⁸⁷ Their figures must have had a great impact on the formation of the legend of Cosmas and Damian. The Arab *Vita* of Cosmas and Damian appears to be more closely related to the martyr-literature, and one to which miracles were added. It had connections to the story of the martyrdom of the healing brother and sister from Aegae, Saint Zenobius and Zenobia. Ludwig Deubner and Ernst Lucius long debated which *Vita* had had been the model for the other, i. e. the legend of which pair of saints came into being first.¹⁸⁸ Both scholars however were in agreement about the impact of Asclepius, whose notably famous cult in Aegae doubtlessly influenced both narratives. In addition, they were one in pointing out the common elements shared by the two martyr-stories. These shared elements include the person of Lysias, the prefect who condemned the saints, Aegae used as background scenery, the date in the time of Diocletian, and the whole scheme of the narration, to which one can also add the saints being brothers.

Ernst Lucius and Alfred Maury¹⁸⁹ both identified the beginnings of the cult in Aegae. In Asclepius both of them saw the catalyst of incubation healing. Based on a miracle of Cosmas and Damian (KDM9) in which a pagan addressed the saints as Castor and Pollux, Ludwig Deubner formulated the hypothesis that Cosmas and Damian inherited the cultic role of the Dioscuroi, who had fulfilled important tasks as *soter*-s and healers, and we know about their incubation function as well.¹⁹⁰ Yet, upon their arrival at Rome it was not in any Asclepieion where they took lodgings, but in a small church with antique traditions in the Forum. During the plague of 590 AD, the procession of supplicants asking for a cure started off from this church.¹⁹¹ The forger of the fake charter of Constantine regarded the saints as the successors of Castor and Pollux. Deubner came to the conclusion that the Arab version had been fabricated for the use of the Roman cult sometime in the

¹⁸⁶ *Historia Ecclesiastica* II, 5= T 389.

¹⁸⁷ AASS Oct 13, 259-273.

¹⁸⁸ Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 64, Lucius *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche*, 260.

¹⁸⁹ Maury, *Révue Archeologique*, 6 (1849).

¹⁹⁰ Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 77; R. J. Harris, *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), esp. 96-104 on the connection between Castor and Pollux and Cosmas and Damian. The rejection of Deubner's fundamental thesis on the basis of the Syriac legend was Paul Maas's review of Deubner's book in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 17 (1908), 609-613; Another rejection of the Christian identification of the Dioscuroi from a standpoint different from Maas may be found in Hippolyte Delehaye, "Castor et Pollux dans les légendes hagiographiques" *Analecta Bollandiana* 23 (1904), 427-432; as well as Franchi de' Cavalieri, "I SS. Gervasio e Protasio sono un'imitazione di Castore e Polluce?" Offprint *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* IX (1903).

¹⁹¹ The sanctuary had previously been dedicated to either Urbis Romae or Romulus (the son of Emperor Maxentius); according to the newest hypothesis it may have been dedicated to Jupiter Stator (personal communication, Krisztina

5th century. Hence, the saints as noteworthy exceptions appeared in Rome before the conquest of Justinian.¹⁹² It was the Arab pair to whom Pope Felix IV dedicated the above-mentioned and still beautiful basilica in Rome around 526-530 AD. There existed to their honour, an oratory built by Pope Symmachus (498-514 AD) was an older place of worship dedicated to them. Incubation was connected to their cult place in Rome as well.¹⁹³

In the end, Rome made her own pair of saints. In the *Passio Romana* they are depicted as living in Rome as Christian physicians who were denounced by the Emperor Carinus (283-285 AD). They were arrested (after that the locals hid them in a cave), and interrogated by the emperor. They threatened that Carinus would become as distorted as his thoughts and indeed this is what is said to have occurred - his head turned backwards. The miraculous healing of the emperor was followed by the latter's confession of faith and the saints could leave in peace. Final martyrdom was needed however. The emperor's jealous physicians lured them into a trap and stoned them. What brought this version of the legend into being? Was in the competition of the Eastern Church with the Western Church that the demand arose for a martyr-pair of Saint Cosmas and Damian resulting in a new "Roman" pair?

The antiquity of the Asian pair is attested in the churches erected in their honour.¹⁹⁴ A church was dedicated to them around the year 400 AD in Aleppo, in the 5th AD century in Edessa and Cyrrhus (together with "their bones"). We know of a Cosmas and Damian church dated to the 6th AD century near Jerusalem, while Johannes Moschus preserved the memory of a church and monastery (where incubation was probably practiced) within the city of Jerusalem itself.¹⁹⁵ A knightly order was established in their honour in Palestine, Procopius Carthophylax made mention of a church in the 9th century in Pamphilia, Saint Sabas built a church in Cappadocia, there are traces of their cult from the 7th century onwards in Galatia, in Mysia, important Byzantine ruins were found on the island of Dascilio as well as, in Phocis and in Dyrrachium, all dating to before 518 AD. In the Jordanian town of A church dedicated to Cosmas and Damian with a spectacular mosaic floor was excavated in the Jordanian town of Gerasa (today Jarash), dating to 530-533 AD. Based on the the Greek dedication inscription the church was built from donations by five individuals under the patronage of Paul, bishop of Gerasa.¹⁹⁶ However, the supposedly Arab pair was not to be done away

Bóka, Soprintendenza, Rome). For bibliography see: G. Luongo, *Il dossier*, 41-42; the interpretations agreed upon and those rejected by Deubner regarding the church see Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 73-74.

¹⁹² Deubner speaks about shorter and longer Greek versions, the former extant in two mss, from the 11th-12th c. and the latter in another manuscript from the 14th-15th c. This latter manuscript is, interestingly, full of Latinisms cf Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 80, note 1.

¹⁹³ D. Knipp, "The Chapel of Physicians at Santa Maria Antiqua" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 1-23.

¹⁹⁴ Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 81 ff.

¹⁹⁵ The *Pratum Spirituale* 127 (PG 87.3. col. 2990) speaks about a hesychast nun, Damiana who before entering the convent attached to the church of Cosmas and Damian in Jerusalem, spent Friday nights in the church. Cf. G. Luongo, "Il dossier", 38 (the text does not seem to me to necessarily attest to incubation since these visits may just as well have been related to a vigil).

¹⁹⁶ Hamarneh Sami Khalaf, "Cosma and Damian in the Near East: Earliest Extant Monument" Offprint from *Pharmacy in History* 27 (1985).

with so easily as the one created and used exclusively in the Roman sphere. If their attributes have been correctly identified the stucco painting from a 6th century Egyptian monastic complex (in Wadi Sarga) seems to contain characteristics of the Arab pair. An Old Testament martyrdom scene of Ananias, Azarias and Misael in the burning furnace is painted between the two figures of Cosmas and Damian. Below this scene appear the three brothers of the saints, who were themselves not depicted as twins!¹⁹⁷ Their oldest known iconographic representation, however was painted much earlier, the mosaic in the church of Saint George in Thessalonice has been dated by Artelt to between 379-395 AD.¹⁹⁸

Among the unique characteristics of the *Vita Asiatica* one particular aspect may have a real background, a place named Pheremma.¹⁹⁹ The town was probably the same as the Cilician Pheremma, near the town of Cyrrhus, 21 kilometers northwest from Aleppo. Cyrrhus was both the supposed birthplace of the saints and the place where their remains were placed (either after their martyrdom in Aegae or after they died naturally).

The town of Cyrrhus took pride rather early on with the possession of these relics, as shown both in the Hagioupolis name of the town as well as in the basilica erected in honour of the saints to which Theodoret (bishop of Cyrrhus from 423 AD) bore witness in 457 AD.²⁰⁰ The cult of the saints may have flourished from the 6th century as reported by Procopius:

There was a certain utterly neglected fortress in Syria, Cyrus by name, which the Jews built in early times, when they had been carried off as captives from Palestine into Assyria by the army of the Medes and were released much later by King Cyrus; and for this reason they named the place Cyrus, paying this tribute of gratitude to their benefactor. And as time went on this place came to be neglected in general and remained altogether without walls. But the Emperor Justinian, both out of his forethought for the safety of the state, and at the same time as showing especial honour to the saints Cosmas and Damian, whose bodies lie close by even to my day, made Cyrus a flourishing city and one of great note.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ The stucco is held in the British Museum.

¹⁹⁸ G. Luongo, "Il dossier", 40; a photograph is in H. Skrobucha, *Kosmas und Damian* (Recklinghausen: A. Bongers, 1965) *Iconographia ecclesiae orientalis*; English translation: *The patrons of doctors* (Recklinghausen: A. Bongers, 1967) (Pictorial Library of Eastern Church art, 7.); for more on their (mostly Western) iconography: W. Artelt, *Lexicon der christlichen Ikonographie*, t. 7 (1974), col. 344-351, sv "Kosmas und Damian"; and idem: *Kosmas und Damian: Die Schutzpatrone der Ärzte u. Apotheker. Eine Bildfolge*, (Darmstadt: Merck, 1954); M-L. David-Danel, *Iconographie des Saints Côme et Damien* (Lille: Morel & Corduant, 1958); P. Julien, F. Ledermann, A. Touwaide, *Cosma e Damiano: Dal culto popolare alla protezione di chirurghi, medici e farmacisti. Aspetti e immagini* (Milan: Antea, 1993); Current research on the iconography of Cosmas and Damian was presented at the "II Congresso sull'iconografia ed il culto dei SS Cosma e Damiano" 29 settembre 2006 - 1 ottobre 2006, in Nusco, Italy, accompanied by an exhibition "I Santi Cosma e Damiano, Storie, Miti e Leggende".

¹⁹⁹ On the evidence from KDM 12 where we learn of a sick woman that ever since her childhood had been under the protection of these saints, for κ γ ρ τ ζ τ ν Κυρρεστικ ν μερ ν τ ζ ν ατολ ζ τ γ γανεν ρ μ σ θ αι, ν θ α τ τ μ ι α λ ε ψ α ν α τ ν θ α υ μ α σ τ ν τ ο υ τ ν γ ω ν κ α θ ε ρ α π ν τ ω ν Χ ρ ι σ τ ο Κ ο σ μ κ α Δ α μ ι α ν ο κ ε ι ν τ α ι. The criticism of Deubner's identification of the place (with Pelusion) and for the overall topography of the miracle collection see W. E. Crum, "Place-Names in Deubner's Kosmas und Damian" *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* 30 (1908), 45-52. P. J. Stilling was the first to understand that Pheremma must be near the town Cyrrhos, on the basis of a letter by Theodoret, - without knowing the *London Codex*, which confirmed it - : *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 17 (1908), 609-613.

²⁰⁰ Festugière (p. 121. note 43) introduced the KDM 34, which refers to the relics being in Constantinople. Hence, he claimed – together with Lucius – that the growing number of places where the relics were guarded led to the multiplication of saints.

²⁰¹ Procopius, *Buildings* II, xi, 2-5, trans. H. B. Dewing, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 7, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

Lucius correctly observed that the scarce and insufficient evidence that can be deciphered from the miracles do not provide a basis for locating the origin of the cult in Constantinople. This observation will be confirmed by the picture provided by the other miracle collection, which I will introduce below, the *Codex Londoniensis*. The same fact is also corroborated by the contents of the KDM 12 which explicitly attested that the remains of the saints lay in the Syrian town of Cyrrhus.²⁰²

While all this variability reveals the magnanimous flexibility of their cult it renders the question of which “original” pair of saints superseded which “single” ancient healer irrelevant. An elasticity equal to that of the cult can be observed in the exceptionally convoluted hagiography of the saints. Their legend is many-layered and - in spite of the numerous sources - tangled, exactly because it adopted so willingly the barely adequate hagiographic characteristics of the moment, be these about the number of the saints, their persons, their lives or deaths, or the places and times they were active in. By considering the Oriental texts within the research modified current interpretations on some important issues including the hagiographic dossier based on surviving Greek and Latin texts.²⁰³ The research history on Cosmas and Damian is splendidly depicted by M. Van Esbroeck, with the inclusion of Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, and Georgian manuscripts.²⁰⁴ Vincent Déroche is presently preparing the “decisive” edition of the – probably earliest – Syriac corpus. But not even knowing the “earliest” *Vita* would enable us to find (nor would be sensible to search for it) the *real* or *original* legend.

²⁰²Deubner dismissed it as an inorganic element, similar to the mention of the five saints in certain manuscripts (which would lead to the conclusion that it is the Arabian saint-pair that was related to the miracles – erroneously. On the evidence of the Suda (sv “Christodoros Thebaïos”), where it was noted that this Christodoros from Thebes put together a collection of the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, Lucius reached the conclusion that the saints must have exercised their thaumaturgic powers outside of Constantinople as well. Deubner however, also considered this story an elaborated version of the Constantinople corpus. (I did not found the Suda mentioning that Christodoros wrote on Cosmas and Damian, cf. <http://www.stoa.org/sol/>).

²⁰³ On a Syriac *Vita* surviving in a 5th-6th century manuscript: Bedjan (v. Bédian): Bibl. Hag. Orient. 210; with translation and commentary: W. Weyh, *Die syrische Kosmas – und Damian-Legende* (Schweinfurt: Druck der Reichardt'schen Buchdruckerei, 1910); W. E. Crum vindicated the attention being paid to the Coptic – Arabic version of the legend, published by Yūhannā Sulaymān: *Tufbat az-ẓamān fī sirat-al-farisain Quṣṣamān wa Damyān* (Cairo, 1926). Crum pointed out that the version of the Cairo manuscript survived not only in Arabic but in a Coptic version as well; this version is outlined by van Esbroeck, 65-66. The narration of the vita is followed by seven miracles, out of which three were unknown both in the Deubner corpus and in Rupprecht as well. The seven miracles are also present in the Arabic Cairo manuscript and in the Coptic codex (Pierpont-Morgan MS 856). Esbroeck also emphasized that at the beginning of the collection the Coptic introduction placed the story of the saints in Petra, a piece of evidence showing that Petra had been Christian before Islam (see the next footnote).

²⁰⁴ Michel Van Esbroeck “La diffusion orientale de la légende des saints Cosme et Damien” In *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés IV-XII. siècles*. Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2-5 mai 1979) 61-77 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985).

Cosmas and Damian in Constantinople

Hesychios of Miletos, a Byzantine historian from the 6th AD when writing about the pre-Christian history of Constantinople, referred to legend that Byzas, the mythical founder of the city, erected a temple – by water – for Castor and Polydeices who healed his people.²⁰⁵ Deubner connected this reference to the incubation cult of the Dioscuroi with the KDM 9 where a pagan visited the saints addressing them as Castor and Polydeices. This miracle led him to believe that 1, the cult predecessors of Cosmas and Damian were the Dioscuroi and 2, that the cult originated in Constantinople. Though it was not the place of origin of the cult, there is a sort of consensus about the primary importance of Constantinople in the incubation cult of Cosmas and Damian. Nevertheless, to locate where the miracles took place, remains far from easy. We know of six Cosmas and Damian churches in the capital city:²⁰⁶

1-2. Κοσμάς καὶ Δαμιανός ἐν τοῖς Βασιλεισκού: built by Justin II (AD 565-578) together with his wife, Sophia, as an offering of thanks according to an epigramm from the Anthologia Palatina I. 11 “for the victory over illnesses and the barbarians” (ἐπὶ νίκῃ καὶ κατανίκῃ καὶ βαρβάρων); Janin claims that it was identical with the church of the saints in the Dareios town quarter, (Κοσμάς καὶ Δαμιανός ἐν τοῖς Δαρείου), which is known to have been built by Justinian II in AD 569, northwest of Port Sophia.²⁰⁷

3. The church in the Zeugma town quarter, the Κοσμάς καὶ Δαμιανός ἐν τῷ Ζευγματι, was founded according to the patriographers by Saint Proclus, bishop of Constantinople (AD 434-446). Although it was never mentioned in the synaxaries, it stood until the end of the 12th century, near the Forum of Constantinos.

4. The church of the monastery of the patriarch Euthymos (Κοσμάς καὶ Δαμιανός ἐν Ψαμαθοῖ) was erected around AD 890.

5. Based on meagre documentation, all that can be said about this monastery of Cosmas and Damian (also called the Monastery of the *Anargyroi*) is that it was founded by a *logothetes* (secretary of the state), and fell into ruin at the time when the Latins overran Constantinople. It was later rebuilt and rendered independent by Theodora, the widow of the Emperor Michael Paleologos VIII. We know nothing about its location, although it is surely not identical with the monastery of the Cosmidion.

6. The Cosmidion: a church and a monastery-complex erected on the shores of the Golden Horn Bay, was one of the most beautiful and most frequented church in Constantinople. Janin saw in the titular saints the Roman martyr-pair because their feast day was on the 1st of July.

²⁰⁵ Quoted, together with other testimonies, in Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 79.

²⁰⁶ R. Janin. *La Géographie Ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantine* vol. III: Les Églises et les Monastères. 2. ed. (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1969), 284-289.

²⁰⁷ Janin, *La Géographie*, 284, while Ebersolt speaks of two different churches, *Sanctuaries de Byzance*, 98-99.

According to the tradition, it was founded by Paulinus, *magister officiorum* and a schoolmate of Emperor Theodosius II (AD 408-450). Paulinus was accused of a liason with the Empress Eudocia and for this reason the emperor tried to have him killed. According to the legend, the killers succeeded only in cutting off his ears that was interpreted as an intervention by the saints who would have viewed with displeasure if the construction of the church in their honour had remained incomplete because adulterous behaviour.

On the basis of the story told in various sources, the construction of the church may have taken place around 439 AD. Although the role of Paulinus in connection of the church cannot be ascertained, it is sure that the Cosmidion stood in the Paulinus quarter of the city, i.e. on the property of a man called Paulinus. About the monastery adjacent to the church we do not know, exactly when it was built, its first known mention comes from AD 518. Procopius described the church in the following way:

At the far end of the bay, on the ground which rises steeply in a sharp slope, stands a sanctuary dedicated from ancient times to Saint Cosmas and Damian. When the Emperor himself once lay seriously ill, giving the appearance of being actually dead (in fact he had been given up by the physicians as being already numbered among the dead), these Saints came to him here in a vision, and saved him unexpectedly and contrary to all human reason and raised him up. In gratitude he gave them such requital as a mortal may, by changing entirely and remodelling the earlier building which was unsightly and ignoble and not worthy to be dedicated to such powerful Saints, and he beautified and enlarged the church and flooded it with brilliant light and added many other things it had not before. So when any persons find themselves assailed by illnesses which are beyond control of the physicians, in despair of human assistance they take refuge in the one hope left to them, and getting on flat-boats they are carried up the bay to this very church. And as they enter its mouth they straightforward see the shrine as on an acropolis, priding itself in the gratitude of the Emperor and permitting them to enjoy the hope which the shrine affords.²⁰⁸

About hundred years later, in 626 AD, on the 5th of June the Avars plundered the church during the siege of the city, three years later during their withdrawal they set it to fire. Yet thanks to the popularity of the saints, the church did not lie in ruins for long. At the synod of Niceae (787 AD) one of their miracles was cited that can probably be connected to this church. At the end of the 10th century Agapios, Patriarch of Antioch, became responsible for the monastery of the Cosmidion. Later Michael IV (1034-1041) fortified and enlarged the building complex and it is at this time that the exterior sacred precinct, gardens, marble mosaics and a bath were also constructed. The privileged status of the church maintained as late as 1453, until the year of its (supposed) destruction. The exact place of its sanctuary could not be identified. The building was often called – after the surrounding area – either after the Paulinus quarter or after the Brachys or Lympidarios quarters. On

²⁰⁸ *Buildings* I. vi. 5-8. Trans. H. B. Dewing. The Loeb Classical Library, vol. VII, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971). Deubner calls into question that the church re-built by Justinian would be identical with the church “built by Paulinos” (*De Incubatione*, 108). The church lavishly enlarged and embellished upon the miraculous recovery of the emperor must have been of a humble sight beforehand (cf Procopios’ description) and it likely to have acquired greater popularity after and thank to this event – suggested Lucius, and hence drew as a consequence that the saints previously were rather insignificant. But Deubner is quite right in finding it hazardous (as being unfounded) to deduct the popularity of the saints exclusively or even chiefly from the imperial grace, while I find unlikely that Justinian would have turned to a totally insignificant cultplace.

the basis of testimonies of Russian pilgrims Ebersolt suggested²⁰⁹ that the proximity of the famous church of Mary of the Blachernai may explain why the text of the *Codex Londoniensis* speaks of the church of Cosmas and Damian of the Blachernai.

The miracle collections of Cosmas and Damian: The London Codex (Rupprecht)

In 1907 in the neighbourhood of a ruined monastery near Edfu an Arab a shepherd, pasturing his flock on forbidden ground, found some codices. The excavations that followed the discovery unearthed a (supposedly) library from a (supposedly) Coptic monastery. News about the finds spread fast and the English collector Robert de Rustafjaell was only the second person who selected from among the manuscripts.²¹⁰ In addition to the majority Coptic material, there was also a Greek manuscript. The 9th - 10th century codex is now in the British Library (Cod. Lond. Add. 37534). Hence it is called in the secondary literature the *Codex Londoniensis* or London Codex. Thorough the thesis I will refer to its miracles as CL. In 1935 a disciple of Deubner's, Ernst Rupprecht, edited the Greek text although no additional commentary was added neither at that time nor later.²¹¹

The codex is an alternative version of Cosmas and Damian's miracles, written in a simple Greek, in an inventory-like way. Already Rustafjaell argued that the London Codex represented an earlier phase of the cult, pointing out the unpretentious style and the straightforward narration.²¹² Rupprecht called it the *antiquissimum quod novimus exemplum graecum*.²¹³ The question of its precedence, however, should not be based only on the simplicity of style, since one must not forget that lowering the style of popular hagiographical works also occurred.²¹⁴ The *Vita* at its beginning of the miracles is

²⁰⁹ Ebersolt, *Sanctuaries de Byzance*, 98.

²¹⁰ Robert de Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt from recently discovered predynastic and early Christian records* (London: Kegan Paul, 1909); he writes the following: "Here [in Edfu] I met the supposed finder himself, who agreed, for a small remuneration, to take me to the spot where he said he had dug them out. On the last page of two of the manuscripts references are made to a monastery to which they were dedicated, named 'St. Mercurius on the mount at Edfu,' and I was greatly surprised when the Arab piloted me to a place about five miles west of Edfu on the fringe of the desert plateau, where, he said, was a Coptic monastery. This monastery proved to be a white building of the Oriental type, standing within its own enclosure, and further partly surrounded by the dark brick ruins of what must have once been a very large building." (4-5) It is uncertain, if these mss were indeed found or really belonged to this monastery, for - besides the questionable tale of the Arab -, it was not uncommon for monasteries to buy up libraries of other churches. Books could also be transferred to larger places for safety or as gifts between different various communities. He continues: "The most important of the Coptic manuscripts is the Apocryphal Narrative of Christ's descent into Hell, by the Apostle Bartholomew; this, the Greek manuscript relating to Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian and the small, insignificant-looking Nubian volume of the tenth century [with the Miracles of Saint Menas!] were left, because, from their appearance, they seemed to have no particular value compared with the larger and better preserved books selected from the find, before I obtained possession of the remainder." (p.5)

²¹¹ *Cosmae et Damiani sanctorum medicorum vita et miracula e codice Londoniensi* (Neue Deutsche Forschungen 20; Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1935).

²¹² Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt*, 90: "The text of the manuscript ... in all probability refers back to an original of greater antiquity than those of any the current texts."

²¹³ *Cosmae et Damiani sanctorum medicorum vita et miracula*, vii.

²¹⁴ Claudia Rapp in her "Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries" in *Bosphorus. Essays in honour of Cyril Mango*, 31-44, eds. S. Efthymiadis, C. Rapp and D. Tsongarakis. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1995), 36

the Asiatic Life, showing the non-martyr pair of saints. In addition to this, twice the text identified unmistakably the origin of the saints' cult in their hometown and burial place, Pheremma-near-Chyrresticon. Besides the 14 miracles that figure in this collection alone but not in the KDM, the uniqueness of the London Codex lies in its Egyptian colouring and in its Monophysite standing.

The hagiographer divided the corpus into 47 sections with each miracle story being given a unique number and a title. There is a huge lacuna in the codex. Miracles 12-20 are entirely missing. The text is easily readable and there are painted floral decorations in colour. An encomium to archangel Michael can be found at the end of the codex that was written by another hand.²¹⁵ This edition naturally calls out for comparison with the later, Deubnerian version of the miracles, which not only survived in a great number of manuscripts but also differ in various points from the *London Codex*.

Kosmae et Damiani Miracula (Deubner)

The larger and better known collection, which called here KDM on the basis of the critical edition (*Kosmae et Damiani Miracula*), is a compilation and multiple redaction of 36 manuscripts, presenting 48 miracles from various periods and places, collected and published by Ludwig Deubner. It chiefly contained the cures obtained through incubation in the church of the Cosmidion, in Constantinople, probably between the 5th-6th and 13th centuries. The earliest layer of the written record may date to the 6th-7th century. The collection was continuously enlarged until the 13th century. Ludwig Deubner organised the miracles in chronological order and distinguished six series of miracles:

I (with a prologue) Mir. 1-10

II (without a prologue) Mir. 11-19

(Mir. 20 is an addition, which was originally in the fifth series.)

These two collections were written by two different authors, but it is likely that the author of section II united the two and wrote the prologue at the head of the first series.

III (with a prologue) Mir. 21-26, written by a sick man cured in the church, at the request of a certain Florentius.

complemented the picture of the lowering the style, simplifying and abbreviating, given by Ihor Ševčenko "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose" in his *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982), 301.

²¹⁵ The codicological description of the text: *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years MDCCCXVI-MDCCCX*, 1912, p. 73; F. Halkin, "Publications récentes de textes hagiographiques grecs. II. part" *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1935): 347-381 (Miracles des SS Cosme et Damien – pp 374-381); including some photographs, Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt*, 89-98.

IV (without a prologue) Mir. 27-32; this series is supposed to be an extract from a longer collection, probably written by the author of section III.

V (with a prologue) Mir. 33-38; the author is different from the previous ones; the miracles are shaped into individual stories, often having separate prologues and endings. This series survived in a 10th century manuscript.

VI Mir. 39-47; written by the deacon Maximus (13th century) in an elaborated style with references to contemporary history.²¹⁶

Mir. 48 was performed in the saints' lifetimes and does not belong to any of the six series. This "miracle of the black leg" was, however, probably the best known of the saints' cures, especially in the West and numerous paintings attest its fame.²¹⁷

Sophronios in the miracles of Cyrus and John²¹⁸ mentioned two miracles from Cosmas and Damian, KDM 1 and 24, that is, the content of the first three series (maybe in different order of the miracles) was circulating together surely at the beginning of the 7th century. From the parallel miracles of the London Codex and the KDM that last in Deubner's chronological line that is present in the London Codex as well, is KDM 33. That means the miracles of the first five series were surely known and copied in Egypt in the 9th century.

The Cult of Saint Cyrus and John

The Greek Church recognizes 17 saints as *anargyroi*, saints who took no payment. Probably Cyrus and John were the first of the saints to be called in this way. The name was later used more prominently with regard to Cosmas and Damian as well and came to generally denote the saints of an unselfish, succouring type.²¹⁹ Healing without accepting money was not the unique quality of this pair of saints. This characteristic can already be found among the precepts of Hippocrates as regarded the poor and foreigners.²²⁰

²¹⁶ On the textual history of this part only see the article of Alice-Mary Talbot, "Metaphrasis in the Early Palaiologan Period: The Miracula of Kosmas and Damian by Maximos the Deacon", in *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church: the New Saints, 8th-16th*, ed. Eleonora Kountoura-Galake, 227-237 (Athens: Institute for Byzantine Research, 2004).

²¹⁷ E. g. Fra Angelico (1438-1440), Museo di San Marco, Florence; Ditzingen (1490) Stuttgart, or Master of Los Balbases (c. 1495): The Miracle of Cosmas and Damian, in the cathedral of Burgos, Spain. Cf. Kees W. Zimmermann, *One leg in the grave: the miracle of the transplantation of the black leg by the saints Cosmas and Damian* (Maarsen: Elsevier/Bunge, 1998).

²¹⁸ MCJ 30.

²¹⁹ Cozzolino, "Problemi connessi con gli Anargyroi" 96-103; Timothy Miller wrote that the term *anargyroi* came to be used only after the Theodosian edict, that is, the Asclepius temples were closed, around the beginning of the AD 5th century: Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, 224. n. 26. In Delphoi stood a Hagios Anargyros shrine, see David-Danel, *Iconographie*, 17; about the sanctuary: P. F. Foucart, *Mémoire sur les ruines et l'histoire de Delphes* (Paris: Archives des Missions scientifiques, 1865), 2nd vol, 6.

²²⁰ "I urge you not to be too unkind, but to consider carefully your patient's superabundance or means. Sometimes give your services for nothing, calling to mind a previous benefaction or present satisfaction. And if there be an opportunity of serving one who is a stranger in financial straits, give full assistance to all such. For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art." Hippocrates, *Precepts*, 6, transl. W. H. S. Jones.

Similarly to the cult place of Thecla, the thaumaturgic site itself lay at the core of the cult of Saints Cyrus and John in the Egyptian Menouthis which owed its significance to Isis, the previous healer there. In their case we possess a precious piece of evidence about the conscious replacement of the ancient healer with a Christian cult engineered by Cyril of Alexandria in order to challenge the tenacious fame of the miraculous cures of Isis.²²¹

The site, Menouthis (now Abukyr), located near Alexandria, was important in Late Antiquity for two main reasons. First, the site lay in the vicinity of Alexandria, it fell within the sphere of interest of the Alexandrian university and second, the Serapeia of Alexandria and Canopus also influenced the development of the characteristics of the place. Incubation was practiced at the Serapeion of Canopus, just as in the Iseum of Menouthis.²²² In the wake of Christian pilgrimages, the importance of Menouthis was not only geographic, it lay on the pilgrim route leading to the Holy Land, but it was also close to one of the most renowned healing sanctuaries of Egypt, Saint Menas in Abu Mina.²²³ The individual figures of the saints established here, in fact, seem rather insignificant. They acquired their entire role as the new, Christian occupants of the cult site. Two deities should be mentioned with regard to the cultic predecessor, Isis, whose incubation cult was adopted by Cyrus and John, and closely related to Isis, Serapis who similarly provided miraculous healings (also) through incubation.²²⁴

Similarly, as the role fulfilled by the Asclepius shrines in created a cohesive force among the pagan Greek intelligentsia in the face of advancing Christianity, the cult places of Isis and Serapis were of great importance for the teachers and students at the Alexandrian university, who together formed a sort of neoplatonic “order” in the 4th century AD. In 391 AD the patriarch of Alexandria, Theophilus and his monks, the “tall brothers”²²⁵ destroyed the Serapeion and publicly defiled its sacred cult objects. After that the Serapeion was pulled down. Theophilus had a church built over its

²²¹ R. Herzog, “Der Kampf um der Kult von Menuthis” in: *Pisciculi. Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums: Franz Joseph Dölger zum sechzigsten Geburtstage dargeboten von Freunden, Verehrern und Schülern* ed. T. Klauser and A. Rücker, pp. 117-124 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1939); Jean-Marie, Sansterre, “Apparitions et miracles à Menouthis: De l’incubation païenne à l’incubation chrétienne” In *Apparitions et Miracles*, Ed. Alain Dierkens, 69-83 (Bruxelles: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1991); Sarolta Takács, “The Magic of Isis Replaced or Cyril of Alexandria’s Attempt at Redirecting Religious Devotion” *ΠΟΙΚΙΛΑ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ* 13 (1994), 489-507; Dominic Montserrat, “Pilgrimage to the shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* Ed. David Frankfurter, 257-279 (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

²²² Diodoros Siculus, *Bibliothèque*, I. 25, 2-5.

²²³ Menouthis (Aboukyr) near Canopus, some 20 kilometers from Alexandria to the east cf. Dominic Montserrat, “Pilgrimage to the shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, Ed. David Frankfurter, 257-279 (Leiden: Brill, 1998) on the name of the place cf. Deubner, *De Incubatione* 90 and Montserrat, “Pilgrimage,” 260.

²²⁴ the primary sources on the two deities: L. Vidman, *Syllogae inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapicae*. Religionsgeschichte Versuche und Vorarbeiten (RGVV) 28 (Berlin, 1969); their interpretation: L. Vidman, *Isis und Sarapis bei den Griechen und Römern. Epigraphische Studien zu den Trägern des ägyptischen Kultes*, RGVV 29, (Berlin, 1970).

²²⁵ The monks were used as a sort of private army of Cyril for his wide-ranging interventions not only in ecclesiastical matters but into civic life of Alexandrian Jews, intellectuals, pagans; see M. Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); for a more general context cf. E. Wipszycka, “La Christianisation de l’Égypte aux IV-VI. siècles. Aspects sociaux et ethniques” *Aegyptus* 68 (1988), 117-165.

site, , named after Emperor Arcadius. A similar fate befell the Serapeion in Canopus and the Iseum in Menouthis, the latter was transferred to the monks by Theophilus to be transformed into a church of the evangelists.²²⁶ Nevertheless, the cult of Isis retained its influence, not only among pagans but in the surrounding Christian communities as well, exactly because of her powers of miraculous healing.²²⁷ After 412, Theophilus' successor, his nephew Cyril of Alexandria (412-444 AD), tried to gain control of the situation by establishing a Christian healing cult in the immediate vicinity of the Iseum. This new cult was centred on the relics of those two saints, whose resting place was learned by Cyril in a dream.²²⁸

The bones were unearthed but as they were the remains of two bodies, by then impossible to identify, Cyrus, the saint they initially sought, was connected to John, both otherwise unknown saints.²²⁹ That Cyrus was the more important saint of the pair is reflected in two circumstances. His name, Cyrus (Kyros=Lord) was contrasted to the epithet of Isis: Kyra=Lady. Moreover, it was saint Cyrus who gave the new name of the town, that became Abukyr, from Abba (father) Cyrus. These associations along with the supposed identity of the saints (in their lifetime one was allegedly a soldier and the other a monk) were articulated by Cyril in the homilies written for their translation.²³⁰

Deubner suggested that Cyril himself had contrived the characteristics of the saints, based on the model of the saint-pair Cosmas and Damian, of great renown at that time.. Following their popular form, the saints were transformed into "martyrs" and even "brothers" and occasionally being in the medical profession was also attributed to one of them (Cyrus?) that he practiced in his lifetime.²³¹

The three Cyrilian homilies held during the translation of the relics, were read aloud in Canopus and Menouthis. They mark the first written records of the Christian cult of Cyrus and John. From these homilies it can be also understood that Cyril introduced these saints not only to eradicate the pagan cult²³² but in order to replace incubation as well.²³³ However, the mere presence of the

²²⁶ Or, according to Sansterre - on the basis of an inscription in the A. Bernard-collection-, the church of the Evangelists was a new construction, built in the vicinity of the Iseum which remained intact (Sansterre, "Apparitions", 71).

²²⁷ The different context of the worship of Isis and Serapis is outlined by S. Takács in her "The Magic of Isis Replaced": Isis, as opposed to Serapis, was one of the most ancient Egyptian deities, the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus. The worship of Serapis had a serious political connotation, relating to the emperor-cult. Hence, the position taken against it by Christian authorities should be interpreted in this context as well. "As long as she (Isis) did not or could not be thought to interfere with Christianity, as long as she was solely identified with healing, and as long as there was no equally powerful "local" Christian alternative, there was no other entity which served her function and thus her position remained secure." p. 503.

²²⁸ Cf the already mentioned work of Pierre Maraval, "Songes et visions comme mode d'invention des reliques" in: *Sogni, visioni e profezie nell'antico cristianesimo. XVII Incontro di studiosi dell'Antichità cristiana*, Roma 5-7 Maggio, 1987 = *Augustinarianum* 29 (1989), 583-599, with Sansterre's objection, viz. that this event was not part of the typology of Maraval (Sansterre, 80, note 17).

²²⁹ On the versions and evaluation of their *Vitae* see: Theodore Nissen, "De SS. Cyri et Johannis Vitae formis" *Analecta Bollandiana* 57 (1939), 65-71.

²³⁰... Sansterre, 71, ref to. Cyril's homily: XVIII, III. In PG 77. col. 1105A.

²³¹ Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 94-95; in this the hagiographer was, however accidentally, his ally since the saints in the miracles narratives sometimes forget that they are not brothers at all.

²³² cf. Takács, "The Magic of Isis Replaced" **PAGES**

saints did not prove sufficient to preventing the cult from s taking root, while Isis continued to attract pilgrims. Some sixty - seventy years later the supposed translation of Isis still exercised immense power over her suppliants and in written sources concerned with the scandal of her hidden worship (in the account of *Vita Severi* by Zacharias Scholastikos)²³⁴ and there is no firm evidence of a functioning Christian cult of Cyrus and John. Hence, several hypotheses arose. E. Wipszycka rehabilitated the thesis of L. Duchesne, who concluded that it might not be Cyril, but rather Petros Mongos, the patriarch of Alexandria between AD 482 and 489 who introduced the saints. Petros Mongos was, however, a monophysite, and thus his name could have replaced with that of Cyril during a more conforming Orthodox revisitation.²³⁵ Other scholars generally agree about the authorship of Cyril but state that the establishment of the two saints' cult had shown no direct results by that time.²³⁶ As the pagan Menouthis was strongly connected to a circle of prestigious Greeks, the Christian cult site may have been linked to such extent to the patriarchal family whose representatives were Theophilus and Cyril²³⁷ that its eventual decline might have been the wish of Cyril's successor and adversary.²³⁸ Recently Jean-Marie Sansterre proposed that the figures of Cyrus and John were indeed introduced by Cyril, but – in accordance with his goals – without the incubation rite. Thus, the cult failed to attract the previous clientele of Isis. The sacred character of the place was too closely related to incubation.²³⁹ In his third homily, Cyril affirmed: “Come then, all, who have been erring for long, at our place nobody patches up dreams ... Despising then the old wives' tales and the dirty jokes of the fortune-tellers, come to the really true physicians.”²⁴⁰ To the phrase οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἡμῶν νεύρατα πλῆττεται (“nobody of us patches up dreams”) Angelo Mai added the following comment concerning dreams:

Superstitiosa ac fallacia somnia intellegit, reprehenditque Cyrilus, cujusmodi non in Menoutheos tantum cultu, verum etiam in Aesculapii Alexandrino fano nosocomioque saepe dictitabantur. Caeteroqui bona somnia, et a bonis angelis, ut credere pium est, atque a sanctis martyribus Cyro et Joanne immissa, in volumine suo de praedictorum martyrum miraculis Sophronios permulta narravit.²⁴¹

²³³ Sansterre, “Apparitions”, 72. Sansterre here also calls attention to an apology by Cyril, in which rejecting the *Contra Galileos* of Julian, Cyril confirmed his aversion towards incubation with a commentary on Isaiah 65:4, using his interpretation of Isaiah to show that Jews practiced incubation only when they turned to false deities; he rejects the practice in Christianity along with dream interpretations; (Jerome in his commentary on the locus recalled the *pagan* custom of incubation) *Contra Julianum*, PG 76, 1024-25, esp. 1024 CD).

²³⁴ R. Herzog, “Der Kampf um der Kult von Menuthis” in: *Pisciculi. Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums: Franz Joseph Dölger zum sechzigsten Geburtstage dargeboten von Freunden, Verehrern und Schülern*, Ed. T. Klauser and A. Rücker, 117-124 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1939). As a result, Petros Mongos demolished the privately owned house where her worship, together with the saved cult objects, had been practiced in secret.

²³⁵ Loius Duchesne, “Le sanctuaire d'Aboukir” *Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie d'Alexandrie* 12 (1910): 3-14 and refers to a similar event where the name of Cyril replaced that of Bishop Theodore in Mopsuesia.

²³⁶ Thus, Delehay in his “Les Saints d'Aboukir”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 30 (1911), 448-450; Cozzolino, *Origine del culto*, 95, as well as D. Montserrat, “Pilgrimage”.

²³⁷ Various scholars have recently emphasised (M. Dzielska, G. G. Stroumsa) how Cyril coordinated his spheres of influence, acting in parallel on ecclesiastical, political, and social concerns.

²³⁸ Montserrat, “Pilgrimage”, 263.

²³⁹ Sansterre, “Apparitions”, 74.

²⁴⁰ The 3rd homily, read on the occasion of the translatio, PG 77. 1106.

In order not to be defeated the saints were forced to combat Isis using her own methods, one of whose names in Menouthis was “True”, after her truthful advice offered in dreams.²⁴² By the 6th century the practice of ritual sleep had received the acknowledgment it merited in the Christian cult.

It is mere coincidence that the same Emperor Zeno, whose recovery of his throne resulted in the grandiose worship of Thecla, also played a role in the cult of Menouthis. He indirectly provided powerful state help in retaliating actions against the cult of Isis. The previously mentioned scandal, the uncovering of conspiracy by Illos and Pantrepios against the emperor in AD 481 was followed by a large-scale persecution of Greeks, to which the Alexandrian scholars remaining faithful to the cult of Isis fell also victim, and - on a strength of a denunciation -, the very cult place as well.²⁴³ The closeness of Alexandria, the adherence of teachers, students and, sophists, - and I number here physicians as well - to the ancient religion presented a great challenge to the rival Christian cult; those numerous pagans and learned physicians featuring in the miracle collection who developed a strong aversion to the saints, not only had a hagiographical or narrative role but also reveal principles of Greek philosophical and scholarly tradition. They and what they represent serve as the best indicators for what the hagiographer intended to include into *his* Christian *paideia* and what he excluded from it - in contrast to Thecla's hagiographer.

In the stories that involve these scholars, and where they are put to shame or overmatched, the point was often not so much to comment on the Christian faith's attitude towards the saints but rather more of a showdown with this scholarly worldview. (I do not mean it in the absolute sense but within the local and personal contexts of Cyrus and John's cult.)

At the time of the formation of the miracle collection, i.e. at the beginning of the seventh century, the sanctuary flourished as a miraculous healing centre. On the basis of the descriptions in the corpus, a vivid picture can be drawn of the richness of the building-complex and about the social standing of some of its visitors. Deubner attentively collected mentions in the stories concerning the temple personnel, while the hagiographer himself underlined the range of action exercised by the fame of the cult place, when he consciously elaborated upon the “geography of the sacred”. The church complex in all likelihood weathered the hardships of the Persian attacks in 618. Later, it continued to function under Muslim authority. After the ninth century we have no evidence that the

²⁴¹ Compare it with the distinction Thecla's hagiographer made between the Sarpedonian false dreams and the true ones of Thecla, Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 289.

²⁴² Oxyrinchus Papyri XI, 1380. 63, cf. Montserrat, “Pilgrimage”, 258, who drew direct comparisons between two other Isiac inscriptions from Menouthis in Vidman, *Sylloge Inscriptionum* nos. 403, 556a.

²⁴³ Herzog, “DerKampf”, 122; the ancient source for these events is the *Vita Severi* by Zacharias Scholastikos, which he wrote in order to defend Severus (the bishop of Antioch) from accusations of Hellenism (i. e. paganism) (F. Nau, “Vie de Sévère” *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* IV (1899), 344-353, 544-571; Cf. other references by Herzog to other sources pertaining to the cult of Menouthis (besides the homilies of Cyril and the *Thaumata*: Socrates: *Historia Ecclesiastica* V 16 and works of Sozomenos, Rufinus, Eunapius, Damascius on page 117, note 2, 3, 4. Sansterre's no less adventurous account of the events directed the reader to the collection of A. Bernand, “Le Delta égyptien d'après les textes grecs, I: Les confins libyques” *Mémoires de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* 91 (1970) 200-205, 214-217, 321-323.

cult still functioned; the worship of the saints with the passing of time shifted to Rome and Constantinople (where their church lay in the neighborhood of the Hagia Sophia²⁴⁴).

The miracle collection of Cyrus and John: the *Thaumata*

Seventy miraculous cures by the saints were collected and re-worked into a high literary style by Sophronios, himself a beneficiary of a dream cure, between 610 and 614 AD. it is possible to date this collection so precisely because although the collection abounds in references to religious intolerance, there is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem in 614 AD.

The hagiographer Sophronios was probably born around the year 550 AD, near or in Damascus and a laudation of this city opened the description of his own cure in the 70th miracle, the last miracle in the corpus. After studying rhetoric, Sophronios became a monk in the monastery of Saint Theodosios near Bethlehem. He later travelled within Egypt when he formed a life-long friendship with John Moschos. Together they travelled through Palestine and Phoenicia, and upon their arrival in Alexandria, they became friends, first with the patriarch Eulogios, and from 607 AD his successor, John the Almsgiver. After the fall of Jerusalem in 614 to the Persians, they went to Rome where Moschos wrote his *Pratum Spirituale* and it dedicated to Sophronius. After the death of Moschos, Sophronios returned with the remains of his friend to the monastery of Saint Theodosios where he only became involved again in the theological and political debates of his time around 630. After a short stay in Constantinople, he reappeared in 634 AD in Jerusalem where he was elected patriarch and four years later witnessed the entry of Caliph Omar into the city.²⁴⁵

In the *Laudes* written at the head of the collection, just as in the last miracle of the corpus telling of his own cure, Sophronios recalled that he was afflicted with an eye-ailment for which he turned to the saints. He dedicated his work as a gift of thanksgiving for his recovery.

The full *Thaumata* survived in a single copy from the 10th century (*Vaticanus Graecus* 1607), an *editio princeps* by Angelo Mai, adopted by the *Patrologia Graeca*. For his critical edition, Natalio Fernandez Marcos also took into consideration another version, the *Codex Berolinensis Graecus* 220, which only contains, 15 miracles, a random selection from the total seventy. Fernandez dated this codex to the 10th-11th centuries, adding an important remark that the selection of the Berlin Codex on various occasions filled the lacunae in the Vatican manuscript.²⁴⁶ He explained the continued

²⁴⁴ Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 108-109.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 1-11; for more details on Sophronios see: P. S. Vailhé, "Sophrone le sophiste et Sophrone le patriarche" *Revue d'Orient Chrétien* VII (1902), 361-385; VIII (1903), 32-69; 356-387.

²⁴⁶ The two codices are described by Fernandez Marcos, 231-237.

absence of variants and copies by maintaining that these miracle narratives were so closely connected to the cult place of Menouthis that they never reached a wider Christian reading public.²⁴⁷

Although I agree with the importance Fernandez attributed to the cult site, there is another reason for the limited distribution of these miracles. These miraculous stories emphatically propagated a Realpolitik, the theological position taken by the Church in the face of Christological and heretical debates – when these tensions moved into the background, this propaganda, especially outside of the Egyptian context, generated hardly any wider interest. What marks out the corpus of Cyrus and John from the other incubation miracle collections treated here is that heretics are emphatically present, mirroring splendidly earlier and contemporary Christological debates. Again the presence of heretics in the collection can be attributed to the characteristics of the cult place, namely, its location in Egypt. After the synod of Chalcedon (451 AD) a greater part of Egypt remained faithful to the monophysite credo and it may well be that the church in Menouthis was monophysite standing for a while. The redactor of the saints' miracles, Sophronius, however, was a Chalcedonian, and either out of personal conviction, or in order to exonerate the saints from the accusation of monophysitism, the Chalcedonian theology was emphatically expressed in their activities.

Without going into a detailed analysis, it is still worth calling attention to another, Egyptian account of incubation miracles, almost contemporary to the *Thaumata* of Menouthis, from the second half of the 7th century. Agathon, an Alexandrian monophysite and the successor of the patriarch Benjamin (626-665 AD) wrote a book which recorded the incubation healings that took place in the church of Saint Macarios (Abû Maqâr). The Greek original was translated into Arabic, with the erroneous title given by the translator of *Book of the Consecration of the church of Benjamin*. Several dream cures took place in this church on the day after its consecration by Benjamin. A boy with leprosy told in his dream to Agathon that Macarios had appeared to him and healed him so that his illness, all the spots and wounds on his body became attached to his garment.²⁴⁸

This is a well documented and relatively clearly retraceable example of a spontaneous continuation of incubation cult in the case of Thecla and a conscious replacement of the ancient healer-predecessor in the case of Cyrus and John. The incubation healing cult that became most well known, both in the Eastern and Western church, formed - , around the figures of Saint Cosmas and Damian, exactly because they were miraculous physicians. I shall introduce their miracle-material later in a more detailed way since theirs is a heterogeneous group of sources, shaped in various phases and by different traditions. Moreover, because their miracles survived in two different collections they comprise excellent raw material for comparison. By virtue of the richness of the

²⁴⁷ Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 227.

²⁴⁸ René-Georges Coquin, *Livre de la consécration du Sanctuaire de Benjamin* Introduction, édition, traduction et annotations (Cairo: Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1975), 177-185; (the healer appearing in dream is a tall man, in a monk's habit, with a beard covering his chest).

material, the distribution of the cult, the saints' popularity in iconography and other similar factors, several questions pertaining to incubation and Christian thaumaturgic healing in general have been much discussed in the literature by scholars.

The Cult of Saint Artemios

Concerning the theological standing of the healer, the most illustrative example of the way a cult could become orthodox is that of Saint Artemios, who by the 7th century had grown to be one of the most renowned of the incubation healer- saints in Constantinople. He was with little doubt a historical figure, was an Arian, and his cult probably gained ground first among the Arians of Antioch.²⁴⁹ The *Life of Saint Pachomios* unfailingly demonstrates that Artemios was an Arian at the same time explains how he came into contact with incubation during his lifetime and how he may have been portrayed as an incubation healer after his death.²⁵⁰ Vielleux, the editor of the text of the *Life of Pachomios* added that: "Egypt was ruled by a governor (hegemon), that is a civilian authority and by a military general, called duke, dux, who resided in Alexandria. We know from the Index to the Festal Letters that Artemios searched for the fugitive Athanasius in 360. The Greek *Vita* adds that it happened during the persecution of the Emperor Constantius (353-361) against Athanasius. Artemios was put to death by Julian the Apostate in 362, and was therefore venerated as a martyr

²⁴⁹ For a long time, it was only supposed that Artemios was an Arian, mostly based on a remark of Photius' *Bibliothèque*, on Philostorgius lost Chronicle, which mentioned Artemios with profuse praise. A more serious piece of evidence comes from the *Vita Pachomii* (see the next footnote), a reference I owe to David Movrin.

²⁵⁰ the First *Vita Graeca*, 137-138: "And it happened after this, as the holy bishop Athanasius was being sought by the Emperor Constantius at the instigation of the enemies of Christ, the Arians, that a certain general by the name of Artemios received authority and was searching everywhere for him. and as a rumour spread, 'Is he not hiding among the monks of Tabennesi, for he loves them?' the duke (!) sailed up for this purpose. As he was sailing up, it happened by chance that Theodore himself was sailing down to visit the monasteries of the brothers near Hermapolis. As he drew near the upper monastery called Kaior, he saw the duke sailing up; the Lord made him understand what was going to happen and he revealed it to the brothers. The brothers wanted to turn back and arrive before him lest he should trouble the brothers at Phbow, but Abba Theodore told them, 'He for whose sake we have come so long a way to visit His servants is able to take care of this affair without there being any grief.' Having said this, he went on to the monasteries. 138. When Artemios came to the monastery he ordered the army to keep watch around the monastery by night, armed as during war. He himself sat with his lieutenants within the monastery, outside the synaxis, having archers standing by him on both sides. Seeing this the brothers were afraid. But a holy man called Pecoš, whom we have mentioned above, exhorted the brothers to keep courage in the Lord. The duke asked through an interpreter, 'Where is your father?' Abba Pecoš answered, 'He has gone to the monasteries.' And he said, 'The one who comes after him, where is he?' They showed him Abba Psahref, the Great Steward. And [Artemios] told him privately, 'I have an imperial order against Athanasius the bishop, and he is said to be with you.' Abba Psahref replied, 'He is indeed our father, but I have never yet seen his face, Still, here is the monastery.' After he had searched and not found him, he said to those in the synaxis, 'Come, pray for me'. They said, 'We cannot, because we have a commandment from our father not to pray with anyone who follows the Arians' – for they saw with the duke one of the Arians who was acting as bishop – and they left. So he prayed alone. And as he fell asleep in the synaxis by day, he woke up with a bleeding nose and was troubled – we do not know for sure what happened to him – and full of fear, he said, 'When that happened to me in the vision, I hardly escaped death with God's mercy.' Thus he withdrew. When Abba Theodore returned and heard these things, he gave praise to God." Pachomian Koinonia. The Life of Saint Pachomius and his disciples, Transl and introd. Armand Vielleux, 3 vols, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications Inc, 1980), Vol. 1, 395-397.

despite his Arian past. This may explain why he does not come out as a persecutor in the present story told in the *Life of Pachomios*.²⁵¹

Probably thanks to his successful miraculous healings Saint Artemios' fame spread far and wide and by the 5th century he was ascribed the honours due to doctor-saints and his relics were translated (or at least of his healing cult) to Constantinople. Supposedly, a deaconess named Ariane sent the relics to the capital perhaps with the intention of erecting a church in their honour. Instead of this, the relics ended up in the church of Saint John the Baptist, which was in all likelihood built by the Emperor Anastasios I (491-518 AD), hence the *translatio* could have taken place occurred in the last years of the 5th century at the earliest.²⁵² In this version of his story, his Arian past may have become forgotten to such an extent that in the 7th century the collection of his miraculous cures Arians were fiercely attacked along with other heretics and non-Christians.

What is known of Artemios from the historical sources? In AD 356 the Emperor Constantine commissioned him to bring the relics of the Apostle Timothy to Constantinople and a year later those of Andrew and Luke. From 360 AD Artemios was a *doux* of Egypt. In this quality and also as a zealous Christian he took part in profaning the Serapieion of Alexandria, in the destruction of the cult objects and votive offerings. Hearing the account of the numerous denunciations of his behaviour, Julian sentenced him to death²⁵³ although nothing indicates that he died as a martyr. A note by Ammianus Marcellinus from the 4th century AD rather suggests he was a criminal²⁵⁴, just as the Church History of Theodoret from the mid-5th century (ca 444-450 AD) mentioned the destruction of pagan sculptures, only vaguely outlining the (Arian) story of the martyrdom, which was to be elaborated in the 5th century.²⁵⁵ Yet later "...the removal of the relics from Antioch to Constantinople implies that at some point Artemios had ceased to be venerated only among the Arians and had come to be recognized as a holy martyr among non-Arians as well. [...] The passage [of the two martyr-acts, claiming that Artemios received the *gift of cures*] suggests that during the 5th

²⁵¹ *Pachomian Koinonia*, 291-292, note 185.2; Without mentioning the vision, the story was also told in the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*, BoL 185a in *Pachomian Koinonia*, 182,

²⁵² Cf. Lennart Rydén, "Kyrkan som sjukhus. Om den helige Artemios' mirakler" *Religion och Bibel* 44 (1985), 3.

²⁵³ According to the – now lost – ecclesiastical history of the Arian Philostorgius, Julian's charge was far more grave (?), namely that Artemios, by the order of the Emperor Constantine, actively participated in the execution of Gallus. Cf. José Grosdidier de Matons, "Les *Miracula Sancti Artemii*: note sur quelques questions de vocabulaire" in: *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière. Antiquité, Païenne et Chrétienne*, eds. E. Lucchesi and H. D. Saffrey, 263-266, (Geneva: P. Cramer, 1984), 263. On the various versions of his *Passio* (also translated to Armenian, Georgian and Old Church Slavonic) see: S. Lieu, "From Villain to Saint and Martyr - Flavius Artemius Dux Aegypti" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20 (1996), 60-68, who emphasized that the *Passio* was surely written in Constantinople by a certain John the Monk, whose identification with John of Damascus by John of Rhodes still lacks secure foundation.

²⁵⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XXII, 11: "...Artemius ex duce Aegypti Alexandrinis urgentibus atrocium criminum mole supplicio capitali multatus est." Cf. Nesbitt, "Introduction", 1.

²⁵⁵ On the variants of the Artemios-martyria, esp. on the role of Apollon and Asclepius see Nesbitt, 2-6; on p. 28, note 3: "Theodoret states that Artemios 'smashed most of the idols' and for this reason Julian 'not only stripped him of his property' but had him beheaded." This statement is similar to the description of Artemios' fate as it is found in the year AD 363 in the *Chronicon Paschale*: "And Artemios, who was the *doux* of the diocese Egypt, since in the period of his office

century Artemios came to be credited with the working of medical miracles; hence, - says Nesbitt – it was Artemios' reputation as a worker of cures that led first to his acceptance among non-Arians and eventually to the translation of his relics to Constantinople.”²⁵⁶ Though it remained unclear how and why exactly there, the relics of Artemios were placed in the church of Saint John the Baptist, in the Oxeia-quarter of the capital. This place was to become the scene of the incubation miracles which were collected and organized into a miracle-corpus in the 7th century. In the field of ritual healing Artemios specialized²⁵⁷ in curing male hernias²⁵⁸ – while the female patients were treated by his less prominent colleague, Saint Febronia.²⁵⁹

The church of Saint John the Baptist in the Oxeia²⁶⁰ lay close to what is today the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul: “the name of the quarter derives from the hill's steep declivity toward the Golden Horn.... The church was situated opposite the Bath of Dagistheos, a complex which began to arise during the reign of Anastasius, but was not opened until 528. ... the Bath was not very far from St. John's and very likely situated along the Mese, the broad avenue leading to the Hippodrome, to the east of Constantine's Forum”²⁶¹ - while the collection itself supplies evidence that in the vicinity of the church there was a hospital or hospice²⁶² which had physicians and assistants, offering hospital care and must have been of some importance.

under Constantius the Augustus of blessed memory he had displayed great zeal on the behalf of the churches, had his property confiscated and his head cut off in the Alexandrian city, since Julian had a grudge against him.”

²⁵⁶ Nesbitt, “Introduction”, 4.

²⁵⁷ Specialization was not unheard of among either the ancient Greeks or Christian cultic healers. Cosmas and Damian for example were known at the beginning of their careers as experts in curing barren women. Saint Euphrosyne likewise specialized against infertility, (AASS Nov. 3. 861-877), Saint Anastasia dealt with mental patients cf. Michel Kaplan, “Le miracle est-il nécessaire au saint byzantin?”, in *Miracle et Karama*, ed. D. Aigle, (Turnhout: Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 2000), 174, while Saint Modestos a veterinarian, on the occasion of an incubation by Cosmas and Damian directed the woman seeking a cure for her oxen to Modestos: “O woman, we are not allowed by God to work cures for animals, for this grace has been granted to Modestos, the great high priest from Jerusalem, if you will go to him he will cure your oxen.” Quote from the *Passio et Miracula Modesti* in Magoulas, “The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic,” 252. The Byzantine miracle collections attest that even if there was no absolute specialization, as in the case of Artemios, certain sanctuaries, saints and, cult places were more concerned in some illnesses than others.

²⁵⁸ A contemporary to the collector of the miracles, Paul of Aigina, a famous Alexandrian physician – professor and surgeon, in the VI. book 61-66. chapters of his medical encyclopaedia gave full details of the various forms of hernias and a hernia-operation, cf. Rydén, “Kyrkan som sjukhus”, 5.

²⁵⁹ Saint Febronia was from Nisibis and suffered martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian. On her *Passio* see J. Simon, “Note sur l'original de la Passion de Sainte Fébronie” *Analecta Bollandiana* 42 (1924), 69-76 and F. Halkin, “La Passion grecque des Saintes Libyè, Eutropie et Léonis, martyres à Nisibe” *Analecta Bollandiana* 76 (1958), 295; The English translation of her *Vita* with commentary: S. P. Brock, and S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); more on her *Vita*: P. Chiesa, *Le versioni latine della Passio Sanctae Febroniae* Spoleto, 1990, 368-395.

²⁶⁰ On the church: N. H. Baynes, “Topographica Constantinopolitana” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 31 (1911), 266-267; Paul Maas, “Artemioskult in Konstantinopel.” *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* I (1920), 377-380; R. Janin, *La Géographie Ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantine*. vol. 3.: Les Églises et les Monastères, 58; 433-434; Cyril Mango, “On the History of the *Templon* and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople” *Zograf* 10 (1979); J.-P. Sordini, “Les cryptes d'autel paléochrétiennes: essai de classification” *Travaux et Mémoires* 8 (1981), 440-443; Nesbitt, Introduction, 8-19; the architectural plan of the church: Mango, “On the History of the *Templon*”, 42, Nesbitt-Crisafulli, 319.

²⁶¹ Nesbitt, Introduction, 8.

²⁶² the Cristodotes hospital.

The last known mention of the church comes from the end of the 11th century, but the healing cult of the saint underwent a change sometime earlier: “It may be worth pointing out that there is no mention of the martyrion of St. Artemios as a centre of healing after the period of the Iconoclasm and that in Byzantine iconography the Saint is normally portrayed as a warrior having, for some obscure reason, the features of Christ, not as a physician.”²⁶³ (The warrior attributes may already be observed in the dream epiphanies recorded in the miracle collection.) Nesbitt, on the basis of some indications dropped here and there in the miracles suggested that the church, having seen better days, became delapidated both architecturally and financially by the second half of the 7th century when the collection was written. According to this hypothesis, attendance at the cult place did not go hand in hand with an abundance of votive gifts, which may be explained by the fact that the church was mostly frequented by simple folk.

What is known about the incubation practiced here? Artemios, unlike the other healers relying upon ritual sleep, did not inherit an incubation cult site. Nothing was known about the Antiochian beginnings of his miraculous healings, not even what the medium of healing was. At the time his cult came to Constantinople, temple sleep was a widely popular practice at the cult places of the capital. Grosdidier de Matons was also of the opinion that the incubation cult of Artemios was established based on the model of the practice in the Cosmidion. He emphasized that unlike the great incubation churches, the worshippers of Artemios were only allowed to sleep in the left nave, which was locked off during the night with bars. Rydén plausibly argued that the right nave was designed for the use of women, in what might have been the place of the chapel of S. Febronia.²⁶⁴

Incubation also took place in the most famous church, the church of Mary of the Blachernai. Another incubation saint, Therapon, functioned near this church. Thecla’s Constantinopolitan incubation church was located in this quarter. The reknown of Saint Cosmas and Damian of the Blachernai should also be mentioned of course, as well as the famous incubation place of Saint Michael in the nearby Sositheneum.

One of the characteristics of Saint Artemios’s cult practice was that the votive offering presented before the incubation mostly consisted of an oil-lamp lit in honour of the saint which the patients placed most often in the church, perhaps next to the relics but in his home as well. Incubation was supposedly practiced on the night between Saturday and Sunday, following the vigil of Saturday evening, but apparently this rule was not always strictly adhered to by patients. The Saturday night vigil was one of the most important “institutions” in the cult place. There were organized members and Saturday night was the time the thaumaturgic wax (holy lamp-oil) was

²⁶³ Mango, “On the History of the *Templon*”, 41. The reproduction and interpretation of a 10th century image of Artemios: Karl Lehmann, “Ein Reliefbild des Heiligen Artemios in Konstantinopel” *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* I (1920), 381-384; Artemios depicted in a group of saints, together with the saints Cosmas and Damian and Saint George and Saint John the Baptist among others: Nikos A. Bees, “Weiteres zum Kult des heiligen Artemios” *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* I (1920), 384-385.

distributed and in all likelihood this was the occasion when the miracle stories were told and listened to.

In the period after the miracle collection was put together, Lennart Rydén has observed a conspicuously lack of continuation of the Artemios cult. He sought an answer for the alleged disappearance of his incubation practice in that “Artemios did not belong to the great and well known saints, that his cult lacked social standing, that his healing activity was valid almost exclusively for a single illness, about which one was unwilling to speak.”²⁶⁵

The miracle collection of Artemios

The corpus of Artemios²⁶⁶ is relatively easy to date and interpret within the context of the saint’s healing cult, because this was a single group of texts,²⁶⁷ which was written around AD 658-668 (probably with a larger insertion around AD 692) in Constantinople. It contains 45 miracles by the saint that took place at his cult place in the capital. In Artemios’ case, there was no rival cultic predecessor; we hear only in passing about the competition between the saintly healers of the city. The focus of the text, without long digressions, events pertaining to the church, moving between strictly set chronological boundaries. The hagiographer probably was officially associated with both the saint and the cult place as one of the staff of the temple. Some scholars have suggested that he himself might have been a physician. He described the physical characteristics of illnesses and of the cures using a professional terminology, and showed himself to be familiar and a far from impartial critic of the contemporary medical guild of Constantinople.²⁶⁸ The fervent invectives against doctors, and non-Orthodox Christians, heretics and, Jews is a particular mark of the collection. In their evaluation, in contrast to the editors of the text, I have followed John Haldon who regards these

²⁶⁴ Cf. Rydén, “Kyrkan som sjukhus”, 7-8; also Lieu, “From Villain to Saint”, 56.

²⁶⁵ Rydén’s further arguments concerning the possible causes included economic instability and the phenomenon that Artemios was primarily the patron of merchants and artisans in the capital, not of aristocrats. His other speculation sounds less convincing, namely that with time Byzantines became more shamed in matters surrounding hernias. Cf. Rydén, “Kyrkan som sjukhus”, 13-14.

²⁶⁶ First published by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia graeca sacra*, 1-75. Saint Petersburg: at the University, 1909; the second edition is by Nesbitt – Crisafulli, the third edition and French translation is under preparation by Vincent Déroch.

²⁶⁷ The situation was, in fact, more complex: “Whether the collection in the form edited by Papadopoulos-Kerameus from the manuscripts he employed should be treated as a unified body or not is a debatable issue ... Several scholars have noted inconsistencies in the collection, although none has yet undertaken a thorough analysis of the text as a whole.” Haldon, “Supplementary Essay”, 33. On the two possible ways of dividing the collection see Haldon, “Supplementary Essay”, 34-35.

²⁶⁸ In order to do this he himself must have been a trained physician can be contradicted on the basis of Scarborough’s Introduction in DOP 38, p. x-xi.: “Literary sources further verify the typical presupposition of a sophisticated medical knowledge, widely diffused among the upper strata of the Byzantine Empire; such medicine was practiced by skilled professionals, well schooled in the theory of medicine.” The following examples are illustrative: Procopius’ *Wars* and *Anecdota* contain numerous instances of medical knowledge, often on a rather high level; Photius’ review of important books include Dioscorides, among other medical authors. Psellus’ *Chronographia* provides details of the illness and death of Romanus III, based on close acquaintance with technical medical theory and approaches to treatment; Anna Comnena’s *Alexiad* not only contained many examples of medicine and medical learning, but also the “death scene” of

short sermons attached to the miracle narratives as being different in content and form from the stories appearing as later insertions. The existence and tone of these sermons indicate that the miracles were (also) read as part of the liturgy in the church. One of the signal characteristics of the collection is that the hagiographer, who intimately knew the city, depicted a vivid picture of everyday existence in Constantinople, of the ordinary events of life and customs. He certainly did not limit himself to occurrences around the church or those pertaining to the religious sphere. Given that the stories are about events that took place in the hagiographer's time and in his immediate surroundings he was able to employ details in a way that acquaints the reader with the labyrinth of the streets and merchants of Constantinople, into the network of circumstances surrounding the patients' family life and their economic situation or the particulars of his or her work. Attention of course was also given to the traditions characteristic of the church, as well as to its interior. The patients of Artemios were typically from Constantinople, often already connected to the church in some manner (as a member of the all-night vigil fraternity, for instance). Patients coming from afar were usually merchants, sailors, ship-owners.

There were other Byzantine saints, who healed with incubation too which I will enumerate here. However, for these saints incubation was either not their primary medium or, as in the case of Saint Dometios, there are scarce extant sources about their activity. Without addressing any of the issues of these saints' cult or miracle collections, I give only the briefest introduction.

Minor incubation saints

Saint Dometios

Saint Dometios, a 4th century minor incubation healer saint has a rather complex legend in view of the variety in the dogmatic standing of his cult.²⁶⁹ According to his Syriac *Vita* the saint was once cured miraculously near a hill called Cyrrhus and from that time onwards he also practiced this thaumaturgic gift. Based on the testimony of the Greek *Vita*, Dometios once went to the martyrion of Saint Cosmas and Damian in the town of Cyrrhus (in northern Syria, near Aleppo), where he encountered a patient who had practiced incubation for long time there to no avail. Dometios suggested to him that instead of incubation he should take the Eucharist and when he did finally achieved a cure for him.

One scholar explained the dichotomy between the two Cyrrhus saying that Dometios may have had a *Nestorian* healing cult on Cyrrhus *hill* in juxtaposition to the *monophysite* healing cult of Cosmas and Damian in the *city* of Cyrrhus. We learn from a *sermo* of Severus of Antioch (from AD

Alexius Commenus, which suggested a long-standing awareness of therapeutics and medical theory; John Tzetzēs' *Letters* display deeply embedded expertise in "ancient" medical writings, particularly Galen. ..."

²⁶⁹ M. Parmentier, "Incubatie in de antieke hagiografie" In *De heiligenverering in de eerste eeuwen van het christendom* Ed. A. Hilhorst, 27-40 (Nimègue: Dekker and Van de Vegt, 1988).

514) that in his time there was a Monophysite church of Saint Dometios in Antioch where incubation was practiced. Severus wrote that Dometios was from Cyrrhus and contrasted him to the “Nestorian” Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus (423-457 AD). Out of this hagiographical chaos the most likely conclusion may well be that a Nestorian incubation cult was first formed around Dometios to counterbalance the nearby Monophysite dream healing cult of Cosmas and Damian. With the passing of time, the figure of Dometios was “re-programmed” by the monophysites. Thus, he became a converted former Nestorian they could use in their fights with Theodoret. Incubation played an important role in both cases; either the negative approach of the Greek *Vita* or the positive one of the Syriac *Life*.

The *London Codex* of Cosmas and Damiana contains a valuable miracle story illustrating that the rivalry between cult places could be expressed not only in terms of different healers – for that latter hagiography offers countless examples. Often the saints themselves directed their worshippers to another’s saint sphere of competence. The fact that cultic healers were often specialized lay behind this re-distribution of clientele. Saint Artemios dealt only with male hernias, directing his female patients to Saint Febronia. In miracle 18 of the London Codex an eye patient started to practice incubation in Cyrrhus in the Syrian church of Cosmas and Damian (without any evidence about the theological standing of this church, this place was probably the starting point of cult). But the saints appeared in a dream to the patient and directed him to their other church in Constantinople. The shift in emphasis within the same cult of saints can be explained by change in theological power-relations (e. g. as Arianism overshadowed) but cannot be excluded that the change was related to the growing popularity of the thaumaturgic centre in the capital (and simply conforming to the customary way incubation was practiced there) and not the opposition of orthodoxies.²⁷⁰

Saint Therapon

The only document that has come down to us concerning Saint Therapon, whose telling name means “Healer”, is an encomium of his miracles,²⁷¹ compiled around 695-710 by Andrew of Crete, although little can be learned about the saint himself from this text. In all likelihood Therapon was a Cyprian bishop in the 3rd century who suffered martyrdom. His remains were rescued from attacking barbarians in the 650s and were brought to one of the churches of the Holy Virgin in

²⁷⁰ Paul Peeters in his article “S. Dometios le martyr et S. Dometios le médecin” *Analecta Bollandiana* 57 (1939), 72-104 distinguished two Dometios: the healer of Mount Cyrrhus was Saint Dometios the Physician, in the town of Cyrrhus, and Saint Dometios the Martyr or the Persian. Yet their two legends complement each other; in Peeters’ view the hagiographer of the less well known Dometios the Physician consciously referred to the town of Cyrrhus in order to recall in the reader the figures and the efficacy of the famous *anargyroi*, Cosmas and Damian. The hagiographer of Dometios the Persian, on the other hand, dated the activity of his Dometios earlier, urged on by the – by that time significant – popularity of Dometios the Physician, as well as by a sense of rivalry.

²⁷¹ *Laudatio Therapontis*, Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 113-134.

Constantinople to,²⁷² probably the church of Mary in the Blachernai, (i. e. in the immediate neighbourhood of the church of Cosmas and Damian and also that of Thecla, both located in the Blachernai quarter). The patients of Therapon practiced incubation and holy wax and lamp-oil also often figured among his prescriptions.²⁷³ That incubation was practiced in the church of Mary in the Blachernai, is attested in the *Vita* of Irene of Chrysobalantion as well.²⁷⁴ According to John Haldon, “Therapon’s cult was also an incubation healing cult, whose centre was located in the Zotikos foundation in the Pera region across the Golden Horn.”²⁷⁵ M-F. Auzépy has pointed out that Therapon, just as Artemios, was likely to have been Egyptian in origin, or was in some way closely connected to Egypt, since there was an Egyptian martyr specialized in curing rabies who went by the name of Tarabô.²⁷⁶

Isaiah

Still in the Blachernai quarter, in the church of Saint Laurence, the prophet Isaiah also acted as a minor incubation healer.²⁷⁷ (It may be the indication of rivalry between incubation places within the same quarter that one of the protagonists in Cosmas and Damian’s miracles was affiliated with the church of Saint Laurence but nevertheless went to the Cosmidion.)

In other words, the prophet was degraded or promoted to martyr status and his relics deposited in this church. The surviving manuscript of his miracles dates from the 12th century. In this manuscript the hagiographer stated that he was recording contemporary miracles to which he (the hagiographer) was an eyewitness. However, it is not clear what era would have been contemporary to him. The 19 miracle-narratives are quite Epidaurian in character!

Saint Michael

The Archangel Michael may also be numbered among the Byzantine incubation healers— but since there are no surviving miracle collections which can be connected to his activities as a dream healer, it becomes necessary to rely on indications in other texts regarding his cult site. He was honoured as a healer in Egypt, in the Phrygian towns of Colosse and Hierapolis, where Asclepius and Hygeia had previously been worshipped.²⁷⁸ Interestingly enough in the Arabic version of Cosmas

²⁷² on Therapon’s church in Constantinople cf. Janin, *Géographie Ecclésiastique*, 255, ref. in Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*..., 172

²⁷³ Hippolyte Delehaye, “Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints” *Analecta Bollandiana* 43 (1925), 38-39.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Kaplan, “Le miracle est-il nécessaire au saint byzantin?”, 174; *Life of Irene, abbess of Chrysobalantion*, edited and transl. J. O. Rosenqvist, (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1986), 29-38.

²⁷⁵ Haldon, “Supplementary Essay”, 34.

²⁷⁶ Marie-France Auzépy, “La carrière d’André de Crète” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88 (1995), 1-12.

²⁷⁷ Delehaye, “Les recueils antiques”, 39-40; the Greek collection of the miracles was also published by Delehaye: *Analecta Bollandiana* 42, (1924), 257-265.

²⁷⁸ Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 65.

and Damian's Syriac legend, Saint Michael saved Cosmas and Damian together with their three brothers.²⁷⁹

There are several pieces of evidence that an incubation cult of Michael existed in the place called Sosthenium ("Being saved"), near Constantinople. The ecclesiastical histories of Sozomenos from around AD 440 and those of Nicephoros preserved some of Archangel Michael's incubation miracles as well.²⁸⁰ The name Sosthenium refers to the *soter* aspect of the occupant of the cult place – both A. Maury and L. Deubner have suggested that Michael was not the first incubation healer in the church that had been renewed by Constantine, who saw in a dream the archangel in the form a cult-statue, dressed in a garb similar to the hooded garment of monks.²⁸¹ Some saw in the cult predecessor of the site the Argonauts, while others hold that the Sosthenium was a different site, not to be identified with the location of the church of Michael.²⁸² It cannot be mere chance that there is an encomium to Michael at the end of the *London Codex* containing the miracles of Cosmas and Damian.

Saint Demetrios

Demetrios should also be mentioned along with other incubation healers; the early martyr lists connected him to Sirmium, yet from the 6th century his figure became entwined in texts with the town of Thessalonice.²⁸³ This connection with Thessalonice was to become the backdrop to the partially incubation miracles surrounding his relics. Three different pictures emerge about the circumstances of Demetrios' life and death in his three surviving *Vitae*. Accordingly, it may have been that in his rage, Emperor Maximian had him executed in Thessalonice. Demetrios was sometimes introduced as being of humble origin and he was portrayed as a noble senator or general. His miracles may be grouped as follows:²⁸⁴ I. a collection of 15 miracles by Bishop John of Thessalonice. These stories are, for the most part, incubation miracles from the first part of the 7th

²⁷⁹ The Arabic legend was published by Yūhannā Sulaimān, *Tuḥfat aṣ-ṣamān fī sirat-al-farisāin Quṣṣamān wa Damyan*. Cairo, 1926; its summary is in Crum, "Place-Names in Deubner's Kosmas und Damian" *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* 30 (1908), 45-52 and Van Esbroeck, "La diffusion orientale", 65-66.

²⁸⁰ Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II. 3. 10-12 (PG 67, 940ff), Nicephoros Callistus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII 50 (PG 145, 1329ff); cf. Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 65; and Sansterre, "Apparitions", 72.

²⁸¹ Deubner's conjecture was (*De Incubatione*, 66) that the figure was Thelesphoros, "who brings the end" the hooded companion of Asclepius. (About representations of Thelesphoros and on his relationship with Asclepius see C. Kerényi, Asklepios, 88-90 and his "Telesphoros: Zum Verstandes Etruskischer, griechischer, and keltioch Germanischer Damongestalten" *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny*, LV11 (1933) 156 ff.) Deubner's other suggestions for possible healer-predecessors include the Argonauts, Apollon Iasonius, Serapis or right away a local healer called Sosthenes.

²⁸² "The first of these places was also called Hestiae, where there was a Church of St. Michael, built by Constantine, not to be confounded with that of Sosthenion (=Laosthenion), now Stenia, north of Rumili Hissar." wrote J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, (London: Macmillan, 1923), 442, note 101.

²⁸³ About how his cult changed places see: Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires*, (Paris: Librairie A. Picard, 1909), 103-108.

²⁸⁴ The first two are edited and commented by: Paul Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius* 2 vols. (Paris: CNRS, 1979 =Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca 499-523.); all the three versions are in: PG 116, 1081-1426. A good overview on the collections and on the saint's figure is given by: Delehaye, "Les recueils antiques", 57-64.

century; II. a group of anonymous miracles from the end of the 7th century, comprising six long miracles, III. a likewise anonymous miracle catalogue from the first half of the 10th century, with some further incubation miracles. Thessalonice lay at the centre of this collection including the calamities that fell on the town and its inhabitants. Besides information on the illnesses and the catastrophes of wars this last collection provided rich historical details concerning Slavic attacks. By the 10th century, Demetrios had chiefly become a warrior saint. In his attributes and often in his representations he was placed next to Saint George. However, I consider his miracle narratives, thought incubation stories, differing greatly from the other dream-healing collections because they speak more of the language of Byzantine hagiography more familiar from elsewhere than the language of incubation narratives with their ancient heritage.

To some extent, Saint Luke of Steiris, Boiotia, should also be numbered among the ancient practitioners of incubation. His *Vita*, written by an anonymous monk some time in the 960s contained among his posthumous miracles some cases of incubation. It was attested that temple sleep was rather a ubiquitous means of worship, not one confined exclusively to certain cults. His miracles provided variants of the hitherto discussed modes of ritual sleep. Mir. 13 informs us that according to the cult practice of the place, it was necessary for the patient not only to sleep near the tomb of the saint but also be the only one to sleep there, while another miracle (mir. 10) revealed an alternative mode of incubation, not alien to the previously mentioned collections either²⁸⁵ where the patient practiced incubation in his dream although they were actually situated far from the church (while visiting the saint's tomb in imagination the patient prayed that they would be able to visit the tomb once they were healed).²⁸⁶ Marco Dorati has added some other saints who had a partial incubation function; he speaks of Hagios Nikolaos as “santo, tra l'altro, guaritore, e nella cui chiesa in Constantinopoli si praticava l'incubazione...”²⁸⁷ Saint Menas also was credited with a few of incubation miracles, and it is worth mentioning Saint Stephen, whose 20 miracles are candidates to be the earliest ones, from the beginning of the 5th century AD.²⁸⁸

In locating the place of Christian incubation in the changing religious landscape Dorati also pointed out a parallel also mentioned at the beginning of the dissertation, namely, that the pagan Greek heritage served as a background to Christian practice in the same way as Christianity would later stand against the Islamic incubation practice:

Per il suo legame particolarmente forte con Asclepio – il rivale di Cristo più tenacemente avversato dai padri della chiesa – l'incubazione doveva essere in origine sentita come una pratica troppo compromessa, troppo ‘pagana’, per essere pacificamente assorbita nel quadro della nuova religiosità. Non è un caso che i padri di

²⁸⁵ Thecla's hagiographer recorded a dream when he had been dreaming that he was practicing incubation MT12.

²⁸⁶ Carolyn L. Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium: The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and Its Frescoes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 98.

²⁸⁷ Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi”, 94, note 17: on the basis of the *in vita* miracles, referring to Gustav Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos, der Heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913-1917), vol. I, 3ff.

²⁸⁸ *Patrologia Latina* 41 coll. 833-854; Cf. Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi”, 96-97, note 21 for incubation saints on the West.

chiesa abbiano mostrato un atteggiamento nel complesso ostile nei confronti della pratica, e che fino al V secolo non sembrano esistere tracce di incubazione cristiana [...] Si noti come anche nel mondo islamico l'incubazione fu sempre condannata e guardata con sospetto dai più ortodossi per il suo legame con il passato preislamico.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Dorati, "Funzioni e motivi", 95, note 19.

PART II

THE SOURCES: COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY

Chapter 3: Material Sources

1. The ex votos

In the church of the Madonna di Rimedio near Oristano, Sardinia, [...] on a votive photograph glued onto a piece of cardboard a soldier is portrayed in his Sunday best, standing before a back-drop which shows Saint Peter in Rome. A life-size wooden model of an ear is fastened with a ribbon to the corner of the photograph. When a man, either ancient or modern, thanks his god for a cure by offering an acute replica of the part, which had been afflicted, he may be overcome by an acute awareness of the vulnerability of his mortal body, perhaps even heightened at the sight of numerous similar dedications in the sanctuary.²⁹⁰

The closeness of the supplicants in Antiquity to their local deities is reflected in their humble votive offerings, placed in the local shrines with care, conveying the intimacy and devotion incorporated within these simple objects. Though the written and archaeological testimonies tend to be more concerned with the great and famous temples of Antiquity, the faithful paid no less tribute to their local protecting divinities, and even the humble shrines of the nymphs and heroes were full of simple objects of thanksgiving.²⁹¹

Among the situations of life that provided occasion for thanksgiving, recovery from an illness was of overwhelming importance. The temples of the healing gods and heroes were thus the prime repositories for votive tablets of both modest and lavish gifts. For the Greeks of Antiquity from the 5th-4th centuries BC, one of the centres of the Asclepieian miraculous healing was Epidaurus. Strabo summarised the essence of this site in the following words: “Epidaurus, too, is an important city, and particularly because of the fame of Asclepius, who is believed to cure diseases of every kind and always has his temple full of the sick, and also of the votive tablets on which the treatments are recorded, just as at Cos and Tricce.”²⁹² Lynn LiDonnici has carried out a masterly analysis of the formation of the *Iamata*, the Epidaurian collection of the miraculous dream cures of Asclepius, from the votive material and from the oral tradition around the sanctuary as source material.²⁹³ The *Iamata* and the research on its compositional history supply the study of Christian incubation records with rich parallels, for two reasons. First, the ancient practice of incubation devolved into the early Christian cult of the saints, and at the same time the process of the formation

²⁹⁰ F. T. Van Straten, “Gifts for the Gods” In *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* Ed. H. S. Versnel, 97-151 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 112. The picture was observed and described by R. Kriss, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 60 (1957), 101, Abb. 4.

²⁹¹ “Indeed, because of the closeness and familiarity of the local deities, he could have felt more at his ease with them. He could submit all his daily worries to them and, out of gratitude for their help and protection, their shrines were too crowded with gifts which may have been of less value, but were presented with no less piety than the ones in the larger sanctuaries.” Van Straten, “Gifts”, 79.

²⁹² Strabo, VIII 6, 15. transl. H. Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library, (London: W. Heinemann, 1936).

²⁹³ Lynn R. LiDonnici, “Tale and Dream: The Text and Compositional History of the Corpus of Epidaurian Miracle Cures” (Ph. D. dissertation: University of Pennsylvania, 1989); and *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions. Text, Translation and*

of the miracle tales into a textual corpus was also similar. Hence, the understanding the role ancient *ex votos* played both as sources and in shaping the narrative will provide a good point of departure and comparison into research on analogous Christian records.

The varieties of ancient Greek and early Christian votive offerings

Any object could be used as a votive gift and indeed an enormous variety of examples have been found in Greek and Christian sanctuaries. Rouse, in his *Greek Votive Offerings*, classified these offerings into four groups: 1, the image of the deliverer – the statues and statuettes in the image of the god were not dedicated for healing by private individuals at early date, but rather by cities; in the case of Asclepius snake offerings (as an epiphany of the god) also enter this category; 2, an image of the person delivered from illness, (statues only appearing after the late 4th century BC); 3, a representation of the act or process of healing; 4, Miscellaneous objects including a wide and exotic variety of – not only objects but sometimes persons as well. A healed child or a child born to a previously infertile couple could be given as an offering, among both Greeks and later early Christians. Neither was the practical sense wanting, with plenty of useful objects offered including medical tools, restoration work, carpentry in the temple, food to feed the sick, or money cover the expenses of a ceremony.²⁹⁴

The material may also be grouped into categories: wood, clay or precious metal were all used, and what is more, their usage points to local preferences at the different sanctuaries. The same typology has been found in early Christian votive objects.²⁹⁵ In the healing sanctuary of Asclepius in Corinth, terracotta model limbs gave way to silver anatomical votives, dedicated in the Corinthian church of Cosmas and Damian, until the 20th century.²⁹⁶ These anatomical votives may represent the sick²⁹⁷ or the healed body part. Mary Hamilton saw in all (both Greek and Christian) anatomical votives the representations of the sick limbs, before the cure: “... an image of the member to be healed was up in the neighbourhood of the god’s statue, as a sort of guide for the deity.”²⁹⁸

Votive plaques could also serve as memorial objects, veritable guides for the deity, as Callimachus teasing poem attests: “Know that you have received the debt, Asclepios, which Akesson

Commentary (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1995), “Compositional Background” 20-82, especially the part “Source Material for Tales” 40-49; and Herzog, *Wunderheilungen*, 56-57.

²⁹⁴ W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings. An Essay in the History of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 208-209.

²⁹⁵ In Corinth, for instance, the terracotta anatomical votives were cherished; clay and wooden tablets (*pinakes*, or *sanides*) were frequently dedicated, e. g. in Samothrake and Lebena. (For their modern interpretation and examples of the ancient (inscriptional and literary) references to them see Dorati, “Funzioni e motive”, 92, esp. note 12 and 99.) From Athens, Piraeus or Oropos numerous elaborately carved stone reliefs survived. The material could be secondary to what it represented, anatomical *ex votos* were in use in all over the Mediterranean.

²⁹⁶ Cf. Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Ancient Corinth* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1977), 31. This little book contains a rich photographic material on terracotta anatomical *ex votos*.

²⁹⁷ Such as the silver milt, the dedication of which survived from the Tiber Island, from the 1st c. (or 2nd) AD: Girone, *Iamata*, 154-156, also for further reading on anatomical votives.

²⁹⁸ Hamilton, *Incubation*, 86.

owed you because of his prayer for his wife Demodike; were you to forget and claim it a second time, the votive tablet will serve as evidence.”²⁹⁹ The frequency of dedicated model limbs may shed light onto locally occurring diseases, or the special competence of the temple.³⁰⁰ Specialization on a certain disease was certainly not unheard of, the hero Theogenes on Thasos, for example, was especially consulted for healing fevers. The Epidaurian practice probably included placing a clay tablet, with a figurative drawing of the limb and with a short text on it, comprising the patient’s name, hometown as well as the individual features of his illness and cure.³⁰¹

The temple personnel regularly removed these objects covering the walls of the sanctuary, in order to make room for newer ones. On such occasions the *ex votos* were recorded as can be seen in this official (i. e. priestly) dedication from the Athenian Asclepieion: “Nikomachus, a priest and physician dedicates a censer made out of old offerings melted down.”³⁰² In Athens there was a board of yearly elected temple personnel whose task was to inspect and catalogue the votives,³⁰³ and the office was of such authority that the name of its bearer (like the archons) often was inscribed on the inscriptions in order to date them. The latest found stele from the 4th century AD from the Athenian Asclepieia includes the actual priest and also gives an example for a son dedicating the votive on the behalf of his father:

Hegemachos, son of Krataimenes of Lamprta to Asclepius. Having suffered many terrible ills and seen many visions, [and] having been saved, Eurumedon, son of Hegemachos, dedicated [this] to Asclepius and Hygeia, under the priest Theophilus.³⁰⁴

Aelianus wrote about the votive catalogues themselves, circumspectly mentioning, “the catalogues indicated the missing votive offerings and so did the empty spaces where the votive offerings had been set up.”³⁰⁵

Another typology of votive offerings focuses on their function. The purpose of such dedications was always to honour the deity, either as thanks for his or her help given already, or in order implore future protection. These twofold aims of the practice were similar to the motivations for offering sacrifices, as Theophrastos formulated it.³⁰⁶ Cult objects, which expressed the help received or the miracle experienced by those who dedicated them, represented the so-called

²⁹⁹ Callimachus, *Anthologia Palatina* VI, 147, in Van Straten, “Gifts”, 71.

³⁰⁰ In Lebena on Crete, for example, it is conspicuous the great number of those who were healed of eye-diseases, while from Corinth (contrary to the numerous feet, for instance) hardly any eye came down to us.

³⁰¹ For a short stylistical introduction to the basic elements see Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi,” 93, note 13; for its typologization on the basis of the inscriptions from the Tiber Island cf. Rüttimann, “Asclepius and Jesus”, 59.

³⁰² See for example one of the “official”, i. e. priestly dedication of the Athenian Asclepieion: in Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 206 (=CIA ii. 836). For an elaborate survey on such material see Sara B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asclepieion: Their People, Their Dedications, and Their Inventories* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1989).

³⁰³ Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 198.

³⁰⁴ Girone, Iamata, 36-38, English translation Johnson, *The Life and Miracles*, 205.

³⁰⁵ Aelianus, *De Natura Animalium* VII. 13: T 489.

³⁰⁶ *Peri ensebeias* Fr. 12. cf Van Straten, “Gifts”, 66, distinguishing between sacrifice and offering, he defines the first as edible, the latter as non-edible.

acknowledgement votive, while offerings made before the manifest divine intervention were the invocational votives. Though in Antiquity thanksgiving votives were more common, invocational votives may also be found in the Asclepian practice. A curious instance is a votive from the Athenian sanctuary of Asclepius: the first part of the inscription was the invocation; the second one contained the acknowledgement.³⁰⁷

The use of many of the above-mentioned votives was continued by early Christians.³⁰⁸ The principal destinations for Christian pilgrims were at first in the lands of the Bible. Occasionally, the journey itself (also) meant the fulfilment of a vow; besides these places, pilgrims, with many among them seeking cures, hastened to far-famed ascetics and miracle-working saints, and left behind gifts that hardly differed in their colourfulness of ancient *ex votos*: "... ornaments in vast numbers, which hung from iron rods: armlets, bracelets, rings, tiaras, plaited girdles, belts, emperors' crowns of gold and precious stones, and the insignia of an empress" – thus the Piacenza pilgrim described around 570 the votive objects placed at the Holy Grave.³⁰⁹

Interestingly, there was a group of anatomical votives made out of small silver plaques, from northern Syria from the 6th century AD,³¹⁰ with large eyes moulded on them, some of which belonged the invocational type, with the inscription "Lord, help, Amen," while others of the acknowledgement type, with the words "In fulfilment of a vow". In early Byzantine art the testimonies of pilgrimage and personal devotional art are overwhelmingly more common in the form of objects beseeching help or tokens or *eulogiai* endowed with miraculous power. Anatomical votives can also be found among the multiplicity of votives rendering thanks for healing. Theodoret of Cyrrhus confirmed that the practice was not at all unusual in Byzantium: "Christians came to the martyrs to implore them to be their intercessors. That they obtained what they so earnestly prayed for is clearly proven by their votive gifts, which proclaim the healing. Some brings images of eyes, others feet, others hands, which sometimes are made of gold, sometimes of wood..."³¹¹

An incised bronze cross connected to Saint Thecla, from Syria from the 6th or 7th century AD, represents an example of the invocational votive. The cross, which is now at Dumbarton Oaks, may have been placed into a wall or column, probably in a shrine or chapel dedicated to Thecla. In the upper centre there is a bust-portrait of Thecla as intercessor, in the orans position, while an

³⁰⁷ The dedication of the temple servant Diofantos is in Girone, *Iamata*, 31-34.

³⁰⁸ On Christian votive gifts cf. Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*, (Münster : Regensburg, 1950), 398ff; Gary Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982); and Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic," 66-67.

³⁰⁹ The Piacenza Pilgrim, *Travels*, 18 (around 570 AD) in: Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 44.

³¹⁰ in the Walters Art Gallery; Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 57. 1865. 560, fig. 38 in Vikan's *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 45, and fig. 1 in his "Art, Medicine", 66 but apparently he gives the same number (and image?) to both types.

³¹¹ Theodoret, *Graecorum Affectionum Curatio* 8, 64 translation from Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 45-46.

invocation on behalf of four dedicators was written across its surface: “St. Thekla, help Symionis and Synesios and Mary and Thekla.”³¹²

The pilgrim-graffiti, inscriptions beseeching help – even without the votive objects – often bear important witness to the circumstances under which the saints were implored.³¹³ For example, the invocation of a sick woman in a graffito from Abydos attests that Cyrus was invoked together with Cosmas and Damian and Saint Kollonthos.³¹⁴

The ubiquitous presence of the votives, the way they covered the temple walls, their colours, varieties of form and not the least the cures they advertised, exercised a great impact on those who arrived at the sanctuary – not only aesthetically but in the psychological sense as well.³¹⁵

Ces ex-votos représentaient souvent en peinture ou en sculpture une scène ou un objet sur lesquels pouvaient travailler les facultés imaginatives des visiteurs ou des desservants du sanctuaire. Quelquefois ils étaient accompagnés d’une inscription, indiquant au moins le nom du miraculé et la grâce obtenue

– writes H. Delehay in an optimistic vein,³¹⁶ yet archaeological findings are surprisingly scarce and written sources referring to votives dedicated after healing are also rare.³¹⁷ In what follows, I shall investigate the way votives could be used as sources. Votives will not only be treated as testimonies or first hand material for textual recording but they themselves may be considered agents in shaping the miracle narrative.

The votive objects as sources

Votive gifts not simply bore witness to the miracles simply by their presence but they were closely connected with the direct representation of the cures, to their oral dissemination, their pictorial³¹⁸ and their textual recording. Lynn LiDonnici has demonstrated how it was possible to find in the *Iamata* tales the ex votos that served as a point of departure at the core of miraculous stories –

³¹² G. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 44.

³¹³ on these pilgrim graffiti cf. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage art*, 44.

³¹⁴ A. Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte des Byzantins aux Abbassides. L’apport des inscriptions et des papyrus grecs et coptes* (Paris: CNRS, 2001), 238.

³¹⁵ A literary description of such a visit in Herondas (ca. 250 BC) *IV. Mimiambos*, the women’s amazement in the Asclepieion of Cos: “– La! Cynno dear, what beautiful statues! What craftsman was it who worked this stone, and who dedicated it? – The sons of Praxiteles – only look at the letters on the base, and Euthies, son of Prexon, dedicated it. [...] – Only look, dear Cynno, what works are those there! See these, you would say, were chiselled by Athene herself – all hail, Lady! Look, this naked boy, he will bleed, will he not, if I scratch him, Cynno; for the flesh seems to pulse warmly as it lies on him in the picture....” (T 482)

³¹⁶ Hippolyte Delehay, *L’ancienne hagiographie byzantine. Les sources, les premiers modèles, la formation des genres* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1991) 62.

³¹⁷ Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage art*, 45.

³¹⁸ Two examples: on a Boiotian vase-painting next to a serpent there are suspended anatomical votives, which suggest that the image shows Asclepius and Hygeia (photo in Lang, *Cure and Cult*, 18; fig. 16); the other is the well-known relief of Archinos for the Amphiareion at Oropos (Athens, National Museum 3369) showing the double aspect of divine healing, the miraculous dream (in which the A. cures the patient’s shoulder) and parallel to this the sight from the outside: Archinos lying on a bed and while he is asleep, a serpent is licking his shoulder. That all this happens in the temple precinct, is indicated by a votive tablet behind the bed. More on the relief and also about the representation of

stories, which themselves went through repeated priestly redaction and were, with the passing of the years, re-copied and re-organised, receiving a new order as well as different emphasis. In this case, the rewriting of the stories from the votives indicates the development of a more and more compact, shorter form or miracle stories. Despite the *ad hoc* nature of the survival of the finds, from Epidaurus we occasionally have both the original votive and the *Iamata* inscription shaped on its basis. A large block of stone near to the sanctuary was found, bearing the following inscription:

Hermodicus of Lampsacus

As an example of your power, Asclepius, I have put up this rock which I had lifted up, manifest for all to see, an evidence of your art. For before coming under your hands and those of your children I was stricken by a wretched illness, having an abscess in my chest and being paralysed in my hands. But you, Paean, by ordering me to lift up this rock made me live free from disease.³¹⁹

This is a rare instance when one can compare the inscriptional evidence with that of priestly redaction and contrast what elements were retained or dropped and how the was re-moulded: “Hermodicus of Lampsacus was paralysed in body. This one, when he slept in the Temple, the god healed and he ordered him upon coming out to bring to the Temple as large a stone he could. The man brought the stone which now lies before the Abaton.” (T 423. 15.)

Due to the literary form of the *Iamata* itself, aiming at a condensed, concise rendering of carefully selected miracles, the ordinary is cast out from the story. The irrelevant abscess must go, the patient is not only paralysed in his hand but in his whole body; the “children of Asclepius” disappear from the scene, giving way to the single figure of the god, while the healing performed by the god’s hand is transformed into an explicit reference to incubation. Moreover, the means of the miraculous cure is referred to, with its exact location.³²⁰

Another characteristic of votive objects is what LiDonnici called ‘stock-influence’: the cured patient could select from the goods of craftsmen plying their wares around the cult place. The goods they offered were probably, more or less, stable, allowing for just some limited, occasional additions to the ready-made tablets. The form-repertoire of these votives and their inevitable uniformity represented an important source for the compilers of the miracle catalogues. Their presence in and around the temple was no less significant for the sick supplicants, still awaiting the cure, as they could

votive tablets on reliefs cf. F. T. van Straten, “Daikrates’ Dream: A Votive Relief from Kos, and Some Other Kat’Onar Dedications” *Bulletin antike Beschaving* 51 (1976): 4. esp. note 41.

³¹⁹ IG IV 1, 125. (3rd century BC) = T 431.

³²⁰ A detailed rendering of the text and the various interpretations concerning it are in Girone, *Iamata*, 53-55. The inscription on the large block of stone inscription (which weights between 334 – 240 kg!), as we have it today, dates back to cc. 200 BC, i.e. considerably later than the *Iamata*, yet no doubt ever emerged about the identity of their protagonist. V. Longo interpreted the discrepancy by regarding the inscription on the stone a later fabrication, to provide a proof for the *Iamata* story. (*Areologie*, p. 80); more convincingly argued Herzog, who saw in the later stone a substitute for a previous one, that was either disappeared-diminished during the centuries, or was originally considerably smaller, but none the less “real” in both cases (*Die Wunderbeilungen*, 100-101). To any of the hypotheses one subscribes, the case of this in situ inscription side by side the *Iamata* tale, confirms the importance of the votive, the mutual impact of the two texts on each other, and a sort of narrative demand dictated either by the “original” stone votive: not only to be formed into a *Iamata* tale but cared after and enlarged, or if we give priority to the *Iamata*, its demand to become a tangible story by virtue of a miraculous proof, exactly as the story told.

find encouragement in them, and more importantly, they could consult their “cases,” in order to interpret the cure suggested in dream.

There is a group of ancient votive reliefs, which were set up in accordance with a dream, and at the same time, usually represent the dream-experience, or the dreaming person. Van Straten called them *kat'onar* dedications, dream *ex votos*. His rich and thorough description of these dream *ex votos* enabled him to state that “the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for dedications offered on the strength of a dream [...] comes from places scattered over the whole of the Greek speaking world and dates from the classical period to Late Antiquity”³²¹

His examples range from the 5th century BC to the 2/3rd centuries AD, and include well-known carved marble reliefs to Asclepius and Amphiaraos, more modest pieces dedicated to the Nymphs and the Charites, to Hermes, Nemesis, various figures of Zeus and Apollo, to Angdistis and Attis, Men and Meter. There were also examples from the Lydian and Phrygian confession stelai as well.³²² Their characteristics draw us to a closer understanding of the Epidaurian votives, and strengthen the interpretation offered by LiDonnici by emphasising the interrelatedness of the textual and pictorial narratives of the votive tablets. The simultaneous representations of cure and dream on reliefs dedicated to Asclepius and Amphiaraos are well-known and have been amply discussed by other scholars as well.³²³ The wider existence of such dedication, also outside the context of the celebrated incubation cults, revealed the popularity of the dream votive type as such.³²⁴

The *ex votos* in the Christian incubation narratives

It is time now to attend to the Byzantine incubation collections. In what context did votive gifts appear in the miracles, what were these gifts, what did the characters in the miracle narrative and readers of today make of them? Finally, and it seems the most significant to me from the viewpoint of the formation of the stories in the Christian context, what did the hagiographer do with them, i. e. how did votive tablets serve as sources for the stories?

The most illustrative way to grasp the role votive tablets played in general in the formation of the miracle story and, at the same time, in the incubation practice in the different phases of development of the cult, is to compare the same miraculous story that survived in the two different

³²¹ van Straten, “Daikrates’ Dream”, 3.

³²² Elaborate lists of the divine addressees and dedicators of dream *ex votos* (with its terminology, provenance and dating) is in Van Straten, “Daikrates’ Dream”, 21-27, and photos of them on 29-38. (Refer to an earlier footnote on the confession stelai)

³²³ K. Sudhoff, “Heilen durch Handauflegen” *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 18 (1926) 235ff; U. Hausmann, *Kunst und Heilum. Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Asklepiosreliefs*, Potsdam: E. Stichtnote, 1948.

versions of the miracle corpora of Cosmas and Damian. The protagonist of the miracle (CL 6, KDM 3) had to burn and drink the pubic hair of Cosmas – as Saint Cosmas and Damian cryptically announced in his dream. As he wonders what to do, in the (presumably later) KDM collection we see him consult the *ex votos*, hanging on the walls of the church. This act conveys the idea of the expansion of the cult of Cosmas and Damian and - more importantly from the compositional point of view - identifies one of the sources of the hagiographic record. Moreover, it took the patient several days to go through all the votives! It was no less significant that the worshipper relied on such records to interpret his own dreams – in the Christian collections we hear nothing of official temple personnel acting as dream interpreters, help that one received, for example, at Pergamon.³²⁵ As for the solution to the absurd prescription we are informed that there was a sheep named Cosmas, brought in as an offering to the church, according to the KDM. In an attempt to condense the story and here –exceptionally? - reduce one detail as spurious, the miracle story drops the information contained in the London Codex miracle, that the sheep was named after its donator, himself also Cosmas.

It must have been similar to these votive tablets covering the walls the one dedicated to Saint Therapon, by a worshipper of his, who was cured through incubation in the church of Therapon³²⁶ and recorded it on a wax tablet: το τε π[ι]θους κα[ι] τ[ο]ς [α]λευθερ[ο]ας τ[ο]ν θρ[ο]ν[ο]ν αμβρον [α]γκ[ο]ροις [α]στηλ[ο]τευσε π[ο]ναξιν.³²⁷

The sheep in the church of Cosmas and Damian was not the only animal given as votive gift in the collections. In the atrium of Thecla's church there was a garden with birds, the function of which has been variously interpreted. Peter Grossmann considered it a poultry farm, and claimed that these animals were donated primarily to feed the poor.³²⁸ Elsewhere this garden was depicted as a “veritable zoo” – birds given to Thecla because of their exotic character, both to please and entertain those present at the church precincts as well as to attest the wealth and uniqueness of the shrine far and wide³²⁹ (– as we will see below, the hagiographer did not exclude any of these possibilities). These votive birds made their presence more conspicuous in those miracle stories where – just as with the sheep above – donated animals are the agents or means of the cure. In MT 24 a child with a disease in one of his eyes, was taken to Thecla by his nurse. In the atrium of the church, - writes the hagiographer - there were a great number and variety of birds, doves and cranes, and

³²⁴ For other examples besides Van Staten's article see Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi”, 93, note 13 and Girone, *Iamata*, 133-135, the latter analyses a dedication of two dream figures, two statues of Oneiroi, in gratitude for regained eyesight through incubation from Lebena, 3rd century AD (IC I. XVII. 24).

³²⁵ Moreover, dream interpreters were denied to receive the Eucharist.

³²⁶ on Therapon's church in Constantinople cf. Janin, *Géographie Ecclésiastique*, 255, ref given in Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*..., 172

³²⁷ Laudatio Therapontis, 12. 22-23, in Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 127.

³²⁸ P. Grossmann, “The Pilgrimage Center of Abû Mîna” in: David Frankfurter, ed. *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 281-302.

³²⁹ Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 44; cf. Kötting, *Peregrinatio*, 156.

geese, as well as swans and pheasants, brought to the church for entertainment or as votive gifts, and all these birds dedicated to Thecla. One of the cranes pierced the diseased eye of the child but when the frightened spectators examined the wound, it turned out to be the remedy, since the eye, “as if it were pierced by the physician’s lancet and incised with medical skill” was emptied of the liquid that obscured the sight and the child became well. Several Asclepieian cures come to mind, not only those of the deity’s epiphanies – where the god heals with the help of a dog or a serpent or took an animal form, but also one cure quite akin to Thecla’s bird-healer: “[...] of Chios with gout. While awake he was walking towards a goose who bit his feet and by making him bleed made him well.”³³⁰

As children playing with the votive animals offered a pleasant sight to the suppliants to Thecla, a deer dedicated to Cosmas and Damian must have also been a source of entertainment as it walked among the patients who lay in their church. The man with the withered arm in the CL8 was more at source of laughter as he tried to chase the deer away that bit the sleeves of his cloak. As the amused spectators did not help him, he began to desperately try to move his arm, and the thus the deer was recognised as the means of the healers’ grace.

The offering can be precisely prescribed by the healers themselves. Once, Saint Cyrus and John meticulously bid their healed patient to return to his hometown, plant a grape vine in their names, care about, harvest and press the vine. In due time, wine produced from the grape vine should be divided with one half being sold as the patient liked. The other half of the wine should be carried yearly to the church and distributed there among the needy.³³¹ In the second part of the same miracle we read about a type of votive gift already familiar from the Asclepieian corpora: the dedication of the “object” itself that caused the illness.³³² In this miraculous story, a woman was gripped by intestinal pains. She delivered a stone as big as an egg, which she ordered to be hung above the tomb of the saints. There the stone remained “for many years, as a memorial to the miracle” – and may well have served as a starting point of the tale for Sophronios or his informant.³³³

In the collection of Artemios there was no explicit mention of ex votos mentioning the cure on them, but more as said about votive gifts, most frequently a lamp lit in honour of the Saint or simply the cost of the lamp oil. This sort of lamp, however, whether lit in the church or in the patient’s house in the name of Artemios, was often the vehicle for the cure. The actual act of lighting it regularly was also an act of devotion as well as the catalyst for Artemios intervention in MA 11. However, the holy lamp-oil was mostly applied as an anointment or was swallowed by the patients. (A curative technique of Saint Cosmas and Damian as well, whose one miracle also describe how

³³⁰ T 423. 43. on stele b; it is difficult not to recall the Boy with a goose in the Munich Glyptothek!

³³¹ MCJ 48.

³³² Cf T 423, 12-13-14, 30, 32, 40, where the “objects” causing the illness (head of an arrow, stone etc) might have been depicted on the votive tablet or left as a votive gift, but surely worded in the text itself.

³³³ MCJ 48; cf. also Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 170.

disgusting this mixture of oil and wax actually was – its taking in was itself a test of faith: KDM...) The saint could order or suggest that a lamp be dedicated, while the patient could also take the initiative. In Artemios' cult, a votive gift comprised organization of a banquet, a common meal for the fellow incubants, as well as the regular attendance at the all-night vigil, the *pannychis*. These two votive acts will be addressed in detail later as communal occasions for telling and listening to miracle stories. Meanwhile, Artemios was also surrounded by the usual votive offering. The hagiographer duly informed us - if not about the character of the objects – but their location. The cured left their objects not on the walls of the chapel but on and around the lead coffin of Artemios' coffin: "the saint's holy coffin of lead, where his living relics are stored, where the gift of cures bubbles up, where patients' thank-offerings for cures affected by the saintly megalomartyr are stored..."³³⁴

Just as with Hermodicus' dedication, which survived both in its original and in its edited form, votive tablets recording the miracle in a few words can sometimes be compared in the Christian context with the longer story of the hagiographer. A unique healing votive being embedded within the miracle narrative can be found in the *Thaumata* - its existence offers an invaluable clue to the mechanism of Sophronios' creative fantasy.³³⁵

I, John, coming from the town of Rome, having been blind for eight years, after having been waiting here patiently, through the miraculous power of saint Cyrus and John, have regained my eyesight.³³⁶

Sophronios the Sophist knew his craft well and was able to weave a pretty story around these words, starting with a panegyric on Rome (so broad was the saints' sphere of action!), afterwards meticulously telling how the miserable patient spent all his money on doctors and when they failed, finally turned to the holy healers. There are two especially noteworthy solutions in this narrative. Sophronios made the precise location of the inscription the basis of his story, interpreting its word *here* literally. In this rendering of the miracle, the patient took up his abode at the entrance of the sanctuary, having made a vow not to enter the church until he received his cure. *There* he stayed, suffering *for eight years*, exposed to the unpleasantness of the weather. Herein lays the other twist of the hagiographer: what figures in the votive text as eight years of blindness, Sophronios transformed into eight years spent in front of the church.³³⁷ Nevertheless, the most inventive part of the tale was that when the saints at last had mercy on the man and healed him by placing their finger onto his eyes, Johannes got up in the middle the night and immediately inscribed on the wall near to where he had been lying, his testimony to the miracle. Thus, the actual placement of the votive inscription

³³⁴ MA 33.

³³⁵ MCJ 69; on most points I follow Delehay's analysis of how "Sophrone enfile ses perles", Delehay, *L'ancienne hagiographie byzantine*, 62-63.

³³⁶ □γ□ □ω□ννης π□λεως τ□ς Ρ□μης □ρωμενος, τυφλ□ς □κτ□ χρ□νους γεν□μενος □νθ□δε δι□ τ□ς τ□ν □γ□ων Κ□ρου κα□ □ωαννου δυν□μενος προσκατερ□σας □ν□βλεψα.

I, John, coming from the town of Rome, having been blind for eight years, after having been waiting here patiently, through the miraculous power of saint Cyrus and John, have regained my eyesight.

³³⁷ Connecting the *okto kbronos* not to the *tuphlos genomenos*, but to *proskarteresas*.

contributed to the formation of the story. This factor, already mentioned briefly by LiDonnici in connection with the *Iamata* tales,³³⁸ was here exploited to an extreme. This precious reference helps us see how Sophronios could recreate his story from very little, and at the same time, it attests to the way votives could be used as direct source-materials to the written record.

This inscription on the wall as a memento of the miracle bears close resemblance to those inscriptions, the *proskynemata*, that are not proper votive tablets, yet were important records of the pilgrim's experience and which are familiar also in the context of incubation. These "remembrances" were commonly written on the walls of sanctuaries in Egypt. "What renders these texts of interest, lies in the fact that these, directly executed by the beneficiary of the miracle, escape, at least in theory, certain demands of serial production that mark the commissioned objects."³³⁹

Although the texts on the original votive tablets did not find their way into other miracles told by Sophronios, he had stories for which the concise votive narratives almost certainly served as the point of departure. In these narratives, the layers of the texts can be neatly peeled off from the core of the story, reducing it to two or three words, as may be observed in MCJ 6 and 7: Geddaios with a fistula; Menas from Alexandria, with a paralysed leg, whose story might have implied competition with the Saint Menas shrine, not far away from Menouthis. In the narrative of the glib hagiographer, this skeleton was complemented with elements well known from other early Byzantine miracle collections (the miracles of Cosmas and Damian were known to Sophronios), such as, the futile medical treatment that preceded the miracle, or the herbal dream recipes of the saints, while Sophronios' creative imagination provided the stories with detours that could be only loosely connected to the plot. In this way, he lingers in MCJ 7 on the theme how the lame Menas had previously been swift-legged as a goat in the meadow, a quality he shared with Asael in the Bible. Thus, Sophronios continued with descriptions that were not at all essential to the stories (how the paralytic lay on his litter and was transported by others to the church and the like).

These stories, which can be stripped to the scheme of 'name-town-illness' are to such an extent rhetorical, (with their literary and everyday commonplaces, biblical analogies, with Sophronios' moral diversions or his praises of the patient's town) that besides the incubation miracle itself, they often lack organic narrative schemes including the patient falling asleep, the dream appearance of the saints, the dialogue between the patient and the healer, the conflicts between faith and doubt, as well as the circumstances of experiencing recovery.

³³⁸ LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions*, 52.

³³⁹ Dorati, "Funzioni e motivi", 92, note 13. cf also A-J. Festugiere, "Proscynemes de Philiae" *Revue des Études Grecques* 83 (1970), 175-197; (the word literary means act of worship, here: the testimony, the memorial to act of worship) Dorati further mentions that it is possible to connect to these *proskynemata*, even if just in passing, those temple and magical

It can be clearly traced in the first miracle of the corpus (MCJ1) how Sophronios' sources are layered on each other and where the presence of the votive may also be supposed. Ammonios, *octaviarius* (collector of the eighth part tax), from Alexandria, with scrofula on his throat. Yet the poultice prepared from bread, mixed with holy wax and the way he obtained his cure must have been hard to squeeze into the terse text few words of an inscription. Sophronios also records that there were 67 scrofulae, as counted not only by the witnesses to the miracle, but also as they were collected after they had fallen down from the sick man's throat and the church servants suspended them for a few days in honour of the saints. Sophronios thus probably had at his disposal a considerable oral material as well, either from the priests or the church personnel themselves, or from their successors. From them he could have obtained information that this Ammonios was an arrogant chap, (a detail we would hardly be likely to read in the patient's own version) and that Ammonios had to obtain spiritual purification through repentance and to become humble was a condition of his recovery. But his haughtiness broke through afresh and so he relapsed back into his illness, for which the saints gave him a new prescription of humbleness where he was to carry water for the other patients. This sort of service, affecting of all the church community, probably remained as a vivid memory in the sanctuary.

2. Images and art objects in the miracles stories: their role in healing and in the narrative

Strabo attributed an interesting point of view to the Jews, by presenting Moses as juxtaposing (illicit) images and (acceptable) dream-sights seen in the sanctuary:

Nay, people should leave off all image-carving, and, setting apart a sacred precinct and a worthy sanctuary, should worship God without image; and people who have good dreams should sleep in the sanctuary, not only themselves on their own behalf, but also others for the rest of the people....³⁴⁰

Closer to what Vikan called "invocational votives" there was an important group of holy objects in the field of ritual healing, associated primarily, but not exclusively, with living saints such as the Stylites, although they can also be found in our rather a-historic incubation-miracle records as well. They vary from elaborated tokens with images on them to the earth or clay surrounding the saint's dwelling. Lamp-oil or candle-wax, burnt by the saint's relics or in the saint's name often had similar function. These pieces of "portable, palpable sanctity" were often situated at the intersection of the magical and religious; they were used as *prophylacteria*, empowered by the saints' name or by his image on it.

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papyri, "which render the formulae and the procedure that are to be used within the practices related to incubation." For incubation examples of these memorial wall-inscriptions see Dorati's same note.

³⁴⁰ Strabo, *Geographica* XVI. 2. 35, transl. H. Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library, (London: W. Heinemann, 1936).

³⁴¹ On the role of icons, esp. concerning their miraculous role, Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before the Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83-151;

At the turn of the 4th-5th centuries AD iconical representations could be endowed by and transmit magical-miraculous powers, for example in connection with a thaumaturgical plant growing near an image of Christ.³⁴² The coins and ampullae bearing the images of saints, such as the ones that are well known from the cult places of Saint Symeon or Saint Menas, played an enormous role in affirming the miracle-working aspect of images, and the overlap between the depicted figure and the saint's power.³⁴³

Miraculous healing in all its forms offers a rich material for the study of the role images played in the thaumaturgic process or in the recognition of the miracle. The key position of images manifested itself in connection with three central issues: 1. A true representation of the healer (i. e. his presence) widened the range of his or her thaumaturgic activity, in this sense the concept of “portable, palpable sanctity” was equally valid. As the following examples demonstrate, images could act in several ways in healing, not only in the case of figurative representations of the healer but through the image-bearing material as well. 2. Images could play an important role in the narrative of healing, either within the miraculous event (e. g. the healer coming down from a picture), or as a possible record of the miracle (painting made as an *ex voto*) and, in some cases, a reference point for the written composition (miracle scenes depicted in the sanctuary, visible in the hagiographer's times). 3. The further importance of the visual representation of the healer lay in the visual character of the ritual practice itself, that is, the dream-medium. The visual representation of the healer was instrumental, since *seeing* his figure was the already miracle in itself. In order to make the image recognizable, it seems to have been equally important to display the images of the healers either before the miracle as preparatory tools or after the appearance, as confirmation or identification.

This central role of images and healing can be further linked together within a cult where images were used to enhance all sorts of miraculous healing power associated with the saints, but not necessary manifested in the dream vision. To put it more simply, art objects or medical tools bearing the name of healer saints may have served to establish a link between the function of the object and the thaumaturgic capacities of the healers. An example connected with Cosmas and Damian concerns a gold and niello ‘amuletic pill box’ housed in the British Museum,³⁴⁴ - “the power for

Henry Maguire, “Magic and Christian Image” In *Byzantine Magic*, ed. H. Maguire, 51-72 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995); a Byzantine example: Methodios, *Life of Euthymos of Sardis*, ch. 41., nine paragraphs dedicated to a “dissertation on the doctrine of the image” – Euthymos has been killed by iconoclasts, for this reference and the connection between iconoclasm and miracles cf. M. Kaplan, “Le Miracle est-il nécessaire,” 170-171;

³⁴² Kitzinger, “The Cult of Images in the Age before the Iconoclasm” 94.

³⁴³ Vikan is right in underlining the importance of such healing icons, endowed by miraculous power by the contact with or representation of the saint, and combating the view of regarding these tokens or images as mere pilgrim-souvenirs. *Art, Medicine*, 67.

³⁴⁴ Dated to the 7th century AD, the box “is octagonal in outline, and bears on its obverse two scenes from the Palestinian christological cycle: the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi. The locket's back side shows a

deliverance came from the locket's very shape, from its imagery and from its words, but more than any of these, it must have come from that sanctified bit of material 'of Sts. Cosmas and Damian' that this capsule once contained."³⁴⁵ Gary Vikan assumed that the locket encapsulated some *kerote*, the the saints' customary all-purpose healing wax, which in this way became an eulogia. It is possible, however, that *any* material (ritual or magical or actually medicinal) was rendered more effective by the saints's name, inscribed on the container of the material. (A *cylix* bearing a dedication to Asclepius was found during excavations at Scornavacche in Sicily. Its words suggest that the *cylix* contained the balm used in the cure and left as a thanksgiving offering to the god.)³⁴⁶

Another piece of art connected to our doctor-saints reveals how help was supposed to be secured by way of a double invocation, one of a general nature, and the other more direct one, with its addressees specifying the focus of the request, namely bodily help. A bronze cross from the Eastern Mediterranean held in the Metropolitan Museum³⁴⁷, and probably dating to the AD 6th-7th century, has the images of Mary with the child Christ, Peter and Paul and Cosmas and Damian, from top to bottom on its four arms, with St. Stephen in the centre holding a censer and an incense box. It has an inscription on the horizontal cross arm 'Christ, help [me]', while on the lower arm as if in a concentrically narrowing circle, the invocation: 'Saint Cosmas and Damian, grant [me] your blessing'. Medical tools were quite often decorated with the name or images of Cosmas and Damian.

The use of icons as *prophylacteria*, or as the actual means of the cure, could not be missing from the incubation miracle collections either. When the healers came in disguise, a recognition scene had to follow presented in three ways. The saints could either declare who they really were (e.g. KDM 9), or – a very common ending – the experience of the miracle verified their identity or the patient compared the dream-figure to the depiction of the saints. The latter instance allowed the image to play out as a separate narrative unit in the story, inserting a phase between the miracle and the recognition of the miracle-workers. It was not rare, as in the following example, that the image-bearing object was itself the means of the cure.³⁴⁸

Sergius, an elderly guard of a granary prayed to Artemios to cure his hernia,

'For you know both that I am old man and that I cannot leave the granary and wait upon you. For if I leave it, they will employ another and I will be deprived of both of my position and my livelihood, unable to do even this job.' These and similar things he would say whenever he went to pray to the saint. While he was sleeping at the granary, the saint appeared to him one night. The old man seemed to see the Administrator of the Granaries. And the saint approached him and said: 'You sleep a great deal and neglecting the granary. Look,

cross-on-steps whose arms terminate in what are probably the letters of a magical number, name or phrase; around its circumference are the words: 'Secure deliverance and aversion [from] all evil,' while into the edge of its octagon is inscribed: 'of Sts. Cosmas and Damian'. That these famous holy doctors are named leaves little doubt that this was a medical amulet – that the 'evil' from which its wearer should be "delivered" was first and foremost that of ill health. Vikan, *Art, Medicine*, 84

³⁴⁵ Vikan's further examples which I shall refer to, may also corroborate this thesis but as we do not know the real content, it is futile to divide sharply the possibilities.

³⁴⁶ Girone, *Iamata*, 37.

³⁴⁷ Vikan, *Art, Medicine* 84-85, and fig. 28.

³⁴⁸ A thorough analysis of image-bearing tokens and the textual records of the same healing cult is made in connection to Saint Simeon the Younger by Vikan, "Art, Medicine," 73ff

pay attention, lest what is here be stolen.’ Giving him a gold coin, he said: ‘Take this that you may drink’ In fact it was a salve. After Sergius woke up, he was pleased with the gift of the coin. For while still drowsy with sleep, he believed he actually held the gold coin. But when he opened his palm and fingers and found that he possessed a wax seal bearing an image of the saint, coming to his senses, he recognized the miracle that was worked upon him and that St. Artemios was the one who had appeared to him. Immediately softening the seal, he anointed his genitals and as soon as the softened wax of the seal touched him, instantly he became healthy and glorified God and the holy martyr.³⁴⁹

From a narrative point of view, icons could play a great variety of the roles in the formation of the story as well as in affecting at cure.³⁵⁰ The image could serve as a point of departure for the miraculous event or the meeting with the saints. Likewise it could also become the means of deliverance. In the miracle corpora, however, there are pictures, which recorded what happened and this pictorial narrative shaped the miracle on its way to becoming a story, and had an impact as well on the hagiographer’s narrative. KDM 13 tells the story of Constantinos, a soldier, who was a devotee of the saints. He served in Laodiceas, where he got married. Since Constantinos lived far from Constantinople he kept a small, painted image of them with himself. His wife developed an abscess on her jawbone. Constantinos lamented that they live far from the capital and thus could not visit the church of Cosmas and Damian for the healing *kerote*. His enthusiasm was embraced by his wife who listened devotedly to the speedy miraculous cures performed by the saints, and wished to approach them herself. At that moment their image, the testimony of her husband’s worship, was forgotten. The following night the saints appeared³⁵¹ “in their likeness as they are represented” and reassured her about their presence and help. Without recognizing the saints, she told the dream to her husband with a detailed description of the figures she had seen. Her husband recalled the attributes of the saints, and their icon suddenly came to his mind and by bringing it forth, the wife confirmed the saints’ identity on the basis of the painting.³⁵² She was healed as a completion of the treatment. Moreover, as a reward for their faith, the saints announced in another dream that she would find a piece of wax under her pillow – to insure that she would never be ill again.

³⁴⁹ MA 16.

³⁵⁰ The case of Symeon the Younger is the best example to illustrate how written and iconical narratives complement each other; an excellent analysis is in Vikan, “Art, Medicine,” 72: “there is not one miracle in the entire Vita of the saint where a medicinal eulogia is described as being used in the shrine itself; rather, they were given out to accomplish their cures” somewhere else.

³⁵¹ “Whatever theory concerning the origin of dream apparitions one adheres to, it is not a very daring supposition that the gods will have appeared more often to persons who had some particularly close tie with them than to others. If we seek support for such an assumption in the inscriptions we may observe that there are quite a few priests and temple attendants among the dedicators.” - observes van Straten in connection with the Greek epigraphical material (in his “Daikrates’ Dream”, 17). The same holds true for the Christian miracle stories as well, bearing in mind that this aspect stands out among those who did not seek cure at the healers’ church, where the close devotion is simply manifested by their being there, yet the turn of phrase that the dream-visitation of the saints rewarded their faith is ubiquitous.

³⁵² Here the icon is instrumental in a way that secures the recognition, confirms a posteriori the identity of the saints. Yet most often the worshipper sees the image first, hence that depiction is reformulated in his or her own imagery; these are the instances when “a vision of the saint was instrumental to the miraculous cure, and [...] this vision might be induced by a man-made representation of the saint.” Vikan, *Art, Medicine*, 73,

The miracle and the telling of the miracle were shaped by the central role of the icon.³⁵³ This gave way to a recognition scene (a double recognition, first by the husband then by the wife) and the other visualization of the saints, their dream-appearance reaffirmed the truth of the identification, while the miracle itself attested to both the cultic “usefulness” of the image. In addition it gave credence to all the other miracles – those told by the husband within the story, those that occurred in the church and thus to the miracle collection itself.

The tale stands out among a host of similar ones by the fact that the beneficiaries not only make no effort, by prayer or action, to secure divine assistance through the icon but are not even aware of the presence of the icon, at least when it first begins to operate on their behalf. The story dramatizes the objective power of the icon, which is shown to be effective regardless of the faithful’s consciousness. Its key theme, however, is the actual presence of the saints in the image.³⁵⁴

The first dream-appearance of the saints was – in my view – initiated by the husband’s recollection of them, of their miraculous curative power and their cult place, so familiar to him and of the miraculous stories associated with them! The selfsame miracle was recorded in the London Codex as well³⁵⁵ and it is worth pointing out the differences between the two narratives. In the KDM version the husband wished to be in Constantinople so he could take his wife to the church of the saints in order to practice incubation there. In the London Codex, however, (besides the fact that Constantinople was not even mentioned!), he would have been content if he contained within himself the image of the saints which, he was convinced, would have sufficed for the cure. Afterwards, the wife began to invoke the saints:

Yet the heart of her husband was even more anxious for her. Himself, in accordance to his custom of carrying the image of the saints, forgot about it and addressed his wife in this way: ‘What shall I do with you, woman? If now I had brought with me the image of the saints or the wax from their church, if you beseeched them, and anointed yourself with the wax, you would be healed.’ On hearing these words, the woman started praying to them, saying: ‘Servants of Christ, Cosmas and Damian, the doctors of incurable diseases, deem me worthy of finding a cure from you, and deign me soon your holy sanctuary.’

Following the first dream appearance,

awakening from her dream, she told in detail what she had heard from the saint in dream, and asked him to bring her their images. Because meanwhile the husband recalled that the image was with him. He showed then the image of the saints and the woman cried out of joy that they were indeed those whom she saw in dream.³⁵⁶

A miracle from the *Vita* of Theodore of Sykeon is very much akin to the one described above as far as the helping presence of the icon, its equivalence with the saints’ power and its role in calling forth the dream-appearance are concerned. (*Vita Theod. Syc.* 39): Theodore was gravely ill and retired to his room. Above his bed, there had long hung an image of Saint Cosmas and Damian, a testimony of his continuous devotion towards them. When Theodore fell asleep (it was not a sought dream i.e. not incubation!), the saints appeared in a dream as depicted on the icon and in a way familiar from their incubation miracles. They acted as visiting doctors, taking Theodore’s pulse and discussing

³⁵³ a topic I shall leave entirely intact. For a starting point of discussion see: P. Speck, “Wunderheilige und Bilder. Zur Frage des Beginns der Bilderverehrung” *POIKILA BYZANTINA* 11 (1991), 163-247.

³⁵⁴ Kitzinger, “The Cult of Images”, 148.

³⁵⁵ CL 25.

between themselves what they needed to do. I shall analyse this story in detail in the last chapter, however, the mere presence of the icon is of interest here, since Theodore neither addressed the saints, nor prayed to the image. The picture watched over Theodore and advanced the healers' appearance. My hypothesis is that this miracle from Theodore's *Vita* attests that in connection with widely known incubation healers such as Cosmas and Damian, the narrative pattern describing how they usually worked their cures found its way into non-incubation hagiography. Within the tenets of the pictorial presence (the role of the icon) and of the visual medium for the saints' appearance, the dynamics of telling the miracle was just as it could be found in the narratives of temple sleep.

The role of the cult-image cannot be overestimated for the practice of incubation, where the dream-medium adds a further stage in seeing the healer. "Sometimes the god would go on even further in assimilating his appearance to the image his devotees knew best, and appear in the shape of the statue."³⁵⁷ – This rings true not only for the ancient healers but for Christian dream-healers as well. The close resemblance of the healer appearing in dream to his representation not simply allowed him to be recognized but it drew on an essential aspect of ancient dream interpretation. One of the criteria for differentiating between the truthful – favourable and false dreams was the extent to which the sight was in accordance with the figure it "should look like". Hence a figure clearly appearing with his or her own attributes was more believable and fortunate, while "gods appearing in a wrong costume may easily lie" – as C. A. Meier has put it. Meier interpreted this insistence on the "real" form of things as a reminiscence of a totemistic attitude.³⁵⁸ In the practice of the doctor saints, however, the dream appearance often could not be so directly identified. The saints were occasionally to be recognized during sleep or right after the patient awakened, even without previous knowledge of the way they looked like. The image of the healer was indispensable to insure that the dreamer identify the saint as the miracle story with the soldier's wife has also shown. The sights, the pictorial character were thus necessarily built on each other, exactly because the medium of the ritual experience, the dream itself, could only be perceived in a visual way, as an image:

"a vision of the saint was instrumental to the miraculous cure, and [...] this vision might be induced by a man-made representation of the saint. As incubation was instrumental to healing [...] so a dream vision was instrumental to successful incubation. And the fact that the healing saint is said to appear "in his customary manner" strongly suggest that representations of the saint (whether on tokens, or as icons or murals) were instrumental to the evocation and confirmation of that vision."³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ My translation

³⁵⁷ Van Straten, "Daikrates' Dream," 15, Cf AA, Asclepius' statue, that of Asclepius to Domninos, or Pindar's vision Pyth III. Cf. Weinrich, *Heilungswunder*, 137 ff and also Carlo Brillante, "Metamorfosi di un'immagine: le statuette animate in sogno" in *Il sogno in Grecia*, ed. Giulio Guidorizzi, 17-33, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1988).

³⁵⁸ C. A. Meier, "The Dream in Ancient Greece and its Use in Temple Cures (Incubation)" In: *The Dream and Human Societies*. Eds. G. E. Grunbaum and Roger Caillois. 303-19 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 311.

³⁵⁹ Vikan, "Art, Medicine", 73, note 44; see also: Delhaye, "Les recueils antiques", 16 and Kötting, *Peregrinatio*, 217f. (yet this meant no novelty in comparison to the ancient Greek practice)

It was nothing new that just like Asclepius and Isis, the Christian dream-healers also appeared as represented in their sanctuary. Nevertheless, there was an important distinction between them. The gods of Antiquity hardly ever manifested themselves in their own form. Moreover, an unconcealed epiphany of a Greek god in most cases resulted in the death of the beholder – however unconscious his vision might have been. In spite of this, the face-to-face encounter with the deity in the cult of Asclepius was quintessential to the cure, often meaning the cure itself. And as Asclepius had to be recognised, his familiar statue in the shrine was in the same way a preparation for the incubation experience as were the narratives, the miracles inscribed on stelai or the *ex votos*. Knowing how the Healer looked like enabled the dreamer to recognize (and of course, to “visualize”) him in his usual form. And Asclepius hardly ever came in disguise unless in his well-known substitute forms: a beautiful young boy, a sacred serpent or dog.

The appearance of the Christian healers was more complex. Probably because they were not healing deities in their own right but transmitted the miraculous power of the *Solus Medicus*, the mere sight of them did not create a cultic experience in the sense mentioned in connection with their ancient predecessors. Oddly, they often came in disguise and hence their image in the stories was more important. Identification could happen as related in the previous miracle, when the dreamer recognized the figures *as they really were*, since they come *as they really were*. These physician saints, however, seem to have loved the sort of masquerade which could either work as a test of faith of the dreamer, where even their appearance was part of the trial or - when disguising themselves as a family member or the patient’s doctor, they sought to facilitate the patient’s trust.

The very visualisation of the healer in the dream could give insight into the illness-related anxieties of the dreamer, originating from real concerns like those of a husband seeing the saints in a dream as the physicians of his ill wife,³⁶⁰ or the panic of the sick person requiring an operation who saw the saint-surgeon in the likeness of a butcher with butcher’s tools³⁶¹ or performing the surgery with a huge sword instead of a scalpel³⁶². Investigation into the way the guises the healer appeared in could shed light on social attitudes as well. The saint could be pictured as one of the lowest of the low (as a monk, a bath attendant boy, a patient suffering on the latrine) or placing him high up on the social hierarchy (Artemios as a palace nobleman³⁶³), a somewhat awe-inspiring stranger (Artemios as the Persian doctor³⁶⁴). Still, the healer could also be imagined quite naturally as the dreamer’s immediate superior (as the Administrator of the Granaries was to the granary-guard in MA 16 or as a sea captain was to the sailor in MA 27). When appearing in the likeness of a family member or a close

³⁶⁰ KDM 29.

³⁶¹ MA 25.

³⁶² KDM 1.

³⁶³ MA 11, 29, 37, 39.

³⁶⁴ MA 23.

friend, the saint's image reflected the unconscious but also the normal attitude of ill people concerning who they turned to in their troubles, those who could be counted on to help.³⁶⁵

The fact that divine apparitions seem to change their shape in accordance with the development of their iconographical types makes them very vulnerable, of course, to the criticism of modern dream interpreters who would rather find the origin of the visions in the (subconscious) mind of the dreamer himself. The shape of the god appearing in a dream was determined by the image which the dreamer had formed in his mind, and which ultimately derived from the representations of a god (cult statues, etc.). To us this makes sense, but people who took the reality of the divine apparitions for granted, would view the matter from a different angle. They might argue that the shape of a god, as he revealed himself in a dream, did not derive from representations in art, but it was in the other way round. And to drive this point home, they could quote several well-known cases where a god had appeared to an artist to sit for his portrait.³⁶⁶

The presence of the pictorial representation of the saints in the stories share a particular feature of miraculous healing: they reinforce the healers ability to operate at a distance and the way they could work outside their church, with the patient being unable to grasp their image there. The presence of the icon in the stories emphatically widened the scope of the miraculous operation.

A more direct relationship can be detected with acclaimed icons. It was very likely that the represented figures generated the story and thus, it is possible to speak more confidently about pictorial representation as one source for the textual record.³⁶⁷ What is more, the miracle I will examine below illustrates the way the figures depicted shaped the cultic experience and the dream-content itself. In KDM 30 the patient turned to the incubation place of Cosmas and Damian with a fistula, following a dream-invitation extended by the saints. While waiting for the dream visit of the saints, he walked one day around the church and discovered a painting of Christ, Mary,³⁶⁸ Cosmas and Damian and a man identified as Leontinus, probably the illustrious donator of the icon. This seems to be a pictorial *ex voto* incorporated into the narrative. Furthermore, Festugière called attention to the hagiographer's expression $\mu\chi\rho\iota\tau\omicron\ \pi\alpha\rho\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$, "till today", referring to the fact or creating the impression that the picture was still in place at the time the miracle was recorded (or told). The patient fervently prayed to the image and accordingly, the following night experienced the much sought after visitation. Not only did the saints appear but the Virgin was also among them (probably just as in the icon). She ordered Cosmas and Damian to heal the man quickly (which duly happened afterwards). The existence of Mary on the picture naturally called forth her presence in the dream and her active role in the course of events. Rather cautiously (as the exact date of the miracle is not known) I would also risk suggesting that her appearance not only implied an emphasis on her

³⁶⁵ Artemios in MA 1 as the patient's father, in MA 31 as a close friend.

³⁶⁶ Van Straten, "Daikrates' Dream", 15. cf also the examples of portraits of saints painted after the saint's appearance in dream: G. Dagron, "Rêver de Dieu et parler de soi," p. 42, note 23.

³⁶⁷ Cf an "extreme" instance, the Passion of St Eleutherius, analysed by H. Delehay draws heavily on the pictorial representations in the saint's sanctuary, hence the scene when the saint is preaching to the animals, gained an additional dimension: the beast, unable to express themselves in songs or in prayer, raise their right paw as to praise God. "It seems clear that he [the hagiographer] has seen animals walking in line in mosaic." H. Delehay, *The Legends of the Saints*, 63.

³⁶⁸ which means that it has been in all likelihood a seated Virgin with the child Christ, cf. Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saint Côme et Damien*, 170.

role as *Theotokos* (note that Christ is not the main character although he is present) but as a higher authority for the occupants of the cult-place. The ending of the narrative deserves further attention. In one version, neglected by Deubner but emphasized by Festugière, the miracle itself was commemorated in a picture, and just as in the case of the intervening icon in the story, the hagiographer here also mentioned the precise location of the representation, that more than likely was the source of the narrative itself, as his last remark suggests: γράπται δὲ ταῦτα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τῷ γένοντι τῷ ξενωνμῷ στοῦ πύθθεν τῷ εἰσόδου τοῦ διακονικοῦ, καὶ οὕτως κριβίστερον ἐν τῷ γραφῇ κατανοῶσαι.³⁶⁹ Shall we envisage a picture depicting a miracle, incorporating another picture within itself?

In a similar vein the image of Christ found its way into the narrative in the MCJ 36. The consciously artistical hagiographer appears to have wanted to attribute special importance to the miracle, because of the extraordinary length of the story as well as its position within the miracle collection. The MCJ 36 was placed in the middle of the corpus, and what is more, it represented an overture to the new section of the collection, the one, which, after the 35 miracles happened to Alexandrians, together comprised the stories of Egyptian and Lybian patients. In the narrative, at the end of a long and complicated sequence of incubations, and having gone through various attempts to convert the heretical protagonist, Sophronios continued by telling that a few days later, the protagonist Theodoros, still unwilling to convert to the Chalcedonian orthodoxy, incubated anew. He saw in his dream the saints Cyrus and John, who bade him to follow them. The patient duly went after them until all three arrived at a beautiful, tall church. Upon entering it they came before a huge icon; in the centre of the picture there was a colourful Christ, on his left Mary, (*tén Theotokon kai Aeiπαρthenon*), on his right John the Baptist. These figures were complemented by some of the apostles and the collegium of martyrs.³⁷⁰ The saints adored the Lord by genuflecting and beseeched Him to secure the recovery of their patient. Yet Christ did not give a nod of approval, so that the saints sadly gave up the intermediation and turned to the patient standing next to the icon: - “Do you see that the Lord does not wish to give you health...”; the answer, thus, was expected from the nod of the depicted Christ! With time passing, they repeated their prayer in front of the icon, again to no avail. But by the third time, Christ has spoken to them from the painting.³⁷¹ “Give it to him!” The

³⁶⁹ Festugière, 103,12; 172, 9.

³⁷⁰ on this so called *Déesis* iconography and this picture being one of the earliest of it, see E. H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 48-53, esp. note 129. (ref in Kitzinger) and T. Velmans, “L’image de la Déesis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans celles d’autres régions du monde byzantin” *Cahiers archéologiques* 29 (1980-81), 47-102; esp. 52.

³⁷¹ Another Byzantine example for a speaking icon of Christ seen in dream (Theodosii Meliteni *Chronographia*. Ed. Tafel, Monarchii, 1859), 97-98): “Theodosius of Melitene records an incident in which the Emperor Maurice dreamt that he saw a large group of people standing before the icon of Christ on the Chalke Gate of the Palace. Suddenly a voice was heard from the icon saying: “Bring Maurice to me.” When the Emperor appeared before the icon, the Saviour spoke and said: “When, O Maurice, do you desire that I punish you? Here or in the future age?” The Emperor asked to be allowed to expiate his sins in this world, and so Christ ordered that he and his entire family be turned over to the usurper Phocas.” H. J. Magoulas, “The Lives of Saints as Sources of Data For the History of Magic” *Byzantinon* 37 (1967), 262.

saints thus, gladly told him that he could be healed, in the following way: he would go to Alexandria, where in the church called Tetrpylos he had to fast and then practice incubation, and moreover, to rub himself with oil from the lamp that burned before the image of Christ in that church. In the miracle narrative the hagiographer recalled the medium of dream in order to evoke the Christ-icon. Thus, it could be that the heretic patient could still see the painting – disregarding whether such a picture in reality was present in the church or not. The iconographic representation of the image, by giving the visual priority to Mary the God-bearer (*Theotokos*) emphasized the theological dogma for the patient as well (who was a follower of Julian of Halicarnassus). The visual message of the invoked image symbolically represented the condition of the cure: the patient's conversion to orthodoxy. On the other hand, the icon seen in the dream formed a link to a real icon, the Christ-image in the Alexandrian church, which eventually became the means of the cure. In this context, an explanatory hypothesis also arises, namely that in the incubation practiced by the patient the sacrality of the ritual sleep might have been derived from the image rather than the sanctuary.³⁷² E. Kitzinger observed in connection to this miracle that “it should be noted that part of this narrative may be interpolated. Neither the large composition with Christ and the Saints nor the image of Christ in the Tetrpylon can be assumed with certainty to have figured in the original version of the story, since just before the first of these pictures is introduced the narrative changes abruptly from the third to the first person. There is at least a suspicion that originally the story involved no images at all. On the other hand, the grammatical inconsistency may be due simply to Sophronios' peculiar methods of composition.”³⁷³ Kitzinger also repeated the remark of the *Patrologia Graeca*, that the story was known to John of Damascus and quoted in his *Third Oration* (PG 94. 1413ff). The miracle was quoted at the 787 Council, hence it could be dated no later than the early years of Iconoclasm. We should remember, however, that Sophronios noted that the protagonist of the miracle became and at the time of Sophronios' stay in the Menouthis (610-614) still was the sub-deacon of the church; hence in this case he might have been his own direct source of information, (and probably also an indirect one for the recording of the other orally transmitted miracle-stories).

In the miracle narrative above, the (probably) fictitious icon seen in the dream directed the viewer to an existing icon; the 15th miracle of the London Codex bore testimony to the animation of an image, indeed present in the church, which became in a very strange way the vehicle of the cure: a woman with dropsy, spent more than four months in the church of Cosmas and Damian waiting for her recovery.

³⁷² Jean-Marie Sansterre, “Apparitions et miracles à Menouthis: De l'incubation païenne à l'incubation chrétienne” In *Apparitions et Miracles* Ed Alain Dierkens, 69-83 (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1991), 76-77. G. Dagron sees incubation so common that it could be practiced at any sacred place, sanctified by for example, the presence of a holy image. Incubation by far was not practiced in the celebrated cult sites of Thecla, Cosmas and Damian or Cyrus and John, but – he writes – “mais dans toute église ou martyrium toute demeure laïque où une simple icône est gage d'une présence sacrée.” (“Rêver de Dieu et parler de soi,” 41.)

³⁷³ Kitzinger, “The Cult of Images”, 106-107, note 86.

According to the Roman calendar, on the first day of July, on the feast day of the saints, there arrived at the church of God a priest and he asked a serving woman about where the woman with dropsy was lying. She answered: “Today I saw in a dream, that one of the two [saints] descended from the icon set up opposite to the entrance and with the images of Cosmas and Damian carved (?) on either side of it, with the Virgin Mother of God between them, and went to the miserable woman (?). He slipped his hand under the woman’s clothes and touched her stomach and belly. And I forgot how he came down from the image and I took him for a monk or a deacon and I thought that he put his hand on the sick woman with some ugly intention and told him: ‘You are not acting nicely with such behaviour, touching like this the nakedness of this sick woman.’

But the saint reassured her, that within eleven day the dropsy would gradually withdraw and by the last day the woman would be healed and this was the way it happened. What gives the miracle its special quality is not just the overcrowding of visual and narrative layers (the church servant saw the dream not the incubant, she saw the picture which could be seen by everybody in the church, she told her dream not to the patients, as usual in the incubation narratives, but to a third party – we do not know in what way he became involved in these events. However, it is especially odd how the picture occupies the whole story. It is not the patient who is in the centre of the narrative, strangely the saints must share the limelight with Mary on the icon, and the deadline for the sick woman’s recovery was the feast day of Saint Euphemia. The image upsets the narrative. The identification of the saints with their representation is complete in this case.

This latter, theological aspect of the wonderworking image is extolled by another, celebrated miracle of Cosmas and Damian (KDM 15), a story also cited in the context of the Iconoclast-debate at the seventh ecumenical council in 787 in Niceae, to support icon-worship. Whereas this miracle is also a model for the way a narrative could shape the pictorial content. The wonderworking painting in the house of the patient can represent only the saints: a woman with colic in her final despair scraped the plasters off the picture of the saints painted on her walls, and dissolving it with some water, drank it and recovered in an instant.³⁷⁴ “This amounts to complete identification of picture and prototype.”³⁷⁵

In the miracle stories above two paradigms can be observed in the curative use of images representing the miraculous healer. The icon either stands entirely for the healer himself (as in MA 16, KDM13/CL25, *Vita Theod. Syc.* 39) so that the patient was healed without going to the cult place, or else the key element of the cure was an image within the healing sanctuary through which the presiding master of the cult site acted out his wonderworking (either exclusively via the icon as in CL15, or mediating the further cure by appearing in the patient’s dream in the form of an icon as in MCJ 36, KDM30). In contrast to this double model for the healing image (within or outside the sanctuary) Gary Vikan outlined how the textual and pictorial narratives complemented each other in

³⁷⁴ Kitzinger, “The cult of images,” 101, 107, 148. cf. on the miracle Henry Maguire, “Magic and Christian image” in his ed. *Byzantine Magic*, 66. Maguire also points to a late 8th -early 9th century source that attests that iconoclasts turned not only against the miraculous icons but in the same vein forbade the use of the *hagismata*, in that case, holy (healing) water. (see the next note)

³⁷⁵ Kitzinger “The cult of images,” 148, (check also 101).

the cult of the living saints (his example is Symeon the Younger), whereas he observed that “there is not one miracle in the entire *Vita* of the saint where a medicinal eulogia is described as being used in the shrine itself; rather, they were given out to accomplish their cures” somewhere else.³⁷⁶ In his analysis the role of the eulogies (pictorial and non-pictorial) applied in ritual healing was developed in such a way that (regardless of whether they bore the image of the healer or not) served primarily in becoming cured far away from the sacred place.³⁷⁷

Our incubation saints did not necessarily work in such a mutually exclusive way. In their case, the eulogies are at the same time “portable sanctities”, applicable far from the saint, although they could be used in their church as well, often at the initiative of the saints. The rarity of long-distance healing in incubation hagiography can be regarded as indication that the cult site itself, the very place, was more important than the person of the healer. A further example would confirm what I understand by the evocation of the cult place being more important than the healer. A mother of a herniated child could not leave her work in the bath to go to incubate for the help of Saint Artemios, so she prepared at her dwelling what was a customary offering in the Church of the Forerunner before incubation. She lit a votive lamp in the name of Artemios and thus rendered her own place suitable for the saint’s dream appearance. Artemios unmistakably came to her in dream and promised – at the same time carried out as well – the recovery of the child.³⁷⁸

Since Artemios’ customary lamp could be offered after the cure as well, it sufficed for inducing the saint’s visit in the same way as an invocal image. Thus, images also served as commemorative votives for miracles. In the *Thaumata* we encounter such a commemorative painting in the form of a large-scale wall painting: the healed man of MCJ 28, the rich Nemesios have made the wall around the saints’s tomb decorated, with a picture presenting Christ, John the Baptist, Cyros (either the saint or the intermediary of the miracle, a lawyer called Cyros) and himself. It is sensible to suppose that such a work at such a prominent place was seen by Sophronios, who admits that this Nemesios, the commissioner of the painting and the beneficiary of the miracle was his source – because of this personal closeness of both the dedicator and the image itself the painting was included at the end of the miracle story, without its direct involvement in the course of events

In the later part of the collection of Cosmas and Damian the same sort of iconographical testimony to the miracle was explicitly identified as the source of the 13th century narrator. It was the

³⁷⁶ Vikan, “Art, Medicine”, 72.

³⁷⁷ It seems that with the possibility of seeing the saint face to face there is no need to evoke him through the image. Cf the story of a woman, who calls Symeon in this way (*Vita*, 118.ch.): “If only I see your image, I will be saved.” And Symeon’s claim: “When you regard the imprint of our image, it is us that you will see.” (*Vita*, 231.) both quoted by Vikan, “Art, medicine”, 73. It was by virtue of this evocative character that the iconoclast condemned the eulogies even if bore no figurative representation.

³⁷⁸ MA 11.

healed woman's peplos (cloak), embroidered with gold and silk, representing the figures of the saints and the woman herself. The hagiographer explicitly stated the *memorial* role of this cloak: καὶ μετὰ θάνατον τὸ θαύματι μαρτυρεῖ καὶ προτροπὴ τῶς κακῆς τῆς σῆμα διακεῖται τοῖς γένουσιν καταφυγῆς γίνεταί.³⁷⁹ This indicates that the cloak was on display (probably in the church?) even after the woman's death. The strength the image gave to the narrative was corroborated by the hagiographer's decision to place it at the beginning of his series: ἔξιν δὲ τῶν ἄλλων προθεῖναι τὸ ἐκείν μὲν ῥημένον.³⁸⁰

The examples discussed above, whether textual or iconographical, are present in the miracle narratives in a twofold way. Most often they were commemorative objects, testimonies to the devotion of the pilgrim and to the miraculous experience itself, or, by virtue of their (symbolic or financial) value, they aimed at expressing the patient's gratitude. Lower in number, they also figured in the miracles as already present objects, around which the miracle eventually evolved and thus, they became commemorated within the narrative itself. The miraculous story elevated these objects to the level of testimony. This might occur with images, as my examples have illustrated, but it could also occur with inscriptions originally not related to the miracle. Such non-miraculous ecclesiastical testimonies in the course of the miraculous events not only became the centre of the miracle but also acquired through the saint's intervention, a greater theological significance.

There was an inscription on a gilded mosaic on the wall of Thecla's church, "proclaiming to all people the consubstantiality of the holy and sublime Trinity."³⁸¹ Symposios, the then Arian bishop of Seleucia, had attempted to destroy it and the miracle, Thecla's protective intervention on the behalf of orthodoxy, was manifested in the accident that befell the workman who was entrusted with the carrying out of Symposios' order. The hagiographer began with the existing inscription. Some damage may possibly have been visible at the time of the record. By mentioning the misfortune of the worker whose leg was broken as he fell down was brought to the fore, illustrating Thecla's anger at the deed. The story was enlarged into another dimension, as the originator of the act, Symposios, later converted to orthodoxy. It would not have been alien to the miracle-pattern that he converted as a result of the punishment miracle but it seems that the memory of the events and persons was still alive during the lifetime of the hagiographer. Therefore, he had to account for the time gap between the two events. He returned, however, to the inscription as the palpable testimony to his story. In attributing Symposios' later conversion to this event, the hagiographer emphasized, that the Arian bishop's return to Orthodoxy was expressed by his public confession of the dogma inscribed on this very mosaic.

³⁷⁹ Deubner, KDM, 40.31-32, *Kosmas und Damian*, 199.

³⁸⁰ Prologue to the VIth series, 40-41, Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 198: "This [story] which is in front of me in pictures, deserves to be set as the start for the other miracles."

Votive tablets and commemorative objects played an important role in the shaping of the narrative in a wider sense. It has already been mentioned that these stories served to guide the worshippers in shaping their expectations about the customary process of the incubation rites, the appearance of the healer and how to obtain a cure. Besides this psychological pre-conditioning, the text of the *ex votos* provided direction to the pilgrims on the one hand for moulding their experience into the customary pattern, while on the other hand, they served as a device for continuously teaching pilgrims (even if they were not recipients of any miracle) what to tell to others, far beyond the boundaries of the precinct. The votive texts efficiently provided the worshippers with proper narrative units and unmistakeably the prettiest stories about the wonders of the place.³⁸²

³⁸¹ MT 10.

³⁸² Dorati affirmed the same role of the recorded miraculous stories in connection to the Epidaurian stelai, laying the emphasis on the right choice of the pilgrims amongst the rivalry of the numerous Asclepieia. “Non si trattava solo di convincere i pellegrini presenti nel santuario della validità di una scelta da loro di fatto già compiuta – recarsi in questo piuttosto che in un altro santuario – ma anche di fornire loro gli strumenti necessari per propagare il messaggio una volta allontanatosi da Epidauro e ritornati in patria, dove avrebbero potuto portare non solo la propria personale esperienza, ma una ‘memoria’ più vasta, per così dire, sintetizzata nelle storie esemplari che le stele avevano fatto loro conoscere.” *Funzioni e motivi*, 98.

Chapter 4: The Oral Tradition

Fondamentalement, les deux pôles entre lesquels s'inscrit, se déploie cette rhétorique, sont l'oeil et l'oreille: oeil du voyageur, oreille du public (mais aussi oreille du voyageur et oeil du public).³⁸³

The telling of miraculous stories is a kind of *storytelling*, leaving its mark on the storyteller, the listener and on the tale itself. What exactly should be understood by the telling of the miracles? Its oral character also had a particular effect on the written recording of the story; according to the dynamics of the formation and transmission of the miracles, the story from time to time took shape in written records and then these records continued to be told in an oral form. Thus, recording did not mean the text became fixed. Even the elements of the story were not immutable. Just as someone wrote down the narrated story, the storyteller could draw on “ready” material from the circulating miracle catalogues, a raw material, which he or she felt free to alter. The hagiographer, when he embarked on the project of recording the stories, is reminiscent of Collingwood’s historian in that the stories find him:

The Greek historian cannot like Gibbon, begin by wishing to write a great historical work and go on ask himself what he shall write about ... Instead of the historian choosing the subject, the subject chooses the historian; I mean that history is written only because memorable things have happened which call for a chronicler among the contemporaries of the people who have seen them.³⁸⁴

The miracles that accumulated at the cult site form the narrator’s source material like a conglomerate of stories. Thecla’s hagiographer expressed this idea by saying that the miracles had invaded him, those stories, which “wanted to come to light”³⁸⁵ The stories that accumulated around the Christian ritual healers, embracing several (narrative but occasionally also material) layers of the cult, in some places even the pagan predecessors of the cult as well, can be easily distinguished from the similar Christian testimonies. The Christian incubation collections differ in one essential point from other Christian miracle records, which may even have been contemporary with them or written by the same hagiographer. Although the latter were clustered around an individual, often coming into being within an identifiable time and describing a clearly delimited miraculous activity, the incubation miracles formed around a cult. Moreover, not around the cult of a saint or the saint, but around the cult of ritual sleep. Accordingly, that cult practice encompassed an incomparably deeper past - something not necessarily emphasised in the records. Because the stories were organised around the cult meant that they also incorporated the earlier phases of the cult – i. e. the memory of the preceding healer. The significance of the oral sources was derived from the central importance of

³⁸³ François Hartog, *Le Miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 271, Ch. 2. “L’oeil et l’oreille.”

³⁸⁴ Hartog quotes Collingwood in his *Le Miroir d'Hérodote*, 276 (R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946, p. 26).

³⁸⁵ MT 13.

place and practice. The transmission of the stories formed stratum by stratum around the cult place eventually becoming hagiographical sources.

In the first part of this chapter (Chapter 4.1) I will try to briefly introduce the questions, methods and results of disciplines concerned with the study of orality, which have already been applied on incubation records, and can also be applied directly or in an analogous way to the analysis of Christian dream-miracle narratives. These studies mostly aimed at detecting the orality *behind* the written records, as identifiable sources, and at discovering traces revealing oral traditions in the composition of the text.

In Chapter 4. 2 (Orality and storytelling in the miracles) I will be more concerned with how orality was represented (deliberately or accidentally) within the stories and incorporated into the narrative itself. Hence, in this section, I shall examine the presence of orality within the miracle collections. On the one hand, orality lay behind the formation of the stories into narratives. Their oral transmission is often highlighted by the explicit references of the hagiographers to the oral circumstances of their story collection. On the other hand, there are certain elements within the stories which reflect the probable oral sources. The same phenomenon, the telling and listening to miracles, acquires a slightly different role in the collections since it also formed part of the narrated events. Most intriguingly, hagiographers occasionally artificially (and artfully) created the illusion of orality – as an indispensable element in the miracle narrative. In this way the hagiographer was able to bring such narrative situations to life, drawing him (and to some extent, the reader as well) into a personal closeness with the beneficiary of the miracle or with one of his or her descendants. Its purpose was not only to create an aura of authenticity but also because miracles had to be rhythmically presented in sequence by the storyteller and the main characters aiming at creating variation. I would like to illustrate this artificially composed orality by comparing two groups of Cosmas and Damian' miracles that record the same stories. By referring to artificially created orality I do not mean that there was no oral transmission around the cult site but rather the moment the narrator starts his tale mentioning that he had learnt of this and that event from the son of the healed etc. In fact, however, he was more likely to work from an earlier written miracle catalogue. The following section will discuss the communal, ritualized events of storyteeling, as depicted in the miracle narratives.

In the closing subchapter (Chapter 4. 3: From oral to written record) I would like to investigate what happens to the texts when they receive their written recorded form; how the side-by-side existence of the written and oral traditions worked based on these sources. In order to understand the narrative construction of the story it is necessary to ask what changes can be observed in the structure of the narrative, what drop off the story with the written recording and what new elements enter the text.

1. The role of orality in the formation and transmission of the incubation stories: methodologies

When examining the oral sources of the Epidaurian miracle stories, Lynn LiDonnici greatly relied upon the results Milman Parry and A. B. Lord and methods of classical philology as these relate to orality (Finnegan, Havelock, Peabody).³⁸⁶

Milman Parry defined the aims of research on oral transmission in the following way:

(a) to what extent an oral poet who composes a new poem is dependent upon the traditional poetry as a whole for his phraseology, his scheme of composition, and the thought of his poem; (b) to what extent a poem, original or traditional, is stable in successive recitations of a given singer; (c) how a poem is changed in a given locality over a number of years; (d) how it is changed in the course of its travels from one region to another; (e) in what ways a given poem travels from one region to another, and the extent to which the poetry travels; (f) the different sources of the material from which a given heroic cycle is created; (g) the factors that determine the creation, growth, and decline of a heroic cycle; (h) the relation of the events of an historical cycle to the actual events; and so on and so on. ...³⁸⁷

If we replace the *oral poet* and the *epic singer* with the hagiographer, and the form of *poems* with miracle stories, Parry's questions and his network of connections regarding the emergence and transmission of texts are also become a valid way of studying the way early Christian miracle narratives were shaped. The research of Milman Parry and Albert Lord,³⁸⁸ focused on the formation and transmission of the Homeric epics and on their re-creation, primarily through the telling of songs, during the performance itself. They focussed attention on the phenomena that a poetic text, rooted and surviving in orality is not only transmitted during its performance, but at the same time, it is being created as well. This continuous poetic creation during the telling of the stories depended on the talent of the singer, his poetic repertoire but also on the circumstances of the performance at any given moment. The text-creating performance on the one hand feeds on stock of formulae. On the other hand, however, the narrator carefully followed a narrative logic as well, maintaining the internal coherence of order of the stories. Illustrating this "natural order of things" Lord writes: "In the case of the horse, the singer begins with the blanket under the saddle and ends with the bit in the horse's mouth. He is ready to be led forth. The descriptions are vivid because they follow the action."³⁸⁹ In the early Christian stories of the miraculous cures one finds the same kind of narrative logic. Invariably, the story of the miraculous cures followed a certain "obligatory" and natural order, e. g.

³⁸⁶ E. A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry. Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); B. Peabody, *The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Ancient Greek Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's Works and Days* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975).

³⁸⁷ Milman Parry: "Project for a Study of Jugoslavian Popular Oral Poetry" (typewritten reports from Parry, Milman Parry Collection, Harvard, Widener Library) quoted in the *Introduction* to the second edition of Lord's *The Singer of Tales*, ix, see the next footnote.

³⁸⁸ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2nd edition, Introduction by Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy

³⁸⁹ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 92.

the sickness is described prior to the cure. The encounter with the holy healers or the dream experience also always have a logical sequence. The patient learned about the holy healers, they arrive at the cult place, they encounter with fellow pilgrims, undergo the rite, or the falling asleep – dreaming-awakening etc. In addition, the formation of the plot of the miracle narratives contained several other components, whose origin and coherence within the text derived from the oral transmission of these stories. Lord demonstrated not only the regularities in the way a text assumes its shape while being told, but – and this is more relevant regarding the miracle collections – how even circumstances of narrating a story, its logical requirements ultimately shape the narrative itself, just as he called attention to the role of the audience in this process.

After fruitfully recapitulating the merits of their research and the relevance of them to miracle narrative studies, LiDonnici also warned that the oral tradition in Classics usually refers to oral composition, performance etc, since classical scholars have paid scant attention to the “loose, informal exchange and preservation of non literary material, especially that which is in free language, that is, non-formulaic prose. It is more this type of oral activity, the spread of tales and traditions by word of mouth among the suppliants, which I envision as lying behind some of the *Iamata* tales.”³⁹⁰

I would like to emphasize some of LiDonnici’s statements, who drew on the methodologies not only of Classics, but anthropology, New Testament research and contemporary rumour studies as well. She stressed that the Epidaurian miracles were shaped into texts through several traditions representing sources of different types and of a rich variety. She distinguished traces of 1. the oral tradition that formed around the cult place; 2. the impact of other votives with their own textual and visual narrative; 3. the “stock influence”, that is, the fixed repertoire of pictorial ready-made materials at the cult-place and the possibilities they offered when incorporated into the story; 4. the state-sponsored inscriptions and elements of local propaganda and 5. the priestly editing given to all these factors. LiDonnici gives an example of when to suppose oral source material:

The existence of an oral tradition of tales concerning Asklepios’ activity, and occasionally centering on particular votives or places within the sanctuary should logically be expected and is vaguely indicated by internal evidence in the *Iamata*. [...] orality should be suspected, where tales occur in groups or pairs which are similar thematically but different linguistically.³⁹¹

The anthropological literature of orality in non-literate societies provides a different point of view. Jan Vansina, in his *Oral Tradition as History* calls attention to the fact that oral traditions document the present, “not only because they are told in the present but they embody a message for the present, not necessarily identical with that message of the past”.³⁹² This message for the present is an essential factor in this process of re-shaping and re-interpreting the message according to its

³⁹⁰ LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions*, 53.

³⁹¹ LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions*, 52.

³⁹² Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

temporary context. I shall return to this observation in relation to the repetitive character of the miracle and the re-shaping of the past theological message of the miracle within repeated narrative contexts.

Questions about how stories spread and which were remembered during the process of oral formation and transfer have been in the focus of rumour studies. The spread of anecdotes, gossip, and modern legends provide an important parallel for understanding how stories spread, and especially, what fell out and what was added during the transmission of the story. The results of this research (e. g. those of Allport³⁹³) were used by LiDonnici in her study of the Epidaurian incubation corpus although even earlier in the 1970s they had been applied in the investigation of early Christian oral traditions (Ernest Abel³⁹⁴, Gerd Theissen³⁹⁵). At the same time, anthropologists also started to take notice of Christian rituals as these relate to the role of orality and storytelling in the pilgrim experience.³⁹⁶ The most important of what anthropological orality studies formulated was a concept that harmonizes with the deductions of Parry and Lord. There are no original versions of orally transmitted stories because the content and contexts were continually being re-shaped.

These conclusions marked another research-field of oral tradition: among the schools of New Testament studies one of the basic dividing lines was extent to which scholars focused on the concept of the “original text” and how they were able to distinguish between the categories of oral and written tradition. Rudolf Bultmann, an influential figure in the form-critique school established by Hermann Gunkel, in his *History of the Synoptic Tradition*,³⁹⁷ regarded the reconstruction of the “original form” of the Gospel tradition as his task. By attempting to unravell the collective oral tradition, Bultmann revealed the social marks in its language and that the Gospels represented both a continuously growing and stratified tradition.

Anonymity, collectivity, and nonliteracy were thus considered the formal attributes of the synoptic tradition, and together they epitomize the concept of *Kleinenliterature*. In sum, Bultmann intended to come to terms not with consciously and artistically reflective literature, but in communally shaped and shared folk traditions

³⁹³ Gordon W. Allport, *The Psychology of Rumour* (with Leo Postman), (New York: Henry Holt, 1947).

³⁹⁴ Ernest L. Abel, “The Psychology of Memory and Rumor Transmission and their Bearing on Theories of Oral Transmission in Early Christianity” *Journal of Religion* 51 (1971): 270-281.

³⁹⁵ Gerd Theissen, “Itinerant Radicalism: The Tradition of Jesus sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature” *Radical Religion* 2 (1976), 84-93.

³⁹⁶ Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978).

³⁹⁷ *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* published originally in 1921 (in English *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

- thus was his approach summarised and in part criticised by Werner Kelber.³⁹⁸ The counterpart to Bultmann's hypothesis of the folkloric, communal, and loose oral transmission was expounded by Birger Gerhardsson,³⁹⁹ who proposed that the transmission of Jesus' teachings might have been a process similar to that of the rabbinic tradition with verbatim memorization and exact reproduction of the text. Bultmannian model, thus, denied all conscious textual creation and emphasised an oral transmission growing by leaps and bounds. By contrast, Gerhardsson's mechanical model excluded creative, communal shaping, the independent life of the text, together with its social, literary and propagandistic contexts, and the personal impact of the transmitters. A new line in New Testament research developed between these two models building equally on the two previous concepts and criticising them. This new school looked beyond the borders of its own discipline, and exploiting both the methods of Anglo-Saxon classical-philology in orality research and simultaneously applying the results of anthropology, rumour studies and sociology, it created a more nuanced picture of the Gospels' textual history. One pioneer of this research direction was Erhardt Güttemanns,⁴⁰⁰ while today Werner Kelber follows in the tracks of Walter J. Ong and Jack Goody. Kelber has summarised his point of departure in the following: "In approaching Mark's healing stories we encounter a *plurality* of brief tales that are impressive by their *uniformity* of composition and *variability* of narrative exposition, and we seek an explanation for this triple phenomenon in the oral technique of communication."⁴⁰¹

When analysing the compositional history of the *Iamata* inscriptions, LiDonnici's aim was to identify the oral aspect *behind* the incubation tales. Her approach in this respect has been among the most fruitful with results that should open up new directions for similar studies on Christian hagiographic material in general. Although I have been strongly influenced by LiDonnici's handling of the incubation material, and in my analysis below I will follow some of her observations on the Christian incubation tales, I will add a new dimension to the oral background she examined. In addition to questioning *what oral sources were used* in the formation of the collections, the internal evidence of the hagiographic narratives also provide insight into the way the stories circulated orally,

³⁹⁸ Werner, H. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1983), 3. Bultmann, although he neglected the importance of distinguishing between the oral and written traditions, he nevertheless called attention to such elements, which can successfully applied not only in an analysis of Gospel texts but in the broader hagiographic literature. I shall touch upon some of these elements when addressing the emergence of the narrative techniques in incubation collections.

"Bultmann – writes Kelber – illustrated a considerable number and variety of regularities and tendencies operative in the synoptic tradition: dogmatic motifs, novelistic embellishments, the law of single perspective, the rule of scenic duality, an inclination toward differentiation and individualization, the transportation of narrative material into direct speech, the law of repetition, and many more proclivities." (Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 3)

³⁹⁹ Birger Gerdhardsson, *Memory and manuscript: oral tradition and written transmission in rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity*. Transl. E. J. Sharpe, (Lund: Gleerup, 1961); idem, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964).

⁴⁰⁰ Erhardt Güttemanns, *Candid Questions Concerning Gospel Form Criticism: A Methodological Sketch of the Fundamental Problematics of Form and Redaction Criticism*, English translation William G. Doty, (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1979) (the German original was published in 1970)

how they reached the recorder and more importantly, what the hagiographer wished to depict of these circumstances. Orality had a role in the circulation of stories around the cult place, as a source for the recording and compilation of the miracle collections and in the shaping of individual narratives. However, the composed material also took on a life of its own through the pilgrims and patients returning home. Material moulded in this way was told and retold naturally, not only on the basis of the pilgrims' own experience, but through orality *seen* or *read* in the sanctuary. Moreover, it was not just the material of the miraculous they took home but more significantly a form of the pilgrim experience in the form of a narrative code, a way of describing the circumstances of dreaming, together with the obligatory attributes of the epiphany and the miracle cure:

Non si trattava solo di convincere i pellegrini presenti nel santuario della validità di una scelta da loro di fatto già compiuta – recarsi in questo piuttosto che in un altro santuario – ma anche di fornire loro gli strumenti necessari per propagare il messaggio una volta allontanatisi da Epidauro e ritornati in patria, dove avrebbero potuto portare non solo la propria personale esperienza, ma una ‘memoria’ più vasta, per così dire, sintetizzata nelle storie esemplari che le stele avevano fatto loro conoscere. [...] Se quindi l’idea di una diffusione del testo, nella sua interezza e in una forma codificata, tra un pubblico diverso da quelli visitatori del tempio, resta verosimilmente esclusa – sebbene non si possa escludere, se non altro come ipotesi, che venissero effettuate trascrizioni delle stele – e il testo, per che ne sappiamo, era fatto ‘consumato’ *in loco*, il messaggio nella sua essenza poteva viaggiare ben oltre i limiti di Epidauro, avvicinandosi, sotto questo punto di vista, ai libri di miracoli.”⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 46.

⁴⁰² Dorati, *Funzioni e motivi*, 98.

2. Orality, oral sources and storytelling within the Christian incubation miracle records

“me, for whom the talk (*logos*) is dearer than my homeland: $\mu\epsilon\delta\omicron\varsigma\lambda\gamma\omicron\varsigma\sigma\tau\upsilon\tau\upsilon\nu\gamma\eta\nu\omicron\nu\lambda\upsilon\tau\iota\mu\alpha\lambda\phi\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ ” – thus wrote Sophronios in the *Laudes* by which he began the miracles of Cyrus and John.⁴⁰³ It is difficult to provide an overall picture of the oral layer within the miracle catalogues. There were different degrees of oral tradition in each collection because of the varying – sometimes very conscious – compositional techniques of the hagiographers. The two most polished corpora, from the literary point of view, those of Thecla and Cyrus and John, represent two extremes in the *depiction* of how sources were handled. Thecla’s hagiographer provided the reader with indications at each step that he was offering the fruits of his own personal research, pieces of information that he had sought out directly, often incorporating into the narrative frame how he had met the narrator. At other times he let the reader know that he had travelled to the town of the beneficiary of the miracle to do a sort of field research. From him we also learn that he was familiar with the (written and oral) miracle stories of Antiquity. These pagan narratives may have served as examples for his development of the narrative model. At the cult place itself there was a small “library” that contained the miracle stories of the previous healer Sarpedonios. The memory of his stories was still vivid alive in the oral traditions in the city as well. On the other hand, the ‘Herodotean’ perspective of the writer should not be neglected through the hagiographer introduced himself as a collector of circulating information.⁴⁰⁴

In order to work in an archive it is indispensable to regard the *written* more true, more authentic, and safer than the *oral* – even if writing can also lie. “Hérodote, homme entre l’écrit et l’oral, écoute des gens qui se servent de livres, mais, lui-même, l’idée d’ »aller aux archives« du sanctuaire de Saïs ou de Bouto ne saurait l’effleurer: “Je sais pour avoir entendu.”⁴⁰⁵

What gives credit to the presentation of oral tradition as the primary source in the Thecla collection is the geographical and chronological coherence of the stories. The chronological reference points encompassed contemporary witnesses and two earlier generations; (a century’s narrated tradition revolved around the city of Seleucia and its surrounding region). What Dagron called the “vaste *présent* correspondant à deux ou trois générations” enabled the hagiographer to draw

⁴⁰³ Patrologia Graeca, 87.3. 3388. C-D

⁴⁰⁴ Thecla’s hagiographer drew consciously on Herodotus. His direct reference is complemented by the impression the hagiographer leaves in us, the figure of the researcher, the collector of stories, the man who is going around in order to get informed. Hartog formulated the way Herodotus created his own persona in this way: “Que l’historien initial, aventuré dans la narration, ait rencontré en elle la fiction, c’est ne pas un accident fortuit: cela même appartient au procès fondamental. Les “sources” d’Hérodote sont fictives, en dépit de sa volonté historique d’aller en “s’enformant”, parce que la fiction appartient au procès de la narration primitive se faisant.” Hartog, *Le miroir d’Hérodote*, 291.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

on (according to Dagron, exclusively) an orally transmitted narrative material, which is “a language, that is not yet a tradition and not yet a legend.”⁴⁰⁶

The other important editor of miracle collections, Sophronios, followed the opposite method in introducing the sources of his material. Apart from his most general and schematic remarks (e. g. that the healed patient told everyone about the miracle that had happened to him) he never referred to his sources. I would hazard to say that he carefully avoided recording them for the same reason that Thecla's hagiographer was so keen to name them. With Sophronios the compositional model was different. The intention of the narrator was to produce a free-flowing narrative, in which he ordered a chain of stories in accordance with his own editorial principles. He created the impression that his own creativity as a “writer” should be more emphasised than did the narrator of Thecla's miracles who subscribed to another image of the narrator-self. The metaphor Sophronios used to describe his endeavours was that of Peter, who foolishly attempted to walk on water. To me, this simile reflects the eradication of all concreteness from the stories. Thecla's hagiographer compared himself to one who sought gold, having to first dig and carry away the soil with much labor in order to reach the treasure hidden beneath.

With the other three collections, it is not possible to speak of the conscious literary artwork of a single hagiographer. The multifaceted layers and their continuous editing allow different glimpses into the formation of the collections. Besides the two corpora of Cosmas and Damian, which more closely resembled inventory-like miracle catalogues, Artemios' *Miracula* fell halfway between the highly ambitious literary artworks and the catalogues of miracles. This midway position holds also true for the presence of oral transmission, that is for the extent the hagiographer revealed his oral sources and described the occasions of communal storytelling within the church. He seems to have been a writer attentive to details and aware of what the rules of incubation-storytelling required, yet he was far from the artistic talent of Sophronios or the hagiographer of Thecla. This is why I call his representation of orality a halfway between obligatory rhetoric and reflection on real experience.

Examining the collections individually, the following questions require answers: 1. What are the aspects or direct references in the texts that indicate an oral transmission with regard to the sources of the miracles? 2. What part does oral transmission play in the spread of miracle stories and the storytelling depicted in the miracles themselves? 3. What were the (ritual and everyday) occasions that provided a framework for telling miracle stories? 4. Who might have been the carriers of this oral tradition around or beyond the cult place? Who were the storytellers sometimes named either by the hagiographer or by characters in the miracles? 5. These questions give rise to another question. What

⁴⁰⁶ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 25.

role did the presence and representation of orality play in the narrative, including the moments when the fiction of orality is encountered. Here, I shall only touch briefly upon the way oral transmission of the miracles may have shaped the cult experience.

Orality in Thecla's collection

Gilbert Dagron has pointed out that the transmission of the material in 'Thecla' corpus significantly differs from the way stories were transmitted in later, similar miracle collections:

C'est une difference importante entre les autres recueils postérieurs comme les Miracles de Cyr et Jean ou de Côme et Damien, dont les auteurs se documentent surtout par conversation avec des desservants du sanctuaire ou par lecture des *ex-voto*.⁴⁰⁷

Unlike these collections, continues Dagron, 'Thecla's hagiographer drew on a not yet recorded, living oral tradition. A close look at the sources (reference to written and material evidence is not entirely missing from 'Thecla's corpus) may display a reality subtly different from both his statements. However, when Dagron outlined the geographical radius of action of the miracles,⁴⁰⁸ the places where there was a still active oral tradition about the saint's deeds at the time the collection was recorded became visible. A chronological survey of the stories⁴⁰⁹ on the other hand showed that the narrator-hagiographer's knowledge embraced, more or less, a century-long tradition. The large number of events precisely dated by the hagiographer is important and unique to its genre. The hagiographer was also keen to picture himself as a researcher of oral tradition – his literary – historiographical ideal admittedly being Herodotus. Nevertheless, the chronological framing of the stories rendered credible the principles of collecting and editing established by the hagiographer in the prologue:

Καὶ ὅτι ἐκ πολλῶν ἡγαν ἡλῶγα ἐπωμεν, φρε ἐπωμεν ἡ τε μεῖς σμεν τῶς, ἡ τε συνομολογεῖται τοῖς πολλοῖς, καὶ ὅτι πῦντες ἱστορες τε καὶ ὅτι πεῖρα καθεστῆκαμεν, ὅτι μὲν καὶ ἀτῆ τῆ ἐπαθεῖν, ὅτι δὲ καὶ παρ ἡ ἀτῆν τῆν ἐπεπονθῶτων κηκοῖτες.

What kind of information did the text contain concerning the circumstances of its formation? A knot of inter-related reasons lay behind the hagiographer's motivation for writing. The hagiographer intended his work as a gift of thanksgiving. At the same time, the hagiographer was inspired by Thecla and also urged on by a friend⁴¹⁰ although from words he occasionally dropped two other background features come to light as well. The first is that the hagiographer was familiar with the ancient prophetic and incubation material, in part even preserved in written records. He probably had a more intimate knowledge of these records, not only regarding their existence as an annoying challenge like Sophronios or sweeping them aside as godless nonsense.

⁴⁰⁷ *Vie et Miracles*, 24, 1.

⁴⁰⁸ *Vie et Miracles*, 24-25.

⁴⁰⁹ *Vie et Miracles*, 25-27.

⁴¹⁰ A certain Achaïos, cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 21

Zeus of Dodona, Apollo of Delphoi, the Castalian oracles, and Asclepius in Pergamon, Epidaurus, and Aegae: πολλὰ περὶ πολλὰν ἡναγεργάσιν χρηστῶρι τε καὶ παθῶν λυτῶρια, which, - writes our hagiographer – “are partly tales (*muthoi*) and fictitious things (*plasmata*), ingenious inventions of their fabricants (*kompseumata*), who wished to attribute to the daimones some power and strength and knowledge of the future, but on the other hand they are often authentic and for many people useful oracles “full of breathing (*gemonta*) ambiguities...” Though Dagron writes that the reference to the great oracle-giving sanctuaries “est purement littéraire et conventionnelle”⁴¹¹ but if someone mentioned Epidauros and Aegae, he must had in mind the stories of miraculous cures that happened at these places, either knowing them in their written form or by hearsay. In addition, by criticizing the content of the texts of these miracles and oracles (and I venture to say criticizing the written records as the hagiographer emphasized) the hagiographer seemed to refer to a material that was well known to both the critic and his presumed audience. Sophronios’s references in the *Laudes* were much more formulaic. He not only listed the local Isis among the demons freed by Christ, but the Loxias’s (=Apollo’s) tripod, Dodona and Castalia, the bull of Rhodos and Asclepius – even though some two hundred years had passed in the meantime!

The literary reality of the ancient Greek oracle-, and dream healing literature undoubtedly inspired the recording of Thecla’s miracles, merely by its existence and splendour. At the same time, it also directed the way Thecla’s miraculous stories evolved. One of the basic layers in the pagan material known to the hagiographer must have been the “book-collection” containing the miracles of Sarpedonios, the previous incubation healer at the cult site and the collective memory that preserved this tradition orally: Τὸν Σαρπηδῶνιον τὸν ἄγνοε μὲν οὐδεὶς, καὶ γὰρ παλαιότατον τὸ κατὰ αὐτὸν μυθολόγημα γινώμεν πᾶς ἱστορίῳ καὶ βιβλῶν.⁴¹²

The phrase “nobody ignores” (ἄγνοε μὲν οὐδεὶς), that popped up elsewhere as well, was a reflection of the fact that numerous miracle stories contain elements of knowledge that was shared by the whole community. It appears that the hagiographer consciously competed with the miracle-tales of the rival cult hero and he repeatedly used a very powerful image. Thecla silenced, dumbfounded Sarpedonios, “she rendered him voiceless, this one with so many voices and so many words saying oracles, by making the word of the Lord and King a stronghold against him: Keep silence and withhold yourself! In this way he was muted, left alone, and he hid himself. I think he even left his tomb and the place where he stayed...”⁴¹³ Thus the imagery of total silence dominates; words of the deity and words about him were muted alike. And with an amazing twist, the

⁴¹¹ *Vie et Miracles*, 287, n. 6.

⁴¹² “Nobody is ignorant about that Sarpedonios, and I came to know the indeed very ancient legends around him from stories and books.” MT 1. This seems a clear indication that the hagiographer had both oral and written information concerning Sarpedonios’ activity. cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 291, note 2.

⁴¹³ MT 1, lines 16-20.

hagiographer connects the physical presence of the healer with the stories circulating about him and his miracle-working. No miracle-*tales* told, no cult.

In the same vein, the hagiographer tried to reduce to silence his own rivals, the local rhetors as well.⁴¹⁴ The high level of the literary apparatus mobilized by the hagiographer was also a response to the level of rhetoric marking the work of the greatest poets and writers of Antiquity. Just as his narrative technique was based on his classical reading, it is not surprising that the first “narrative” of the miracle collection comprised a Herodotus-paraphrase on dream interpretation.⁴¹⁵ Nevertheless, the inspiration for storytelling and rendering the *words* of the miracle narratives *miraculous*, originated from Thecla. The merit was hers not only in the recording of her miracles but also when, during the annual panegyricus-competition the words themselves became the *thauma* of eloquence: οὐ τῶ δέ μοι τὴν χεῖρα καὶ κερὶν συνεπέδωκεν ἄμρτυς, ὅς εἶναι τι καὶ δόξαι, καὶ ἐρηκῆναι μετρώς, καὶ θαύμα πλεστόν ἢ πᾶ μῆδεν ἰθαυμαστὸν ἢ μὲν πενγκασθαι λῆγων.⁴¹⁶

The oral tradition at the cult place must have been old indeed if the ancient name of the place that preceded even the cult of Athene was still known. The oral tradition must also have been very intense as well, since the miracles advertising the triumph of Thecla “were so magnificent that it was impossible even for those who wanted to doubt, not to confess them / not to agree with them, and not to tell and make others tell them.”

Who then were the oral sources of the hagiographer? As soon as he passed from telling about the large-scale miracles affecting the whole town to individual cases, an odd remark suggests that, in fact, the beneficiaries of the miracles or the witnesses would have allowed such events to descend into oblivion, λήθῃ καὶ σιωπῇ παραδόντες.⁴¹⁷ The still living carriers of memory may well have been those who experienced the miracle (e. g. MT 11). Such people would also have included the hagiographer himself (MT 12, 31), the relatives of the healed person (MT 19, 24), in connection with miracles concerning the sanctuary the whole community of believers (MT 5, 6, 26, 27), the compatriots of the healed patients (MT 28, 34, and in MT 15 Cyprus, from where the fame of the miracle reached Seleucia). Testimonies also comprised the descendants of the victim as in the punishment miracle of MT 33 which ended in death, and whose family even after a long time were still marked by that infamy.

There was a more emphatic expression of gathering direct information from the participants in the miracles or from the eye-witnesses at the end of MT 34, a phrase that suggested that the

⁴¹⁴ cf. for example MT 30

⁴¹⁵ Moreover, an unmasking dream interpretation, about Croesus’s dream. On Herodotean dreams see Fr. Hartog, *Le Miroir d’Hérodote*, 278-279

⁴¹⁶ MT 41.25-27.

⁴¹⁷ MT 6.

hagiographer had even travelled to the town of the beneficiary of the miracle in order to collect the details of the story:⁴¹⁸ Το□το δ□ κα□ παρ□ α□τ□ν τ□ν □κε□νοιν πολιτ□ν, τ□χα δ□ κα□ συγγεν□ν □πυθ□μην. It is plausible that this trip provided an occasion for the hagiographer to collect the other miracles experienced by the citizens of the same town, Eleucia (MT 19, 33, 35). That the hagiographer had in mind a sort of “publication of research” was evidenced by the last sentence of MT 35: □περ ο□ν □γνωμεν, π□λιν ε□ς μ□σον □γ□γωμεν.

The groups involved in the transmission of the stories would surely have included those lay-people who moved into the sanctuary, and spent years there, or occasionally the rest of their lives (MT 19, 43, 46)⁴¹⁹; similarly the monks and nuns from the cloister attached to the church,⁴²⁰ as well as pilgrims. Of the latter group, the most renowned was the pilgrim Egeria, who paid a visit to the Hagia Thecla as well. In her travel-diary she recorded that the entire *Vita* of the saint was read aloud to them at Hagia Thecla.⁴²¹ Pilgrims were carefully depicted in the miracles since they mostly formed the crowds that flooded into the cult-spot on the saint’s feast day (MT 26, 29, 33, 41).⁴²²

The range of the miracle’s spreading fame could encompass an entire town, μ□ρτυς το□ θα□ματος □ σ□μπασα Σελε□κου π□λις (MT23) – although it also occurred that by embracing an entire region, it knew no geographical boundaries (MT28): □λαι π□λεις κα□ □λοι δ□μοι, κα□ ο□ μ□χρι τε □μ□ν □π□ τ□ς □□ας παραγιν□μενοι, κα□ α□ π□λιν ο□ □φ□ □μ□ν κα□ μ□χρι τ□ς □σ□ας □κτειν□μενοι.

The same miracle (MT 28) informs us about the difficulties involved in the collection of these stories: “as the seekers of gold, who first cut the woods and dig up the soil, so it is to collect the miracles on the basis of hearsay; those, which were covered, as if by a hillock, by time and oblivion, and thus became obfuscated and weak and tended to exclude memory, order, the place and circumstances of their origin. However, I must say that what I found I discovered only after searching and investigating with difficulty and in the midst of toils...” Whereas elsewhere (MT 44) it had been claimed that the miracles floated in from all directions towards the hagiographer, and “even that the miracles themselves wanted to come to light”, demanding speedy work from the hagiographer: μ□τε ο□ν □με□ς μελλ□σωμεν, κα□ τ□ θ□ττον βουλομ□ν□ προπηδ□ναι θα□ματι χαρισ□μεθα τ□χος (MT 13).

⁴¹⁸ cf Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 385. 9.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 77.

⁴²⁰ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 57-58

⁴²¹ Egeria, *Travels*, 22.2-23.6: Ibi ergo cum venissem in nomine Dei, facta oratione ad martyrium nec non etiam et lectus omnis actus sanctae Teclae..., Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 57

⁴²² On pilgrims see Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 73-79.

Traces of storytelling and handling of oral sources in the collections of Cosmas and Damian

Starting with the two miracle collections of Cosmas and Damian, the KDM and the London Codex (CL), the references to orality invited the reader to consider some of the essential realities of the cult practice and more importantly, differences between the various phases in the development of the cult.

In the first and oldest part of the KDM (1-10) it is often described, as a narrative solution for transition between the miracles, that the recipient of the previous miracle “praised Christ and the merit of the saints, proclaiming the miracle he was affected by...”⁴²³ Proclaiming the miracle to all present as a form of thanksgiving was probably not unusual in the real practice of the sanctuary. The miracles thus told were woven into the texture of stories not only at the cult place but in a broader context as well. As KDM 9 attests, the stories of miraculous cures were not only known among the Christian inhabitants of the locality but they reached the ears of pagans, too; the (pagan) protagonist of this tale was urged by the spreading fame of the cult site to seek a cure there although not from the saints! This Greek still identified the incubation healers as Castor and Polydeikes and this fact highlights how their transmitted miracles revolved around the cult place rather than the persons of the healers.⁴²⁴ The same miracle can also be found in the London Codex (CL 23). Here, we do not read of the orally spread fame of the healers but rather it was explicitly stated the way the sick pagan found his way to the sanctuary: “Those, who were, just like him, faithful to the godless (?) Hellenic (?) religion, carried him to the church of the wise doctors, Saint Cosmas and Damian, but not as to these saints, but to Castor and Polydeikes, whom the Greeks (?) Hellenes) for long / since long (?) *déthēn*) worshipped as healing daimones of diseases.” The pagan Greek was forced to recognize and acknowledge as a condition of his cure the identity and power of the saints. As a beneficiary of the miracle, he could not remain within the framework of his personal experience but in both versions of the story he proclaimed the miracle to his fellow pagans, and many of those who listened to his story and the story of his baptism then confessed to Christ.⁴²⁵

The miraculous deeds of the saints spread orally and became a starting point for those who were ignorant about the cult (either because of the distance or because they were not Christians). As some of the miracles attest, they learned about the cures in this way. KDM 13 represents a good example of how these stories were spread because it shows how the healers known from hearsay

⁴²³ KDM 3.

⁴²⁴ Cf. KDM 2, in which a Jewish woman turns to the saints. In the case of our Greek, it is clear that we are dealing with a tradition inherited from the previous healer; but what was it that Jewess could have heard, thought and expected that she should have turned to the Christian saints? Was it only the pressure caused by the illness? A vague memory of Jewish incubation traditions? Or the entire background to the story was the result of the spreading fame of the recoveries?

could actually effectuate cures through long-distant healing. The protagonists of the miracle were a soldier in foreign land and his wife, also from that place. When she became ill, her husband comforted her by recalling the effective and miraculously fast cures carried out by Cosmas and Damian. As the result of telling about previous cures by the saints, the woman was filled by the desire to see them. Cosmas and Damian in turn, - as a reward for the husband's faith - appeared to the woman in a dream and healed her.⁴²⁶ In addition, this miracle provides a remarkable example about who and how patients may have told about the cures effected by the saints.

The telling of tales by pilgrims and by guides is an important part of the pilgrimage experience, and it plays a great role in inducing mental readiness and expectation, not only in pilgrimage, but in many other types of ritual as well. In the case of incubation, however, it actually functioned, mental readiness was certainly an important element.⁴²⁷

That sick people – as a result of their illness-situation, their participation in ritual practice, and because of the similarity of their experiences and expectations – shared their dreams, the cures they saw or heard about, and that they retold the encouraging, famous miracle narratives of the cult place, would have been natural behaviour from their point of view. This is self-evident in the stories themselves where the patients were depicted discussing the healing between themselves, their asking for counsel, their being sceptical or sharing their common joy. A more specific situation was represented by the ritual context for the oral recalling of the miracles, and of storytelling. This occasion played an organised and organic part in the worship of the saints and in the practice of incubation itself. Three major occasions for the communal telling of miracles were noted in the miracle collections and included the communal vigil, the *pannychis*; the communal meal, the *agape*; and the feast day of the saint. The practice of the all-night vigil in the sanctuary, its name and its cultic function may be found in ancient Greek religious ritual.⁴²⁸

In the third part of the KDM (21-26) the all-night vigil, the *pannychis* was, on the one hand, represented an “exclusive” source for the first person narrator, on the other hand, it provided a cultic and narrative unity for the stories. In this narrative framework created by the hagiographer, he was one of the healed patients, who with some encouragement, had ventured on the project of recording some miracles. He naturally faced (and confronted his readers with) the problem of the vastness of the material: “in fact, which ones of the miracles one could narrate? Those of today, those of yesterday, those of each day, those which took place for many people, or those for single individuals, those from here or those from elsewhere?”⁴²⁹ To facilitate the choice and, at the same time, in order

⁴²⁵ KDM 9

⁴²⁶ A more absurd example of what one can deduce from hearsay about the saints' competence is the case of the lamenting teacher (*paidagogos*), who, learning from the stories the wonders the saints can perform, turned to them with his problem: his desire to settle in Constantinople and get a job there (KDM 18).

⁴²⁷ LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian*, 52.

⁴²⁸ The night of Saturday to Sunday, cf Festugière, *Sainte Thècle...*, 148, note 1, and Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 377, note 6.

⁴²⁹ Prologue to the miracles.

to establish the (fictitious) narrative situation, he chose those stories that he had heard himself during the *pannychis*, just as the narrator of the Thousand and One Nights made an effort to only tell the tales of Scherezade. To justify his method of collecting sources, another argument was used, namely the desire to make the collecting work easier.

The *pannychis* was also the night when the saints' eulogies were distributed, that is wax, lamp oil, or other sort of healing objects, and the dreams seen during this night had particular thaumaturgical significance. According to the stories in the KDM 30 and the *Miracula Artemii* (MA) 33 the distribution of the *kerote* occurred in the sixth hour, i. e. around midnight.

The all-night vigil of Artemios

There are several special events that took place only during the Saturday night-vigil. Only at this occasion it was allowed to sleep next to the saint's coffin, this was the time when the most efficacious lamp oil was distributed and when hymn of Romanos the Melodist were sung.⁴³⁰ There are miracles that either took place during the *pannychis*, the customary all-night vigil, or emphasise its importance in the miracle collection of Artemios. The first of these, MA 15, illustrated immediately at the beginning of the narrative the devotion of the character through his participation in the *pannychis*: "There was a certain man in voluntary service [...] who was devoted to the all-night vigil of the Forerunner every Saturday." The following *pannychis*-miracle (MA 18) begins in a similar manner but in this case the events evolve during the vigil itself, which, however, was not an ordinary Saturday but rather the *pannychis* held on the night preceding the saint's feast day (that of Saint John the Forerunner, his sanctuary hosted the relics of Artemios): "There was a certain man who from tender age used to attend the all-night vigil of the Forerunner ... [...] this man was burglarised as the birthday of the holy Forerunner was dawning." Because he had no clothes, he was unable to attend the vigil of the feast day; this moves Artemios to appear to the man in dream in his house and reproach him: "Why did you not go to meet and escort the holy object in procession with your candle, as is customary for you celebrants of the all-night vigil?" A more precise picture is given of the vigil and the cure occurring at that time in MA 33:

It was a Saturday, the eve of the Lord's day and the holy night vigil was being celebrated; after the *troparion* had occurred and the three evening antiphons, Theognios stood up and fell back on the bed with the herniated child and the child's father himself. And then he fell asleep and saw the one who is quick to help – the glorious servant of Christ Artemios speaking to him: 'Get up, and take some of the prepared wax-salve and anoint your chest and eat some of it. Also anoint the testicles of the child reclining with you and both of you will be well.' After the working of the miracle the man recounted how: "I woke up immediately at the saint's words. It was already the hour of accomplishing the midnight rites and the occasion for the holy wax-salve to be dispensed at the adoration of the precious life-giving cross. [...] Afterward, when we were healthy, I related to my companion the thoughts that I had in my mind and the requests I made to the martyr and the vision that befell me..."

⁴³⁰ MA 19; this is the earliest known mention of Romanos besides his own works, cf. Rydén, "Kyrkan som sjukhus. Om den helige Artemios' mirakler" *Religion och Bibel* 44 (1985), 15, note 19.

The last miracle from Artemios' corpus recalled here connected the Saturday night vigil with the eve of the saint's feast day; moreover, it was an important source for seeing how this ritual took place with frequent participation in the Saturday *pannychis*, itself becoming a kind of votive gift. The protagonist of the story was a widow with her sick child. During their stay in the church, the preparations for the saint's feast day began and the child "assisted capably in both hanging lamps and dispensing water and other necessities on the occasion of the church assembly namely the feast of the holy martyr." As an exchange for the cure, Artemios made the following request to the mother: "if your son recuperates, frequent the all-night vigil that is celebrated here."⁴³¹

Returning to the collection of Cosmas and Damian, what stands out in the KDM 41 story was not only that the miraculous cure took place on the saints' feast day but that the healed man each year repeatedly retold on this same day about the miraculous cure Cosmas and Damian performed on him.

This brings us back into the context of storytelling during the vigil just as the hagiographer in KDM 21-26 described how the just healed patients told their stories during the *pannychis*, one after the other. The narrator-protagonist of the first miracle (KDM 21) was a recently recovered patient, of whom we learn (from the hagiographer) at the end of the story, that ever since the miracle he had become a regular visitor to the church. Thus, the hagiographer established a sort of continuity between the time of the narration and that of the recording, trying in this way to give credit to the story, with both the subject and source of the miracle and the recorder (the hagiographer) were, as it were, living witnesses to these events.

The beginning of the next miracle (KDM 22) remained within the rules of communal storytelling. Just as the previous one ended, another, recently recovered patient took up the word. It is remarkable how the *meta tauta* beginnings of the early miracle catalogue, the Codex Londoniensis, transform into a description of the process of events, each with an incipit in which one patient had just left when the other arrived. The same framework remained, adjusted to the conventions of storytelling. The narrative situation underwent a change in the next miracle (KDM 23), where we learn only from the interpolated half-sentences that the sick person himself is narrating the events. Moreover, in the epilogue added to the end of the miracle, it is made clear that as soon as the patient left the sanctuary, he continued to spread the saints' miraculous deeds that he had personally experienced. In the fictitious framework of the narrative technique in the next miracle, the storytellers within the sanctuary heap up miracle accounts, actually interrupting each other. Thus, while one was still telling his story, another one begins his own. This miracle, the KDM 24, is noteworthy for several reasons. It was one of the best known miracles in the corpus and was known

to Sophronios. It was also paraphrased by the hagiographer of Saint Menas. The narrator was also a healed patient on this occasion although not the recipient of the cure described in the miracle. He was rather a witness to the miracle, the third patient lying between the two people healed by the same miracle. This storytelling technique called the *narration of the third*, appeared on other occasions in the corpus⁴³² and in Thecla's collection⁴³³ as well. It aimed at giving the plot the credibility of oral tradition, a reality-effect.⁴³⁴ What rendered this transmission unique is that this third narrator was the – allegedly – oral source used by the hagiographer, although for the reporting character who re-told the story the source took the form of a *vision*. However, as shall be seen below, given the nature of the story, this narrator must also have been informed by what the dreamers, the protagonists of the miracle, *told* him.

The story runs that on the right side of our ultimate “narrator” lay a mute noblewoman and on his left side a paralysed man. The saints to the paralysed man appeared in dream and ordered him to approach the woman; when he finally makes an attempt, the mute woman cried out and the paralysed man ran away. In order that the miracle-element of the story was made clear, it was essential within the coherence of the narrative, that the paralysed man tell his dream, since this legitimised his action and demonstrated the saints' intervention. The miracle that comes next (KDM 25) evolved in a similar way. A third character was placed between the husband, doubting the fidelity of his wife and the wife, unable to prove her innocence. This third character was a blind man whom the saints had told to rub his eyes from some milk handed to him by a chaste woman as a remedy. The blind man told his dream to his neighbours. It reached the ears the husband, who passed it on to his wife, until the miracle occurs and the husband's suspicions were dispelled.

The KDM 26 miracle story can be traced back to the *pannychis* where the heretic protagonist of the story learned from hearsay about the miracle-working of the saints (apparently from outside the context of the sanctuary), and was taken with a desire to participate in the Saturday night vigil. He was not ill, but the stories he heard had piqued his curiosity. Despite the fact that he was not a patient – the saints appeared to him in dream and proposed a remedy for the ills of the noblewoman lying next to him. In the story, it was seen as a test of his faith whether or not he would have the courage to report the dream he received. He was hindered from telling the wondrous event because of the difference in rank between the woman and himself, and even more by the fear, that if he told the story, nobody would have believed it and he would just render himself ridiculous. Thus, the *telling of*

⁴³¹ MA 36.

⁴³² E. g. KDM 26.

⁴³³ MT 46.

⁴³⁴ This is quite similar to archaic turns of phrase as in classical Greek writers, *hvs legousin, phésin, legetai*... etc to warn the reader and to shift off responsibility of its veracity. It is always a question whether such sources actually existed. Herodotus provides a useful parallel! Cf O. Murray, “Herodotus and Oral History” In: *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, ed. N. Luraghi, 16-44 (Oxford, 2001); on the types of narrator: Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), esp. Ch. VI, VII, VIII, personal versus impersonal narration); Barthes, “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative” in *Image – Music – Text*, 79-124.

the miracle was both the prerequisite for the woman's recovery and a test of the man's faith. (The heretic eventual does bear witness to the miracle when the saints provided a material object, at the same time, the means of the cure and proof of the man's story.) The hagiographer related that he had been told that although the man remained a heretic, he *put down in writing the miracles of the saints* when the prophecy, which the saints had told him concerning his future, was fulfilled. This part of the story was concluded with an epilogue in which the hagiographer turned to his commissioner saying 'here you are, at your request, I have conscripted the saints' miracles for you, if you like them, I shall send more later' Kelber summarized this phenomenon that "One may thus find inscribed in the newly mediated story a rationale for its own medium history."⁴³⁵ (According to Festugière, this second set of stories may have also been identical to the following, fourth section of the corpus (KDM 27-32)⁴³⁶

Before I continue on to the role of orality in miracle-writing in the next section, it is worth casting a glimpse at the "alternative" miracle collection of Cosmas and Damian in the earlier and quite different London Codex. This Codex contains valuable bits of information concerning orality and storytelling. As mentioned in Chapter I, the miracle stories of the CL are in part identical to the Deubner-corpus although the order of the stories is different, with no traces of the "units" found in the latter corpus. The KDM 21-26 stories are analogous to the stories of the CL 33, 34, 26, 11, 35.

The CL 33 starts with the customary first words, *meta tanta* – the repeated cures of the patient, the time-frame of the recovery that extends over years placed the patient I into a different relationship with the narrator of the story since there was no hint of personal contact or direct oral transmission. That the source was ultimately the healed patient, was only mentioned casually in a half-sentence: "he hurried to the saints' church and told what happened to him by the virtue of the saints..." – thus, using quite general terms. If the other analogous miracles are considered, all begin with the usual catalogue-like *meta tanta* formula. In none of them is there any trace of the framework of communal or personal storytelling set up by the later hagiographer. Nevertheless, in CL 35 the moment of the miracle was indeed the Saturday night vigil. The stories that figured in this earlier, less elaborated and rather inventory-like collection show that the hagiographer of the KDM himself created a context of oral tradition for the miracles, an age-old narrative method that was to have a long future:

"Nearly all the Holmes stories, therefore, are stories of people who tell their stories, and every so often the stories these people tell feature people telling stories (about what they heard or saw, for example, on the night in question), and if this sounds like a dubiously metafictional observation then we may have

⁴³⁵ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 129.

⁴³⁶ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien* ..., 165,1.

forgotten how fundamental such stories within stories have always been to popular art from Homer to *Green Acres*, and how lightly worn.”⁴³⁷

The “fiction” of the communal listening to the miracles and the context of direct storytelling does give credit to the hagiographer’s compositional creativity – while on the other hand, it was the probably real medium for the transmission of these miracles. However well it accords with the way the community preserved its miracle-traditions, it is important that the hagiographer emphatically builds communal listening into the narrative – to the extent of creating the fiction of a direct, personal experience. (A similar technique for establishing authenticity and the reality-effect of storytelling was achieved by involving elders as sources.⁴³⁸)

The text, although a written artefact, conveys the sense of “realism” that in its total impact exceeds that of orality. More to the point, this “realism” is the logical outcome of the manufactured text. Written language, exempt from concerns for self-preservation, is allowed full play. It can live and create its own interior potential.⁴³⁹

Most probably, the editor of the KDM miracle corpus worked from written and perhaps oral sources as well although he transformed both into written descriptions of personal and oral sources. The written text was presented as the miracles *read aloud* in the church, the oral ones as stories heard from the patients themselves. It can be generally said that the *Codex Londoniensis* did not refer to its sources (as sources for the hagiographer) directly from oral traditions although its hagiographer was familiar with the idea of the genealogy of miracles, a tradition that received new layers generation by generation, as he wrote after the first three miracles in a short prologue:

While these miracles happened right after the consecration of the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, in the past, we should not ignore those succeeding miracles that happened at our place, by them. One generation shall praise thy works to another...says David the prophet for the glory of God, who urges even now for praise, showing to us, descendants, similar miracles performed by saint Cosmas and Damian.

There is no evidence of embedded story-telling in the miracles of the fourth section (KDM 27-32) in the KDM collection. Instead, the hagiographer established directness in a different – although not hitherto unknown – way. The two sides of telling tales from the point of view of the narrator and the listener had hitherto taken their form that the patient was the narrator and the hagiographer the listener (together with the others: “we”). Now, a new aspect of textual formation came to the fore. It was emphatically the hagiographer, who took on the role of “I”, the narrator while the reader / listener was the public, “you”. The means to achieve this immediacy, or even intimacy, was the way the hagiographer’s turned to his audience at the end of the narration: “Do you see, my beloved friend, how the saints succour those whom they love?”⁴⁴⁰ (KDM 27) – the addressee here may still be the real or fictitious friend created above, Florentinus, but there was also a more general audience before the hagiographer’s eyes: “do you all see, what great things faith in the saint’s

⁴³⁷ Michael Chabon, “The Game’s Afoot” *The New York Review of Books*, February 24, 2005, p. 14.

⁴³⁸ See Weinrich, *Antike Heiligeswunder*, 92.

⁴³⁹ Kelber on the Gospel of Mark, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 116.

grace is capable of?”⁴⁴¹ (KDM 28). This narrator’s aside expanded to such an extent that by the time the KDM 31 was written, the miracle itself occupied only a third of the narration with the better part of the text comprising a universal message, packed with biblical references and, at the same time, personalized by a simile about the emperor’s servant, the hagiographer’s excursus to his reader-friend – *do you see, my beloved friend?* Meanwhile in the preceding miracle, KDM 30, the narrative employed the old fiction of the directly heard story. At the end of the miracle the hagiographer remarked that the healed patient remained in the church – supposedly then the oral source of the tale.

A more explicit version of this same narrative situation was present in the much later fifth part (KDM 33-38) from a different hagiographer. The section was introduced by a bulky prologue, where the hagiographer described the motivations for his work, the sources of the miracles and his own editing principles. He assimilated himself and his collection with the poor widow with two young children. The first “partial narration”, *meros exégeseus* immediately informed that reader that this was an addition to the already existing miracles⁴⁴², something the hagiographer had composed in fulfilment of his vow although, at the same time, the hagiographer was also motivated by his desire to record the already familiar stories of the miracles he himself had just heard first hand. “As I was listening to the reading of the miracles here in the church...” – the first words of the prologue provide valuable witness that there was a written record of the saints’ deeds in the cult place which was regularly read aloud and “written down in various and multiple ways”. However, the narratives of the newly healed patients represented fresh sources for the enthusiastic recorder: “as I have heard them day by day, in every hour, ... either from the mouth of those who were cured, or from those who were eye-witnesses or the servant of the healed person...”. The beginning of KDM 34 contains yet another group of sources: “now I attempt to tell what I have obtained from the pious men, either orally or in writing.”⁴⁴³ Moreover, the hagiographer attested that he incorporated the exact words of his informants into his narrative (it is not specified whether the words come from the written records or were some verbatim phrases taken from the orally told story).⁴⁴⁴ At the same time, this miracle provided an aetiology for the presence of barbers within the church of Cosmas and Damian. The protagonist of the story, a butcher with paralysed hands, was ordered by the saints to shave a fellow-patient; after this test-of-faith act, he was healed and advised by the saints to remain in the church and establish a barber shop. Hence, he spent the rest of his life there and shaved many of the noblemen of the city.⁴⁴⁵ (The hagiographer, in order to demonstrate the veracity of his story, mentioned the contemporary activity of barbers within the sanctuary, confirming the authenticity by

⁴⁴⁰ □ρ□ς, □γαπητ□, π□ς φθ□νουσιν το□ς φιλο□ντας α□το□ς ο□ □γ□οι;

⁴⁴¹ □ρ□τε □σα μετ□ τ□ς τ□ν □γ□ων χ□ριτος □ π□στις δ□ναται;

⁴⁴² Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien*, 177.

⁴⁴³ τ□ δ□ ν□ν προκε□μενον ε□ς □ξ□γησιν θα□μα παρ□ θεοφιλ□ν □νδρ□ν το□το μ□ν □γρ□φως το□το δ□ κα□ □γρ□φως παρελ□βομεν

⁴⁴⁴ □ς κα□ α□τ□ς τ□ς □σ□ας α□τ□ν φων□ς □νθε□ναι τ□ διηγ□ματι

⁴⁴⁵ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien* 182, note 11 about the activity of barbers in the church.

claiming that those present barbers were the disciples of that healed butcher, or if not directly his disciples, then the disciples of his disciples.) Remarkably, the story directs the reader's attention to a concrete group of persons, carriers of the oral tradition at the cult place. In every incubation collection, the healed patient remained in the church after his or her recovery; sometimes at the request of the healer, or out of gratitude, dedicating their personal services in thanksgiving for the miracle. A variant of this case, was when the patient spent a long period (even years) in the sanctuary, awaiting a cure. For whatever reason people chose to stay, the patients who lingered on for years at the cult place were probably significant sources of information about the miracles that had happened to and around them. The other important circumstance, that the churches visitors like the clients of the barbershop, or curious sceptics or the heretic flirting with orthodoxy, in a word, all those people who did not come to the cult-place with a primarily ritual aim, rendered these long-staying suppliants important repositories of storytelling. There was another group in the KDM in particular that had a similar function (although this group was already familiar from the Asclepician stories). This group comprised the servants and family members accompanying the sick person. These multifaceted groups of informants and audience facilitated the mouth to mouth spread of memorable narratives far beyond the network of cult adherents.

The next story (KDM 35) contained just such an isolated beneficiary of the miracle. Interestingly enough, he did not narrate what had happened to him, but instead handed it to the hagiographer in a written form; the latter even admitted to have incorporated the patient's own words into the narrative.⁴⁴⁶ (Could this be an example of a *libellus miraculorum*?)

From the viewpoint of textual tradition, the sixth part (KDM 39-48) of the collection was in a special position. It was the work of the 13th-century deacon, Maximos, who ambitiously aimed at expressing already known miracles in a better style. He also desired to enrich the collection with the stories from his own life-time.⁴⁴⁷ We learn from Maximos that he composed his miracle-group using the stories that reached his ears, and he did it in view of a certain audience: "for you, my listeners", "for you, who all gathered here" – the style of address may be rhetorical, but it doubtlessly represented an attempt to re-construct the oral context of miracle narration. What eyewitnesses recalled was rendered as testimony to the sources (at the end of KDM 42). The majority of the stories (KDM 43-47) were also connected to the monastery – a community around the church complex that was the most natural transmitter of the miraculous events. The hagiographer at some place in the collection remarked that the beneficiary of the miracle was a member of the community. Elsewhere he simply recalled a case "which happened recently and is well known to all of us."

⁴⁴⁶ □ν□ρ τις [...] διηγ□σατ□ μοι, μ□λλον δ□ κα□ □γγρ□φος □ξ□θετο (ο□τινος α□τ□ς τ□ς λ□ξεις τ□ προκειμ□ν□ □ν□θηκα πραγματε□□)...

⁴⁴⁷ cf. Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien*, 191,1.

The variants and the multiple editions of Cosmas and Damian's two miracle catalogues provide a wide variety of stories for observing narrative situations and oral storytelling and for this reason I have dedicated what may appear to be a disproportionate amount of room to their treatment. However, as we shall see below, the representation of orality and the handling of oral sources were exemplary in several ways for the rest of the collections. Instead of recapitulating what would hold equally true for storytelling and oral transmission within the miracles of Thecla, Cyrus and John and Artemios, I will concentrate on features not mentioned in connection with the collections of Cosmas and Damian, characteristics and narrative solutions, situations of transmission that are unique to one or the other of these miracle collections.

Orality and storytelling in Sophronios' *Thaumata*

When identifying Sophronios' possible sources, Fernandez Marcos⁴⁴⁸ included inscriptions, *ex votos* and oral tradition in the church in addition to the other Christian miracle catalogues Sophronios must have known of. He attributed, however, little importance to the material – textual sources, and emphasised the significant impact of the hagiographer's conversations with church personnel, based on the fact that references to votive or written sources are extremely scarce and only worded in general terms. It seems certain, that in cases such as the *ex voto* written on the church wall by the patient (MCJ 69), the commemorative image (MCJ 28) or the egg-shaped stone that had caused a woman's malady and upon her being cured was suspended over the saints' tomb as a votive (MCJ 48), all these material remains must have been accompanied by stories. Only in this way would it have been possible to shape them into narratives. Nevertheless, I do not share Fernandez Marcos' hypothesis that sees an exclusive oral tradition behind the shaping of the majority of the miracles. It seems wiser to say that Sophronios was the hagiographer who was best at hiding his sources and creating the raw material for his stories out of his personal compositional skill and ways of obtaining ideas, as if out of nothing.. It appears that he wished to create a picture of himself as the only and supreme storyteller – the ultimate and omniscient source of the miracle stories.

There are basically two types of miracle narratives in Sophronios' collection. There are short, rather schematic stories and extremely detailed, long tales, often continued on subsequent pages. In the first type of story, reflecting the big impact of the local oral tradition there was the never-missing *name-provenance-illness* of the patient that in my opinion, suggests that these data were indeed conserved in some way, either on *ex votos*, or in a primitive register. The impetus that the oral tradition might have added concerned more their miraculous content. In the long and detailed stories, Sophronios himself reported that he had heard the miracle from the *oikonomus* or the deacon of the church. MCJ 3 is a good example of the first type. At the end of the story, the hagiographer noted that “this was

⁴⁴⁸ *Los Thaumata*, 169-173.

the story Kalos narrated, the memory of the miracle that was performed on him (καὶ τοῦτο μὲν τοῦ Καλοῦ καθεστηκέν τε τὸ διγῆμα, καὶ τοῦ γεγονότος ἐπ' αὐτὸ θαύματος τὸ μνημόσυνον). (Cf. MCJ 23, where Sophronios apologized for the paucity of information; here as well only the barest facts were related.)

The *oikonomos* of the sanctuary was doubtless a precious source of stories. In the miracle concerning the *oikonomos* himself (MCJ 8), the hagiographer revealed that the healed patients had been of great help in the inscription of the miracles: συνεργόντων τὴν δεδρακέντων καὶ δρόντων τὰ θαύματα. Our man, the *oikonomos* must have played an important role, not only in the reconstruction of earlier stories, but his own miraculous experiences also provided rich material for the hagiographer. At the same time his experiences also showed his certain privilege. Sophronios followed his dreams meticulously for several days, just as he dedicated an equally long narrative to the *oikonomos*' wife (MCJ 9) and to his daughter (MCJ 10). Similarly, a detailed miracle described the story of the deacon's daughter (MCJ 11) who may be numbered among the hagiographer's informants. An also first-hand story was depicted in MCJ 12. Here, not only was the patient the oral source for the miracle but its commissioner who himself wanted the story to survive. The grouping of these first-hand family miracles (MCJ 8-12) also attests the thematic compositional aim of Sophronios. The *oikonomos* also appeared as a secondary character e. g. in MCJ 31. Though –interestingly described there as the protagonist of that miracle, Theodoros was named as the source of the miracle – the *oikonomos* may have added some details that concerned his role in the event. Thus, the story would have exemplified the way Sophronios used multiple oral sources. He also figured in the same sort of intermediary role in the following story, MCJ 32.

In MCJ 28 we hear of someone staying in the church; nothing indicates, however, that he was sick: he was a godfearing lawyer, wise and *philochristos*, who plays the role of a mediator in the miracle. The saints give a dream that concerns two patient and involves that one of the them, a poor man should turn to the other, the rich and haughty one – because of the hesitation of the former, our Cyrus help is need. Fernandez Marcos sees in him some sort of domestical *thaumatologos*, a local miracle-writer, who stayed for a longer period in the sanctuary and collected the stories, or at least remembered them.

A more interesting feature of the story is that the rich patient spreads the news of his own and also of the poor patient's recovery and the hagiographer explicitly identified him as his informant: λήξομεν δὲ καὶ κατ' αὐτὸν ἐς μῦθον and Νεμεσιῶν δὲ τὰ τῆς μὲν τῆς διηγέσεως αὐτίος and what is more, often a source: ἐπ' αὐτὸν γὰρ πάλιν τρῶσω τὸν κλάμον... (I shall turn my pen on him again). The monumental decoration that Nemesios commissioned for the wall of saints' tomb represents Christ, John the Baptist, Cyrus and himself – not at the moment of the miracle but when he voices it to the others in the church.

The notoriety of the patient in itself may guarantee that the miracle connected to his or her person will survive and circulate. In this way was conserved a punishment miracle of an unbelieving Alexandrian lady,⁴⁴⁹ who was – already because of her high status – an object of gossip and whose blasphemy against the saints remained a vivid memory (περὶ ἧς ἡ λαὸς γεγόνηται).

The same assumption can be made for the subsequent punishment miracle, the case of Gesios, the renowned Alexandrian scholar.⁴⁵⁰ Such scuttlebutts attached to famous personalities in all likelihood were circulating beyond the sanctuary, in Alexandria as well, being more stick to their figure than to the church. (In this respect the *Thaumata* is atypical; or better to say, that in Thecla's collection we find also otherwise famous persons, like the rhetor Isocasios.)

The protagonist of MCJ 32 is again a notorious person, not only as a silver-dealer but one who openly sustained his pagan beliefs and was imprisoned for idolatry. He eloped from prison and only his paralysis, sent by the saints, makes him to turn to the Christian holy healers. Just as in the previous miracle, the oiconomos appears again as intermediary of the miracle. Agapios, the pagan, in order to turn away suspicion of not being Christian takes Communion and three days later dies. Persons concerned in such punishment stories were hardly keen (or, as in the latter case, capable) to spread the miracle. It seems sensible to conclude that the stories around famous or notorious personalities nurtured oral tradition, complementing the information of the church personnel, who played the role of a repository of stories. Accordingly, the *oikonomos* Christodoros makes his appearance also in MCJ 37 (where the protagonist of the miracle is John, the sub-deacon of the church) as well as in MCJ 39, in which he is mentioned as the one who assigns where the patient should incubate.

Other carriers of oral tradition besides the long-staying patients and the church workers are the *philoponoi*⁴⁵¹ and those who go to Cyros and John only to adore the relics. The *philoponoi* were laic young men, usually students in a formally-organized group, who undertook religious and charity services. They were called *philoponoi* by the Alexandrians, were monophysites and sometimes were considered as fervent attackers of pagans.⁴⁵² The picture about them given in the *Thaumata* depicts them as volunteer lay workers helping around the patients. While MCJ 35 shows the *philoponoi* at work, MCJ 33 and 34 introduces initially not sick persons, who go to pray to the relics as an act of devotion.

In MCJ 36 we also find a character, Theodoros, who later remained for long in the sanctuary, and in Sophronios's time, was a sub-deacon of the church.⁴⁵³ He was certainly the oral source of the miracle, which is the longest story and in the centre of the collection. We learn that Theodoros

⁴⁴⁹ MCJ 29.

⁴⁵⁰ MCJ 30.

⁴⁵¹ explicitly mentioned for example in MCJ 35, on the *philoponoi* cf. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 51-52.

⁴⁵² Rich testimony on this issue is Zacharios Scholasticos, *Life of Severus*, 12; cf. H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 138-9

entered the service of the saints as thanksgiving for his recovery. A similar figure was John, of the following miracle (MCJ 37), also a sub-deacon in the church who left behind his heretical past in exchange for a life-long stay in the sanctuary. Beside such “official” inhabitants of the church, long-staying patients also heard and retold miracle stories. Probably such was the sick heretic of MCJ 38 who stayed four months in the sanctuary, while in MCJ 39 Sophronios made the patient to tell his story directly (which, even is a narrative device, surely attests to real practice).

Orality and storytelling in the miracles of Artemios

The hagiographer of Artemios introduced himself to his readers as a man walking in a beautiful park, who then has to tell of all the wonders he saw “in our desire to write an account of the many miracles of the holy martyr ... of which we have the knowledge of some by sight itself and of others by hearsay...” Even more circumspect than Thecla’s hagiographer, he limited the range of his collection to the period of his own generation – or rather the collectable miracles were limited in this way. “It may well be that [the first part of the collection] the first sixteen stories correspond to the class of miracles that have come to the author’s attention through hearsay and the remainder to those he has personal knowledge of” – speculated Crisafulli.⁴⁵⁴ Though the corpus did not offer such a clear distinction regarding oral sources, I have proceeded following the order of the text – and just as above, my focus has not been limited to the oral sources used by the hagiographer, but on the role of orality in and around the miracles and on the way storytelling was described within the stories themselves.

Among the first miracles in the collection we find that the somewhat obligatory remark about the way the patients learned about the cult place from hearsay was inter-twined with other forms this information took. In MA 4 an African (“who had resided in Africa itself”⁴⁵⁵) turned to Artemios with his sick child, because “in conversation some people suggested to him, as they themselves had experienced the martyr’s efficacy ... Upon hearing this, he inquired diligently about the location and wrote on papyrus taking notes, just as they dictated to him saying: *To St. John the Baptist in the Oxeia, near the colonnades of Dominos.*” It is remarkable how the hagiographer, by emphasising the written recording of the heard information, put himself into the shoes of the patient and involved the reader as well into the reality of the situation. At the same time, by doing so, he stepped out from his familiar narrative frame; in order to create the reality-effect he did not content himself with recalling this simple “let me write down the address” situation, but he also incorporated the “written proof” into his story, which, like a formula, identified the saint’s dwelling place.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵³ Sansterre, *Appartitions*, 76.

⁴⁵⁴ Translator Preface, xii

⁴⁵⁵ The range of the saint’s fame!

⁴⁵⁶ On the geographical location of the church see Nesbitt – Crisafulli, *Introd.* 8.

The beneficiaries of the following miracles (MA5 and MA7) also learn of Artemios from hearsay; in case of the latter, the hagiographer, as proof of the miracle, drew on a parallel between the stories circulating orally about the illness and the sight of the cured man: “whoever had learned of his misfortune, seeing him restored to health, glorified God...”

For prospective incubants, stories about the saint’s miracle-working were told by lay members of the cult-related fraternities, just as they were told to the protagonist of MA 19 “one of those who frequented the all-night vigil suggested that he visit St Artemios...” I have written in detail above about the all-night vigil community as carriers of oral tradition and as the hagiographer’s chief storytellers although the members of this community were not the exclusive transmitters of tales. In MA 17 we hear about an actor who was brought to the church in order to entertain his sick master; while there and not bothering to hide his scepticism, he himself also became a beneficiary of a miracle. The spreading of such miraculous events was always more efficacious if their beneficiary not only repeated the miracle he had experienced but also advertised the miraculous medicine as well! (MA 20). If, as the result of the miracle, he entered the order of the official members of the cult, as did the patient in MA 30, who, say the hagiographer “became the church warden. Up to the present time he excels in this service...” he was probably a direct source for the hagiographer, just as were the protagonists of MA 15, 29, and 33. The narrator of MA 21, Stephen the deacon and *poiétés* of the Blue Faction, must have been a flesh and blood storyteller that the hagiographer gave the word to entirely. Uniquely in this collection (and also in the five miracle corpora) there was a first person narrative from beginning to end. (The other first person narratives elsewhere always concerned the hagiographer himself.) Does this represent an attempt to vary the narrative? Or was the hagiographer faithfully reproducing a real written or dictated record? Or perhaps this was a *libellus miraculi*? Another suggestion may be that the protagonist was himself a literary man and he himself perhaps demanded that his case would reach the audience in the form he composed it – and in this case the hagiographer reproduced a piece that had already been completed. That the story spoke with the personal voice of the *miraculé* was shown in a complex version in the MA 32, where we can read two conflated stories. As person ‘A’ was keen to persuade person ‘B’ about the efficacy of Artemios, he told the miracle as it happened to him in the first person; as a result ‘B’ turned to Artemios and his miracle was described by the hagiographer who “said in these very words: ”...” Was it B who recalled the circumstances of the narration of the previous miracle together with its exact text, or was it the hagiographer who incorporated the two stories by creating a fictitious (or real?) narrative context? The tale would have gone through even more filters if it had been centered on the dream-sight. In stories MA 34 and 36, the mother first interrogated her child about his dream while in MA 36 the mother figuring in the miracle was probably the direct source for the hagiographer, since, says he, “she (who still survives) enrolled herself in the night office there”, while her by then grown up son was an easily identifiable

monk, and what is more, this *miraculé*-monk persuaded the patient featuring in MA 37 to turn to Artemios.

In the miracle between (MA 35) the continuously narrated events that occurred earlier and lead to the miracle of the actual protagonist in such a way that a patient, who had waited in vain for the saint's visit, organized a farewell *agape* dinner in the church. During the communal meal, the priests encouraged the man to tell stories in which the saint cured patients returning home. And just as in the MA 15 miracle, which took place during the communal meal of the Great Saturday vigil, the occasion gives way to a miracle. Similarly, a communal *agape* meal was described in MA 5 because this was doubtlessly one of the chief occasions for sharing miraculous stories.

The collection of Artemios' miracles invite two remarks. There was one sphere where this corpus differed greatly from the other collections, namely with regard to the participants (and possible sources) of the miracles. Here, a conspicuously large number of priests of all sorts figured in the narratives, and not only those who were attached to the cult place but also priests from other churches in Constantinople as well. Sometimes, they acted as protagonists and sometimes in secondary roles (e. g. the deacon of Hagia Sophia or the abbot and monk from Pege church, MA 36-37). These priests seem to have been some kind of official memory-holders of the miracles, people who retained a special sensitivity to holy events in the capital. Naturally, this was the group that would have had the most almost physical contact with miracles and, moreover, they were probably prone to sharing their stories. (Artemios' hagiographer as well was likely to have been some kind of cult personnel.) Fernandez Marcos identified such a group as the main oral source for Sophronios and he labelled them *domestical thaumatologos*.⁴⁵⁷ However, the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John, in fact, revealed very little about such persons – their presence seems to have been more valid for the Artemios-collection. Their involvement in the narrative has another, hagiographical function related to the rivalry between the various cult sites of the capital.

The other characteristic of the corpus (examples may be found in Thecla's miracles as well) is that the same figures appear in several miracles. They may be the protagonists of consecutive stories (as Gregorios in MA 19-20). Elsewhere they pop up in different points in the collection, as individuals who had already been helped by the saint in another "earlier" affair. These overlaps resulted in a peculiar mixture in the chronology of the miracles and the circumstances of their narration. The robbed man in MA 18 is found again in MA 22 as "the very same burglary victim about whom we have just spoken succumbed to severe diseases..." In one case, it is possible to follow the entire life of a character under the protection of the saint. In MA 38-39-40, Gregorios was introduced as a nine-year-old boy, at this time already an industrious visitor to the church and *anagnostes* (reader). He felt a vocation for spiritual service and he took refuge from the

money-changing family business that awaited him. His parents dragged him home, but Artemios, with the help of an illness and a miraculous cure, saved him. In the next miracle, he was shown growing up under the spiritual direction of a monk. He again encountered Artemios at the age of 22. In MA 40, the hagiographer recalled an event of Gregorios life when he was only 18.

Alternatively, it could happen that the main character of a miracle became a secondary figure in another story, as the cured child of MA 36 who became the monk who suggested that the patient of MA 37 turn to Artemios, persuading him by the example of his own healing story. Those narratives show that the hagiographer had received his pieces of information directly in a number of cases and that he chose to organise them around certain given figures.

If we consider the collection of the four healers in comparison with each other from a new aspect, it becomes clear that in view of the formation of the material Artemios's collection is unique because it lacks cultic precedents. In the other cases these antecedents left a strong impact on the emergence of the incubation collections, in regard to their content, the raw-material of the narrator, his way of collecting it, all set against the background of cultic rivalry with the previous healers. That the cult of Artemios was "imported" into Constantinople, in this way isolates the formation and traditional transmission of the stories, or in other words, it retains them within their own context. In the three other cases, we are dealing with the stratification of oral and material cult-traditions; their accidental and conscious shaping into collections are both a sort of archaeology.

Seeing under a different light the collections, the corpora of Thecla and Artemios stand apart. These are the collected material of a single hagiographer, at a relatively short period of time, confined to a well-defined place. The miracles of Thecla – exactly because of the above mentioned cultic continuity and the hence further reaching narrative tradition – embrace greater time than those of Artemios. The latter is described as the imprint of the hagiographer's own generation. The geography of the sacred, the spatial distribution of the patients is also more restricted than in the other collections. Thecla focuses more on her region and town, Artemios on Constantinople and "his" quarter, the Oxeia. Both the closed chronology and space determined what the hagiographers had "at hand" when collection their narrative material. In contrast, the redactors of Cosmas and Damian as well as Sophronios were free to select from a more timeless, diversified and multiple tradition and from a material that encompassed a larger cultural spectrum.

When it comes to orally transmitted tradition, we face a two-sided phenomenon: 1, on the one hand, (any) miracle-narration and transmission in general had a real oral context. This was the same case with ancient Greek incubation and with the survival of the practice it automatically passed also onto the Christian cult. 2, Second, this real orality combined with a literary demand:

⁴⁵⁷ *Los Thaumata*, 171

features of the new [Late Antique / Christian] narrative manner [...] were taken over from traditional oral storytelling. Stylistic assimilation of oral form had presumably begun in late antiquity, but the traits studied here appear with regularity from the sixth century on. The adoption of the oral style by writers of history, that is to say by men of letters, is encouraged and made possible by the fact that the high culture of the period displays new interests of its own that match those popular narrative – in particular the hardening of public life into patterns of ritual and ceremony, and the development of an elaborate inventory of significant and symbolic objects – tendencies that coincide in large measure with the oral-traditional emphasis on gestures and objects. This convergence of high and popular culture leaves its unmistakable stamp upon the new style, which turns out to be something far more complex than a naturalized folktale manner.⁴⁵⁸

Thus, it was partly about the conservation of orality and as such the oral tradition is a *source*. Then again it was a created literary narrative technique, which imitated and recalled oral transmission, in this way giving the framework of storytelling to the narrative prose. What is worth of attention in the miracle collections is that these two phenomena are not only present side by side but they are inseparable from each other; the literary form draws on a living tradition, which in turn easily assumes the composed form of the miracle narrative.

Chapter 5. 2. The transition from oral to written records

Writing always entails a rewriting of worlds (Kelber, 116)

This following subchapter will focus on the impact the mixing of oral and written material had on the narrative, first examining the explicitly stated motivations for putting the miracle story in writing. One of the most often admitted urge to record the miraculous event was the straight order of the deity. The inscription of Iulius Appelas started and concluded with repeatedly emphasizing what Asclepius ordered (cc.160 AD): “I, Marcus Iulius Apellas, an Idrian from Mylasa, was sent for by the god [...] In the course of my journey, in Aegina, the god told me not to be so irritable. When I arrived at the temple, he told me to [here the detailed prescriptions...]. He bade me also to inscribe this.”⁴⁵⁹ Maria Girone called attention to other divine orders given for making written records,⁴⁶⁰ a *topos* that was widespread from the Old Testament to imperial Rome.⁴⁶¹

The purposes of recording incubation miracles (pagan or Christian) were 1, for the healed patient, recording the cult experience 2, to induce that similar miracles happen, for those waiting to be cured and finally, 3, the propagation of the healer’s cultic power.

⁴⁵⁸ Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *A rhetoric of the scene: dramatic narrative in the early middle ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 15.

⁴⁵⁹ T 432, cf. Girone, *Iamata*, 58-70.

⁴⁶⁰ Girone, *Iamata*, 70: Asclepius to Aelius Aristides in the *Hieroi Logoi*, Or. 48, 2K; on the inscriptions from Lebena, III.10 (Girone), III. 12 (Girone), III. 13 (Girone) and Pergamon IV 2. (Girone).

⁴⁶¹ cf. Weinrich, *Antike Heilungswunder*, 6-9; Festugière, *La révélation de Hermès Trismégistos*, 318; Girone lists Old Testamental orders of this sort from Habacuc 2:2; Isaiah 8:1; Jeremiah 30: 2

Lebena, 1st c. BC, (Girone, III.12-13), III.15 Lebena, 3rd c. AD; Girone, *Iamata*, 153, concerning the inscriptions from the Tiber Island, on the importance of written evidence for pilgrims in Roman religion Girone refers to Mary Beard, “Writing and Religion: Ancient Literacy and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion” in *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991), 35-58.

Thecla's hagiographer called his endeavour "searching and collecting" (*tbamatón erauna kai syllogé*⁴⁶²), and we have all reason to suppose that discovering new stories, tracing witnesses and organizing the heard material into a written, structured collection delighted him.

Sophronios in the prologue of the *Thaumata* said what urged him to create his collection was the lack of written sources. When the fame of the saints attracted him to Menouthis, and himself also became a beneficiary of a miracle, he experienced with surprise the richness of the circulating narrative material. He named those two groups of written material that urged him to put down into writing the miracles: Cyril's *sermo*-s, read at the *translatio* of the saints, and the numerous written miracles of pagan deities. Sophronios unambiguously remarked that these collections were widely known, in written form, hence it is legitimate to suppose that they served for him as well as literary models or anti-models on the field of miraculous healing. Sophronios himself dismissed the possibility of a miracle-inventory kept in the sanctuary, though I do not think that he was sincere but rather wanted to create the impression that he only shaped the miracles, circulating orally, into structurally unified narratives. (At one occasion he mentioned that he worked from written sources: in MCJ 8, the first of the miracles concerning Christodoros, he said that Christodoros wrote down the miracles of the saints what he meant for those stories that involved him and his family, not an entire collection, as Vincent Déroche interpreted it.⁴⁶³)

Concerning the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, it is of great importance that the London Codex reported the request of the saints, explicitly forbidding the creation of a written record of their miracles. The background was naturally the imitation of Christ. The London Codex said about Saint Cosmas that "having performed many other sorts of healing, the conscription of which he impeded, quoting Christ, who impeded that his own miracles come to light."⁴⁶⁴

The point is not only that the saints, - both by their miraculous healing as well as by keeping silence about them - , follow Christ's example, but the miracles themselves are carriers of a sort of mimesis, their written recording is all the more to avoid, as these miracles are also Christ's miracles, mirrors, transmittents, appendices to the events of the Gospel.

Saint Cosmas and Damian, having healed already many sick people through the grace given by God, did not want their deeds to become public. It is the saints' custom to hide their merits, so that they would not become like those who seek the approbation of men. As many people urged them to write down together whatever they did in their lifetime while wandering, they replied angrily: 'the grace of healing belongs to God, who does all, at the time and in the way He wants. What He did earlier, are written in the Gospels. Those miracles show that He is the true God.'⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² MT 31.

⁴⁶³ Vincent Déroche, "Tensions and contradictions dans les recueils de miracles de la première époque Byzantine" in *Miracle et Karama*, ed. Denise Aigle, (Turnhout: Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 2000), 147.

⁴⁶⁴ Rupprecht, *Cosmae et Damiani*, 8, lines 27-29 – 9, 1-2.

⁴⁶⁵ Rupprecht, *Cosmae et Damiani*, 5, lines 20-27.

Furthermore, the miracle is doubly mimetic: not only the deeds of the saints are the image of Christ's miracles, but the miracle stories reflect each other as well, revealing the universal from the particular:

You, my dear audience, when hearing the this power of the saints' miracles do not only rejoice but whatever great miracle you hear that the saints performed, regard these small ones and few in number. Because we could select for you only a few from the many, to guide you, those who hear them, to believe the rest of the miracles.⁴⁶⁶

A few written miracles provide a hinterland for the numerous other heard miracles, behind which there are the countless, not even ever heard stories. But this concept of the mimetic oral carriers of tradition failed already in the case of Christ – an inadequacy of the oral mimetic medium of the disciples that eventually led to the birth of the Gospels. It is worth quoting Werner Kelber's analysis in full:

His [Jesus'] whole life, in typical oral fashion, is an example to be followed or a lesson to be learned. His words and actions, travels and suffering constitute the supreme didactic paradigm that guides the disciples into their apostolic responsibilities. This is, however, nothing less than saying that the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is constructed on the oral principle of *imitatio magistri*, or in Platonic terms on *mimesis*, which has as its chief concern the preservation of tradition. In Mark's gospel the twelve personify the principle, oral representatives of Jesus. They function in a mimetic process whose function is to assure continuity of tradition. The tradition to be continued is constituted by the paradigm of Jesus' life and death. As is well known, Jesus' rebuke of the disciples' comprehension, or rather the lack of it, is one of the major unifying theme of the gospel. Although the twelve are placed within auditive immediacy of Jesus and privileged to hear and witness the fundamentals of his life and death, theirs is a failing discipleship. Both the model of the mimetic relationship and the drama of failing discipleship are drawn with equal care by Mark. This leads us to suggest that the dysfunctional role of the disciples narrates the breakdown of the mimetic process and casts a vote of censure against the guarantors of tradition. Oral representatives and oral mechanisms have come under criticism. If the foremost oral authorities are depicted as failing to perceive the message and mission of Jesus, the conclusion is inevitable that, as far as Mark is concerned, *mimesis* malfunctioned and did so at a crucial juncture. In probing the gospel's narrative for clues to the defect, one general answer would be that oral transmission did not work because it could not work. What epitomizes the disciples' frame of mind is a preference for ideological simplicity and heroic actuality. It is a mentality that runs afoul of the kind of theological complexities that, according to Mark, characterize the fullness of Jesus."⁴⁶⁷

The necessary, the superfluous and the additional

When miracles receive their written form, one of the most interesting aspects of the process is what falls out and what remains of the elements of the story. What do we know about the "personality" of the characters, or rather, what we know of them is to what extent inherited from the fixed-form votive (name, place, profession, illness) or how much the result of the narrator's imagination, a rhetorical demand to enrich the narrative? On the fate of names and personal details the two disciplines, New Testament studies and rumour studies contract to each other. Lynn Lidonnici summarized these contrasting views when addressing the same question (what was inserted and what was dropped) in the *Iamata*:

⁴⁶⁶ Rupprecht, *Cosmae et Damiani*, 5, lines 6-13.

⁴⁶⁷ Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 97.

Bultman held that as the oral tradition developed, names and details would be inserted, reflecting the “novelistic” concern with the „characters” in the tradition. [...] However, studies on the transmission of rumor suggest that it is just this type of detail which drops out, rumors becoming more vague though keeping their basic shapes. [...] This is another example of the mismatch between rumour studies and tradition studies, whether oral or written. Rumor is free, but when even an informal tradition is making the effort to persuade and preserve, it seems very natural for the tradition to *gain* material rather than the reverse.⁴⁶⁸

Thecla’s hagiographer in the prologue brought up the question of personal details and historical authenticity and wrote that he sought out and recorded the contemporary or just a bit earlier miracles because these content could be verified, and on the basis of such “facts” the rest of the much older miracles, known by hearsay and lacking these personal details, would also gain credit. This is why he described with care all names and places and persons so that the audience should not have the slightest doubt about the historical truth of the events.⁴⁶⁹

Unmistakeably inserted details of the narrator to enhance the exactitude of the miracle are frequent in Artemios, as the one below concerning the space the sanctuary: “This person [Artemios appearing in dream] was coming from the direction of the narthex, preceded by a spotless white dove. Upon entering the nave and then making a turn, he entered the left colonnade through the upper railings proceeding as if in the direction of the sacristy...”⁴⁷⁰

I wonder if such a detailed account, with the exact topographical description of the interior could have come to the hagiographer from the dreamer, from a previously written account or based on his own intimate knowledge of the church.

Transmission from oral to written record, with the ever-present specification of the sanctuary was had great importance from the aspect of rivalry between cult places. The written documents made public at the place as well in circulation together with other hagiographical writings strengthened not so much the fame of the healers but that of the healing sanctuary. In this race, it was rather probable that freely circulating miracle stories became connected in written form to a specific sanctuary, with the insertion of the place name into the narrative, or, as we may suppose in the case of Cosmas and Damian, by relocating the miracle from its previous place to a by then more famous church.

⁴⁶⁸ LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions*, 55, esp. note 20.

⁴⁶⁹ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 284-285.

⁴⁷⁰ MA 15.

Chapter 5: The literary background of the collections

“Hagiography is not a genre.”⁴⁷¹

One of the most significant facts in the history of incubation is that at the Christian inheritance of the ancient practice of temple sleep the basic characteristics of the cult practice and the way of recording the sacred cures both continued or better to say, the Christian practice and recording conformed to the pagan models as a form of expression.⁴⁷² When examining the votive tablets, it became evident that the textual recording of the dream-miracle cures, their moulding into miracle-narratives is only one, by no means exclusive, mode of testifying the incubation practice, and that in both the Greek and Christian cult places iconical and material votive objects played a major role.

The miracle record as literary artefact

Eternalising the miracles in literary artefacts may be what the beneficiary of the miracle offered as his votive gift,⁴⁷³ the thanksgiving of the healed (occasionally a poet) just as a craftsman offered a piece of his work for the cure. The tragedy-writer Aristarchos, a contemporary of Euripides, wrote a tragedy entitled *Asclepius*, as a *charistérion*, thank offering, for the god.⁴⁷⁴

If one looks back now on the vast mass of divine poetry and prose that is preserved or referred to in the testimonies, one may safely state that there was a rich literature dedicated to Asclepius and other healing divinities. Asclepius from the beginning of his healing activity had many poets, rhetors and philosophers in his clientele who reciprocated his gifts with works of art. Aelian delights in pointing out that Asclepius was wont to take care of the educated⁴⁷⁵ and the testimonies, indeed, give the impression that the god was the special protector of this class of people. He was himself reputed to have inspired or requested literary gifts. He was credited with giving the literati the ability to accomplish their task,⁴⁷⁶ to write poetry and prose.⁴⁷⁷ The writing-redacting the miracle

⁴⁷¹ Claudia Rapp, “‘For next to God, you are my salvation’: reflections on the rise of holy man in late antiquity” In *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Essays in the Contribution of Peter Brown* Eds, James Howart-Johnston and P. A. Hayward, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 63.

⁴⁷² “Il vero problema è sempre questo: determinare se una leggenda cristiana prolunga un fatto religioso del paganesimo, e cioè se è l’espressione di un culto antico, sempre vivo sotto una forma cristiana. Evidentemente, si può prospettare un’altra ipotesi, che sarebbe assai logica: un evento religioso pagano può essere stato re-intepretato in chiave cristiana, eliminando però l’ideologia religiosa pagana sottostante. Si tratterebbe, quindi di una nuova creazione, una ri-creazione dello stesso episodio o personaggio. ... Più che di un perpetuarsi di un culto pagano o di una venerazione di un personaggio pagano, ci troviamo di fronte ad una „risorgenza” situata a livello letterario. Non è una cristianizzazione della teologia pagana.” Reginald Grégoire, *Manuale di agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica*, 2.ed (Fabriano: Monastero S. Silvestro, 1996), 193.

⁴⁷³ Cf. Versnel in Versnel 54.

⁴⁷⁴ T 455.

⁴⁷⁵ T 456

⁴⁷⁶ E.g. T 610.

collection out of gratitude for the cure played a similarly important role in the textual-literary formation of the Christian healing miracles discussed here: the hagiographers of Thecla, Cosmas and Damian, and Sophronios alike, gave this as the motivation of their enterprise.

In the last century most attempts to interpret the literary records of miracles focused on the question of genre. Aretalogy as a genre,⁴⁷⁸ *Miracula* as genre and so forth, touching upon connections (genre-connections, of course) between pagan and Christian works of biography,⁴⁷⁹ Late Antique novel, the literature of dream interpretation, parables, “pagan hagiography” or aretalogy and the Gospels⁴⁸⁰, *paidensis* and *psychagogia*,⁴⁸¹ and the list can be continued endlessly. Recently Scott Johnson, in search for literary models for the miracles of Thecla, made Herodotus and together with him paradoxography the main (or in his view, the only) literary precedent and consciously imitated model, hence he defined Thecla’s miracle as part and parcel of the paradoxographic genre.⁴⁸² But Johnson’s solution seems unsatisfactory even if we were not to do away with the category of genres. Maria Girone already pointed out that Herodotos himself could have served as a literary model for the 4th century Isyllus paean, from Epidaurus, comparing the Asclepius epiphany of the paean and Herodotos VI 105, the epiphany of Pan.⁴⁸³ In fact the whole story is more “paradoxographic” than an actual miraculous healing.⁴⁸⁴ Paradoxography, as Johnson also defined, was a *brique-à-braque* genre, characterized by its loose “composition”, Thecla’s miracles on the other hand have strong cohesive forces: the miracles of a single figure, performed at one site, mostly through dreams, within one generation, not to mention the structuralisation of the text, such as the thematic grouping, for example. But Johnson’s merit, regardless the attribution of the genre precedent of the corpus, lies in

⁴⁷⁷ Edelstein, II. 206. Edelstein also pointed out that on one hand, singing surely had an important role in the cult, and on the other that this sort of patron position holds true for Serapis as well. He listed some famous literary figures, who worked under the guidance of Asclepius, among them Apollonius, Theopompus, Sophocles, Aischines, Plutarchos, Dominus, and Hermocrates, Polemon and Proclus (Edelstein, *Asclepius*, II. 206-208).

⁴⁷⁸ From Salomon Reinach, “Les Arétalogues dans l’Antiquité” *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 9 (1885), 257-265, to Vincenzo Longo *Aretalogie nel mondo greco*. Vol. 1. Epigrafi e papiri (Genova: Istituto di Filologia Classica e Medioevale, 1969) and Morton Smith, “Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, the Gospels, and Jesus” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 90 (1971), 174-199.

⁴⁷⁹ Connecting aretalogy with biography: Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity. A Quest for the Holy man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

⁴⁸⁰ Howard C. Kee, “Aretalogy and Gospel” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 402-422.

⁴⁸¹ Q. Cataudella, *Critica e estetica nella letteratura greca cristiana* (Turin, Fr. Bocca, 1928).

⁴⁸² Scott F. Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: a literary study* (Washington DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006). The book appeared shortly before the completion of my thesis, hence it is difficult to do fully justice to it and use all his conclusions here. Beyond doubt, this is the most “literary” approach to early Christian miracles published for long. The part on paradoxography is Chapter 4: “Greek Wonders”, 172-220. What seems to undermine Johnson’s hypothesis is that he viewed Thecla’s miracle collection alone, isolating it from all the other early Christian dream miracle collections. He also seems to unjustifiably overestimate the hagiographer’s reference to Herodotos: he belongs as much as to the self-display of the hagiographer as the other classical authors he paraphrased (Homer, Plato, Thucydides, or Euripides and Xenophon) in order to place himself into the group of representatives of Greek learning. The hagiographer himself mentions the pagan written material he knew about, hence his references to Greek cultic healing and oracular records are far from being just a literary topos. Moreover, Johnson disregards totally the attested existence and (vivid) memory of the previous incubation healer of the site. Cf. a review of Johnson’s book (with similar conclusions): Linda A. Honey, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2006. August, 19, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2006/2006-08-19.html>

⁴⁸³ Girone, *Iamata*, 50-51.

⁴⁸⁴ In it Asclepius appeared to Isyllus, who was seeking cure in Epidaurus and commanded him first to go the Spartans, who were fighting with Philippus and only after saving them, through Isyllus mission, the god turned to the sick man.

the placing the emphasis on the literary approach, yet when criticizing the previous interest for social history in the miracles, he forgets the literary milieu Dagron outlined, the literary activity, the rhetorical contests, the presence of famous rhetors among Thecla's clientele: this renders his opinion invalid that the *Life* and the *Miracula* was a personal pastime, not for the uneducated public. If Egeria read its earlier version, others as well could probably participate at the public readings around the sanctuary, especially when it was even more famous and such a representative collection was ready. Johnson speaks about "a post-Callimachean impulse to collect, organize, and publish,"⁴⁸⁵ a remark I particularly liked, even if it seems to spread over such a time span, centuries, that it is difficult to see it as a general literary tendency.

These genre categories lost their applicability by today, together with the concept of genre itself. Michel de Certeau and Mark van Uytfanghe demonstrated how illusoric is to deal with the concept of aretalogy and hagiography with terms of genre⁴⁸⁶ – they had done away with the concept and on their footsteps it seems wiser to use the term hagiographic discourse, both in ancient (pagan) and in Christian context alike. From the kindred areas of literature, the researches on ancient biography and martyr acts Van Uytfanghe transferred two essential elements that hold valid for the formation of ancient and Christian miracle narratives: one is the suggestion made by Charles H. Talbert, that biographies are to be characterised not so much by their formal elements but rather enquires to be made into what role these texts fulfilled in that social, intellectual, and spiritual substance in which they were born.⁴⁸⁷ To this is analogous the "two milieus" theory of Herbert Musurillo, namely that the same stimuli, in similar circumstances call for analogous answers.⁴⁸⁸ Thinking further this theory Van Uytfanghe saw it applicable for the imperial – late antique "hagiographic discourse", emphasising that the analogies, borrowings, the mutual influences were all shared, yet he warned to see during the comparison of literary materials a direct origin, a straightforward genealogy behind every similarity: "Dans cet optique, on pourrait dire de manière quelque peu triviale que, généralement parlant, dans le milieu hellénistique, le milieu juif et le milieu chrétien, ce discours était alors 'dans l'air.' Des récits et motifs particuliers pouvaient être empruntés, mais ils pouvaient tout aussi bien 'circuler' parallèlement en des endroits différents et dans des traditions différentes."⁴⁸⁹ Uytfanghe's definition of the "hagiographic discourse" was challenged by Felice Lifshitz,⁴⁹⁰ who had her main objection that the theory continued to concentrate on the textuality of hagiography and by making the literary context almost the exclusive one, Uytfanghe

⁴⁸⁵ Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of saint Thekla*, 185.

⁴⁸⁶ for defining how hagiography functioned as an "open genre" cf. L. Rydén, "New Forms of Hagiography", *17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, Washington, 1986), 550.

⁴⁸⁷ Van Uytfanghe, "L'hagiografie: un »genre« chrétien ou antique tardif?" *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993), 148; Charles H. Talbert, "Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity," *ANRW II*. 16.2, 1619-1651.

⁴⁸⁸ Herbert A. Musurillo, "The Pagan Acts of the Martyrs" *Theological Studies* 10 (1949), 555-564.

⁴⁸⁹ Van Uytfanghe, "L'hagiografie: un »genre« chrétien ou antique tardif?" *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993), 170.

forgot about the historiographic and political framework of these sources. Lifshitz, however, did not aim at formulating a more precise definition of hagiography: her goal was the negation of this category, or better to say, the demonstration of its inapplicability for the period preceding the 19th century. She argued by what the 19th century, and in certain respect, the 12th as well, considered so important: the division of the historical and the legendary; a problem that did not exist for the authors-redactors of previous centuries. “The entire historiographical transformation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century involved the redefinition of the category of that which is true, against which falsity could be measured. [...] The concept of “hagiography” is a historiographical construction and, *ipso facto*, an ideological tool. It is a tool that had no function in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, and thus as a conceptual category did not exist.”⁴⁹¹ A similar claim was repeated by Martin Hinterberger in connection with Byzantine hagiography and autobiography, who gave a more specific history of these words and concepts.⁴⁹²

Since Lifshitz’s arguments concern Western hagiography, it is worth bringing a Western example for that, although calling the Saints’ *Lives* and miracle catalogues of medieval Christianity to account for a general demand for clearly dividing the real-unreal, the legendary-literary and the historical is indeed futile, the question, nevertheless, was raised even before the 12th century. At the beginning of the 6th century a decree attributed to Pope Gelasius (492-496) strongly questioned the status of hagiographic texts and it deleted the *Passiones* from the official liturgy. The ban was lifted during Pope Hadrian I (772-795), and we should remember moving now within the actio radius of Western Christendom, (what is more, we have no evidence what real impact the interdict had), the argumentation, however, of the decree is worthy of attention. It stated that such texts (=hagiography) are on one hand not historical enough, since their authors are unknown, on the other hand, they are too much historical, in what they extol individual, personal merits instead of the universal divine grace.⁴⁹³

Item gesta sanctorum martyrum, quas multiplicibus tormentorum cruciatibus et mirabilibus confessionum triumphis inradiant. Quis catholicorum dubitet maiora eos in agonibus fuisse perpessos nec suis viribus, sed gratia Dei et adiutorio universa tolerasse? Sed ideo secundum antiquam consuetudinem singulari cautela in sancta Romana ecclesia non leguntur quia et eorum qui conscripsere nomina penitus ignorantur et ab infidelibus et idiotis superflua aut minus apta quam ordo fuerit esse putantur; sicut cuiusdam Cyrici et Iulittae, sicut Gregorii aliorumque eiusmodi passiones quae ab ereticis perhibentur compositae. Propter quod, ut dictum est, ne vel levis subsannandi oriretur occasio in sancta Romana ecclesia non leguntur. Nos tamen cum

⁴⁹⁰ Felice Lifshitz, “Beyond Positivism and Genre: “Hagiographical” Texts as Historical Narrative” *Viator* 25 (1994), 95-113.

⁴⁹¹ Lifshitz, “Beyond Positivism and Genre...,” 113.

⁴⁹² “The 17th century French neologism ‘hagiographie’ originated from the latin hagiographa, which, as its Greek equivalent ἡγιαγραφία, since the Middle Ages has been defined as the final portion of the Hebrew scriptures (Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations), in modern Greek the equivalent of ‘hagiography’ is ἡγιολογία, whereas ἡγιογραφία and its derivatives ἡγιογράφος, etc. mean ‘painting of holy icons’, ‘painter of holy icons’ etc. Only during the 20th century did the word ‘hagiography’ obtain its current meaning...” Martin Hinterberger, “Autobiography and Hagiography in Byzantium” *Symbolae Osloenses* 75.1 (2000), 139-140, note 1.

⁴⁹³ Reginald Grégoire, *Manuale di agiologia*, 22-23. He quotes here the Latin text of the decretum from: Pseudo-Gelasius, *Decretum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* IV.4. ed. E. Von Dobschütz (Leipzig: A. Pries, 1912).

praedicta ecclesia omnes martyres et eorum gloriosos agones qui Deo magis quam hominibus noti sunt devotione veneramur.

The suspicion of the decree about the historicity of the texts sends them back to their literary status – yet Lifshitz’s warning, that hagiographic texts are inseparable from the other manifestations of the cult, still holds. The juxtaposition of literary and historical character of hagiographic texts was formulated by Paul Magdalino with a difference outcome. He emphasized that the text can be exactly the medium that establishes the saints’ historicity – just what we could follow in the case of Cyrus and John. The hagiographic text, writes Magdalino, “allows us to study the dynamism of the model projected by the text, even where the model behind the text eludes recovery or turns out to be fabricated; in other words, it gives historical meaning and function to those holy men who never existed in the flesh.”⁴⁹⁴

Although this dissertation examines only the texts of the miracle catalogues as testimonies of cultic healing, as I have already said earlier, I am aware that for an all-encompassing analysis of ancient and Christian incubation the other material remains of the cult are indispensable (such as the sanctuaries themselves, the artefacts – cult objects, icons, statues etc -, objects with thaumaturgic force or commemorative function). Being conscious of this, within the limits of the dissertation I have chosen the analysis of aspects of the written-literary of sources, one source-group among the several ones.

Greek incubation records: votives and temple redactions becoming literary narratives

Greek miracle narratives of incubation or other types of miraculous healing were often recorded and kept in the sanctuaries. Strabo noted about the Serapis temple at Canopus, that is “there are some, who write down the cures, while others record the miracles of the oracles of this place.”⁴⁹⁵ It is important that the textual recording of miracles, healings, dream-visions at places could be a ritual requirement: “Everyone who goes down to Trophonios is obliged to dedicate the story of whatever he has seen or heard, written out on a wooden tablet.”⁴⁹⁶ The ritual order of recording the miracle could have arrived from the cult personnel, but also the divinity might have called for it directly. (This fact is attested for example by the verb *στηλογραφεῖν*, used often on the confession stelai from Asia-Minor, from the 2nd century AD.) The god might give his order tailored to the dreamer, requiring the inscription of the miracle story (or the compilation of a whole

⁴⁹⁴ Paul Magdalino, “‘What we heard in the Lives of the saints we have seen with our own eyes’: the holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople” In Howard-Johnston, James and Paul A. Hayward, eds. *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 85.

⁴⁹⁵ XVII. 1. 17, my translation.

⁴⁹⁶ Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, IX, 39, 4, transl. Peter Levy.

collection); as Iulius Appelas (cc. 160 AD) informed us at the end of his long votive inscription (whereas Asclepius repeatedly “ordered” him what to do): “He bade me also to inscribe this. Full of gratitude I departed well,”⁴⁹⁷ At the same time Aelius Aristides also recorded at the explicit order of Asclepius his dream-relationship with the god, that lasted for several years and the motivation was identical of the Sophoclean Asclepius-Paeon, which kept his fame in the imperial period as well.⁴⁹⁸ I would like to quote a source, which is not above doubts, nevertheless the statement of which makes one think. It claims that the recording of the Asclepieian miraculous cures could have been requested by the emperor as well: the lines from the *Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum* attribute to Diocletian that he “et statim iussit in terras Traianas templum Asclepii aedificari et simulacrum fieri ex lapide proconisso. Quod cum factum fuisset, praecepit omnes curas in eodem templo in praeconias [i.e. “tabulas publice a praecone praepositas”] aeneas cum characteribus infigi.”⁴⁹⁹ The figure of Diocletian is presumably the forever bogeyman of the martyr acts (the emperor who indeed had promoted the Asclepius cult was Antoninus Pius, not considering of course Julian). Yet the value of this note is not at all insignificant: it bears testimony to a concept, according to which around the Asclepieian *Iamata* there was some sort of systematic work of collecting and archiving, the result of which, at this is of importance, was aimed for public disposal.

Marco Dorati even saw a development within the varieties of these cultic records. He separated the earlier votive testimonies (more material than textual) as manifestations of individual piety, and a successive level of miracle recording: when the individual dedications underwent a selection and were written on a stele, shaped to a narrative, to be read within the temple. He emphasised that these inscriptions did not originate any more from the healed individuals but from the temple itself.⁵⁰⁰ This was, however, not the final stage, envisaged Dorati, and outlined that the fate of incubation miracle stories might have been similar to the formation of oneirocritic literature.⁵⁰¹ By the Hellenistic era a large corpus of literary records developed, which could obtain popularity outside the range of cultic healing. It consisted of books whose subject was miraculous healings and divine dream epiphanies.⁵⁰² The oracular type incubation as well as dream interpretation produced a rich literary material,⁵⁰³ transmitting also numerous dream healing miracles and it enables us to suspect, how vast collections, similarly to the oneirocritic literature, could be written from the literary elaborations – versions of the *iamata*.⁵⁰⁴ The precious source, Artemidoros attests that

⁴⁹⁷ T 432.

⁴⁹⁸ T 587, 588, 589, 590.

⁴⁹⁹ Idézi Deubner, *De incubatione*, 75, note 1.

⁵⁰⁰ Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi”, 92-93.

⁵⁰¹ Dorati, “Funzioni e motivi”, 94.

⁵⁰² Cf. Dorati – Guidorizzi, “La letteratura incubatoria”, 346 where they also refer to Halliday, 1936, 286. (CHECK)

⁵⁰³ Dario Del Corno, ed. *Graecorum de re onirocritica reliquiae*. Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antiquità 26 (Milan, 1969).

⁵⁰⁴ Marco Dorati, Giulio Guidorizzi. “La letteratura incubatoria” In *La letteratura di consumo nel mondo greco-latino*. a cura di Oronzo Pecere e Antonio Stramaglia, 345-371 (Università degli Studi di Cassino, 1996). Kérdés, hogy láthatunk-e a nagy hellén gyógyító szentélyek epigrafiai anyagában egy jól elkülöníthető incubációs irodalmat.

Geminus of Tyre collected in three, Demetrios of Phaleron in five, Artemidoros of Miletus in twenty-two books the prescriptions and healings of Serapis given in dreams,⁵⁰⁵ a material that probably made part of a literature of a particular kind that formed around Serapis: the lists of dream-prescriptions and dream interpretations.⁵⁰⁶ Even if it is uncertain whether in the case of the Serapeion of Canopus mentioned by Strabo⁵⁰⁷ we are dealing with proper miracle-lists and booklets or he simply had in mind the written testimonies of the votives, so familiar sight from other cult places, Aelius Aristeides gave a firm point. In his Serapis hymn he wrote about the ἱεραὶ θηκάβιβλων ἱερῶν,⁵⁰⁸ which already quite likely refer to the miracle narratives archived in the sanctuary. To sum up, there existed in the imperial period at least two channels through which divine miraculous events associated with dreams and ritual healing became fairly widely known: the material around the cultplace, that from the primary votive form received a narrative elaboration, and what was archived in the temple but probably travelled far in accordance with the fame of the sanctuary and on the other hand existed the (non cultic) dream literature, out of which works emerged that belonged to the popular entertainment, to the “letteratura del consumo”, as Dorati and Guidorizzi classified it.⁵⁰⁹

Thecla's hagiographer in the introduction of his collections referred to that at the great incubation and oracle cult places of Greece (in Dodona, Delphoi, at the spring of Castalia, Pergamon, Epidauros and Aegae) the supplicants received a written answer. It is more likely that the hagiographer's remark concerned that these answers (i. e. the most famous of them), just as other miraculous deeds of deities, spread in written form. On the basis of the hagiographer's critique of them it seems that not only their content but their style and literary *topoi* were well known to him, most probably from his readings. What concerns the direct literary precedents of Christian incubation narratives, both Thecla's hagiographer and Sophronios made mention of the written recorded material at the cultplace, the miraculous cures of Sarpedonios and Isis, which were known to them.

The fact of recording and shaping into a literary mould the miracles is of utmost importance. Its effect was analogous to what was to happen later around the Christian cult places, that is, from the moment that the miracles were recorded not only in the sanctuary or on stelai around it, but in books, the *actio radius* of the stories, their being read and their cultic significance all have been enlarged. As both in Antiquity as well as in the forming saint cults, the miracle stories concerning the

⁵⁰⁵ Artemidoros, *Oneirocritica*. 2. 44 and 4. 22. cf. Del Corno, *Graecorum de re*, 111, 138-139.

⁵⁰⁶ Longo, *Aretalogia*, 28. Dorati – Guidorizzi, “La letteratura incubatoria,” 346-47, and Del Corno's Introduction to his translation of Artemidoro, *Il libro dei sogni*, (Milan: Adelphi, 1975), xxvii.

⁵⁰⁷ Strabo, *Geographica*, XVII 1, 17.

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. H. S. Versnel, “Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer” in H. S. Versnel ed. *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 1-64, p. 62, note 258. A. Duprez also spoke of *aretalogoi* in the cult of Serapis: *Jésus et les Dieux Guérisseurs*, 73.

miracle-worker were organically linked to the cult place itself. According to the testimony of Augustine in the *De civitate Dei* XXII, he proposed that the beneficiaries of the miracles would write a short written record of the event, which in turn was to be presented to and approved by the local bishop.⁵¹⁰ Afterwards these *libelli* were to be stored in the church. Delehayé remarked that by that time “the practice of the *libellus* seemed so natural, that the idea had to come up nearly everywhere where such extraordinary deeds were produced, the memory of which was worth keeping.”⁵¹¹ Himself also connected the phenomenon to the record-keeping in the sanctuaries of Asclepius and pointed out the essential similarities between the features of the iamata and the Christian miraculous cures. The proposal of these records served a double purpose: the documentation, of the miracles, or better to say, a standardized form of testimonies on one hand, and by the episcopal approval, a sort of control over the miracles on the other. The practice might have taken root at other places as well;⁵¹² but it is difficult to assert that there was such a systematic archiving in this booklet form in Byzantium.

The spread of the stories beyond the boundaries of the cult place had variegated effects. First, the local cult advertised by the miracle stories attracted pilgrims to that very place and not to another of the same cult figure. Just like the Epidaurian stelai were concerned not with the fame of Asclepius but of the Asclepieion of Epidaurus and the miracle stories incorporated the rivalry with and the “defeat” of the Asclepieion of the nearby Troizen, the collection of Thecla is likewise focussed on the importance of the Seleucian shrine. Secondly, a famous sanctuary became a magnet by attracting the most representative stories of the cult figure. This must have happened with some of the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, that – wherever and whenever they took place, were amalgamated into a single corpus celebrating the Cosmidion in Constantinople. The third aspect is that far-spreading miracle narratives (which, as getting more and more distanced often were often stripped off the local features) advertise what is universal in the cult, enlarging in this way not only the universal character of the miracle worker but the circle of “witnesses”, that from a group around the healed person in the sanctuary became *all who read and believed* the miracle stories. On the incubation miracles of Isis Diodorus Siculus wrote: “In proof of this, as they say, they advance, not legends, as the Greeks do, but manifest facts; for practically the entire inhabited world is their witness, in that it eagerly contributes to the honours of Isis because she manifests herself in healings.”

⁵⁰⁹ Dorati – Guidorizzi, “La letteratura incubatoria”, 346.

⁵¹⁰ Hippolyte Delehayé, “Les premiers ‘Libelli Miraculorum.’” *Analecta Bollandiana* 29 (1910): 427-434.

⁵¹¹ Delehayé, “Les premiers...”, 433.

⁵¹² Cf. also *Sermones* 320-324 and Mark van Uytenghe, “La controverse biblique et patristique autour du miracle, et ses répercussions sur l’hagiographie dans l’Antiquité tardive et le haut Moyen Âge latin” in *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés...*, 211 also with regard to the change in Augustine’s attitude towards contemporary miracles.

For standing above the sick in their sleep she gives them aid for their diseases and works remarkable cures upon such as submit themselves to her.”⁵¹³

Either retaining (or acquiring) a local colouring or expanding towards the universal, with the fact that the narratives of cultic events were not limited any more to the area of the sanctuary, started the process in which the miracle worker and their miraculous stories became separated.

An important aspect of this separation (in part its cause, in part its result) that the miraculous motifs, the narrative elements, the most varied units of the narration have a life on their own: the same story can be connected to several heroes, just like the miracle of the mute woman and the paralytic man, which figures among the miracles of Cosmas and Damian⁵¹⁴ and Saint Menas,⁵¹⁵ but it was apparently performed by Cyrus and John as well, but Sophronios purposefully did not want to records those miracles of Cyrus and John, which were worked by other saints as well. Instead, Sophronios gave priority to those deeds that were attributed to his subject-saints alone: “This present miracle I wrote down, because it is not written in the collection of those others.”⁵¹⁶ His note on this subject of multiple attribution and the travelling of miracles also attested to that he knew these stories in a written form. In addition, the spread of the Sophronian miracle corpus is well illustrated by the fact that some of his miracle narratives will be translated in the 10th century in Naples, by the hagiographer of Saint Agnellus – who was also an incubation healer.⁵¹⁷

The fact that the same song occurs attached to different heroes would seem to indicate that the story is more important than the historical hero to which it is attached. There is a close relationship between hero and tale, but with some tales at least the *type* of hero is more significant than the *specific* hero. It is convenient to group songs according to their story content, or thematic configurations, because songs seem to continue in spite of the particular historical hero; they are not connected irrevocably to any single hero.⁵¹⁸

What Lord wrote about the functioning of living, oral compositions, holds equally true for the stories of pagan and Christian *thaumaturgoi*, with the emphasis that the main character’s historical or a-historical, mythical-fictitious being did not influence the migration of these motifs. Moreover, what may seem more significant in case of our healers, is that the “type of the hero” is more important than the religious and ideological texture surrounding his figure and cult. The typology, the turning points, the form-world of the stories around the cult-figures of incubation healing were permanent, independently from the pagan-Christian context.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History* I. 25. 4-5. (transl. C. H. Oldfather, London: Heinemann, 1933) (in the quotation the emphasis is mine)

⁵¹⁴ KDM 24.

⁵¹⁵ MM 5.

⁵¹⁶ In the epilogue of MCJ 30.

⁵¹⁷ D. Mallardo, “L’incubazione nella cristianità medievale napoletana” *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), 465-498; cf. Dorati, “Funzioni e motive”, 114, note 87.

⁵¹⁸ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (2nd ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 120.

⁵¹⁹ Giulio Guidorizzi applied the Proppian model for the Life of Saint Elias the Younger, and he underlined that in the narrative of the *Vita*, just as in the tales, not the characters but their functions mattered. “Motivi fiabeschi nella agiografia bizantina” in *Studi Bizantini e neogreci*, a cura di P. L. Leone, pp. 457-467. Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1983) 461-463.

The Christian affiliations: The relationship of incubation narratives to biblical miracles and early Christian miracula literature

In direct relation to Christian healing miracles were the preceding healing miracles of Jesus and the narrative shape these stories acquired in the New Testament. Their impact was not only literary⁵²⁰ and theological:⁵²¹ they provided a new paradigm of miraculous healing from a medical point of view as well, on turning back to the model of immediate cure instead of a longer curative process, which characterised the later healings of Asclepius. But on the medical front, this was all. If we examine closely the incubation miracles, it is striking how much the saints are perceived to act as medicine men, rather than *thaumaturgoi*. They do not use the means Jesus did to heal, words, or a touch. They give individual councils, they do not have just one remedy. Even the habitual wax is not uniform, as it is advised mostly to treat the already miraculously operated scars, or be taken as a proper pill or oral suspension for internal problems and to rub or smear for external use. Gestures as the laying-on of hands or the sign of the cross are also not instrumental but additional to the miraculous remedy,⁵²² and they come from the Christian repertoire only when enter into a variable motif, which would not interrupt the pattern of the incubation tale as a whole.

The same holds for the healing acts of Jesus, the imitation of which by the incubation saints is more rhetorical, and not even very much embedded in the narrative but additional to it. A common ending of the Christian stories is to parallel the healers to Christ, especially if the patient as well can be compared to some beneficiary of healing in the Gospel, being lame or blind or having his faith so great as the determination of the paralytic lowered down from the roof. It is particularly true for the Miracles of Cosmas and Damian that the obligatory closure of the narrative with its

⁵²⁰ Paul Achtemier, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament" in Schüssler, ed. *Religious Propaganda* ? 149-177; C. Bonner, "Traces of Thaumaturgic Techniques in the Miracles" *Harvard Theological Review* 20 (1927): 171-181; Robert W. Funk, "The Form of the New Testament Healing Miracle Story" *Semeia* 12 (1978): 57-96; John A. Hardon, "The miracle narratives in the Acts of the Apostles" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954): 303-318; H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracles and Magic in New Testament Times*; idem *Miracle in the Early Christian World. A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983); Kelber, Werner, H. *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983; Hendrick van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* Transl. T. S. Preston (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965); Jerome, H. Neyrey, "Miracles, In Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healings" In John C. C. Cavadini, ed. *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity. Imagining Truth*. 19-56 (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); John J. Pilch, "Insights and Models for Understanding the Healing Activity of the Historical Jesus" *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, 1994: 154-77; idem, "Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model" *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 18 (1988): 60-66; and "Understanding Healing in the Social World of Early Christianity" *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992): 26-33; H. Remus, *Jesus as Healer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); idem, *Pagan - Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983); R. J. Rüttimann, "Asclepius and Jesus. The form, Character and Status of the Asclepius Cult in the Second Century CE and its Influence on Early Christianity" (Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 1986); Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978); G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); G. E. Tinker, "Medicine and Miracle. A Comparison of Two Healing Types in the Late Hellenistic World" (PhD diss. Graduate Theological Union, 1983).

⁵²¹ E. g. healing as the external aspect of salvation

marked thanksgiving to Christ, just as the free healing of the saints both reflect the example set by Jesus and the thaumaturgic charisma endowed on his disciples. Despite, however, the biblical references inserted into the story, the half-sentence analogies, quotations the biblical relationship of the stories are only secondary and easy to detach from the narrative. (I emphasise, that I am not speaking about the theological aspects of Christian miraculous healings, but about the formation of the narrative). The biblical rhetoric inserted into the stories (mostly at their beginning or end) – remains rhetoric. To illustrate how the imitation of Christ's gestures by the saints can be forced and out of place, I would like to recall one of the miracles of Cyros and John. In MCJ 46 the saints in dream send their patient to the Lake of Siloam, following Jesus' example in John 9: 7-11. (To the sick man of the previous miracle they also advised to go to have a bath, as it was the case in so many other incubation counsels.) But the sick man in the Egyptian Menouthis protested saying that for the blind man of the Gospels the Siloam was near but he would need a costly journey to go to Jerusalem. Not to withdraw their words in imitation Christ, the at the end saints helped out the patient to have the money for the journey! The way Sophronios told this miracle shows that mismatch of the biblical imagery in this story must have greatly amused him (if it was not him to invent it).

In the theological message of the miracles the *salus* (healing and salvation) given by Christ is naturally very much underlined, together with the repeated possibility of obtaining physical as well as spiritual healing. But it is done in the framework of the story, the dream miracles themselves follow an independent paradigm, the narrative is more determined by the microcosms which called these stories directly to life, the cult practice tradition of dream healing. This loose relationship between the theological-religious background and the narrative was articulated by Dagron in connection with Thecla's corpus:

Les Écritures ne sont donc pas ici une référence sacrée, et une réalité indépassable, mais un modèle religieux et littéraire adaptable et transportable, à partir duquel on composera une sorte de christianisme de clocher. Ces déformations ne sont pas imputables à l'hagiographie en général, mais à la culture de notre hagiographe, chez qui les mots, les images, les croyances du christianisme s'accrochent infailliblement sur les schémas conceptuels du paganisme des cités.⁵²³

Previously I talked about the travelling of certain motifs, of stories that became attributed to various saints. So far our collections allow us to observe, this interlacing of narrative units for the major part moves within the realm of the incubation miracle collections.

⁵²² E. g. KDM 4, 9, 21 or KDM 27.

⁵²³ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 156.

There is no such interconnectedness and mutual influence about which Magdalino writes in connection to the Stylites, where the hagiographers heavily relied on earlier Christian miracle collections.⁵²⁴

That the narrative of incubation miracles and their religious – theological background are clearly separated, was rightly observed by Fernandez Marcos, who approached the issue from another standpoint. While I explain the fidelity to the ancient form in the Christian corpora by the fact that the narrative pattern inherited from ancient incubation was so strong, that it subordinated the formation of the Christian practice to its own rules, Fernandez Marcos attributed the distantiation of the form and content to that the narrative structure of incubation was a mere tool, at least in the hand of Sophronios, for his own ends (the propagation of the truths of Chalcedonian orthodoxy).

En los *Thaumata* se conserva el mismo esquema de la incubatio, las mismas fórmulas para las epifanías, un comportamiento de los santos muy parecido al de Asclepio. Pero junto a esta, tenemos la impresión de que la incubatio se emplea como un recurso retorico más con el fin de transmitir una serie de ejemplos y doctrinas. Todas las narraciones de milagros son tendenciosas desde el momento que están escritas con un parti pris dogmático y con una finalidad cerigmática o propagandística. Pero en los *Thaumata*, la exaltación cerigmática de los santos invade todas las narraciones y hace de ellas un himno de alabanza en el que todos los datos van acordes con el entusiasmo desatado y la credulidad sin límites del autor.⁵²⁵

The “limitless credulity of the author” in my eyes is Sophronios’ (just as of the hagiographer of Thecla and the other saints) obedience to the genre requirements of the miracle narrative. Sophronios especially underlined that he wanted this work to be a masterpiece in its genre; an unavoidable condition of which was the most refined display of the most wondrous miracles.

⁵²⁴ Paul Magdalino, “‘What we heard in the Lives of the saints we have seen with our own eyes’: the holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople” In: Howard-Johnston, James and Paul A. Hayward, eds. 83-112. *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁵²⁵ Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 167.

PART III: STORIES

Compositional Structure

Chapter 6: The Hagiographer and his presence in the text

“Authorship includes reflection on the writing self.”

(W. Kelber)

The (material) author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with a narrator of that narrative – warns Roland Barthes.⁵²⁶ In our cases of hagiographical writing caution is even more needed: the *narrator of the narrative* often takes the garments of a previous narrator, that is the impossibly definable author does not only differ from the narrator, but the narrators themselves are also layered on each other. This layering of the narrators may emerge accidentally, in accordance with the formative rules of hagiography, but it may occur consciously as well.

In the midst of the shaping of the narrative and moulding into a compositional whole, a proper collection, we find the hagiographer – but not only him. The hagiographer, however a conscious composer with the most precise demand of giving birth to a text of literary value, did not rely only on his own literary taste and repertoire of expressions. Hence the question: who shapes the miracle stories, the answer is: the saint, the sick, the hagiographer – and the traditional, internal rules of miracle narrative. The saint and the patient are emphatic naturally not as persons but as the participants of the cult experience. Given, however, the dream as the medium of this experience, the patient, the dreamer, in my opinion, acquires a greater role in the formation of the story, than in other fields of Byzantine hagiography. Since the miracle itself, the encounter with the saint takes place in dream, hence, contrary to several other manifestations of Christian saints, it is visible only to the beneficiary of the dream. The hagiographer, however much he claims to be an “eye-witness”, was to rely on the dream-narrative of the dreamer. Yet the dream-experience and how it is put into a story, is very much influenced by the personality of the dreamer: his faith, fears, expectations, medical and theological knowledge and the ever so much personal elements of his waking world. What leaves its impact on both the dreamer and the hagiographer, is the narrative patterns of incubation miracles. Because the patient, just as the sick supplicant who turned to Asclepius, was conditioned by the stories heard or read about the cult, and recorded and listened to in the sanctuary; and he was conditioned not only emotionally, but in the concrete way of shaping his dream as well. The hagiographer, on the other hand, hearing a story of a dream-cure, places it both consciously as well as involuntarily into the schemes of incubation narratives.

⁵²⁶ Roland Barthes, “Structural Analysis of Narratives”, In: *Image, Music, Text*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 111.

The hagiographer's endeavour of collecting and authoring the miraculous cures of the saints is closely linked to his relationship to the cult place: he can be a beneficiary of the saint's cure himself, or official temple personnel, priest, or member of a lay sodality around the saint. His affiliation within these categories greatly defines, with what purpose and by what means he embarks on gathering together the miracles (personal thanksgiving for healing, church propaganda etc), and moreover, what sources he draws upon and along what demands he puts them together. Another question, for me of no smaller interest, how the hagiographer depicts his own role, what is his self-display, his conscious self characterizing and similarly, what emerges to the forth without his voluntary emphasis.

Let us select two miracles from the incubation narratives, following Lennart Rydén, who, on the basis of these two stories made an observation worth thinking further. The first miracle is from the collection of Artemios (MA26): an elderly man afflicted with hernia received from the saint in his dream the council to turn to a blacksmith for cure. The named blacksmith objected to the idea of possessing any thaumaturgical gifts, perhaps even considering the sick man's request as a mockery. Yet the patient insisted and when he visited the blacksmith's workshop for the third time for the remedy, the latter became so angry that hit the man's hernia with an enormous blow of the hammer, and the sick man - naturally - recovered immediately. In Rydén's opinion the story does not really have an anecdotic, composed character. To this miracle Rydén paralleled the story that ends with the double recovery and marrying of the paralytic man and the mute woman, adding that he has the feeling in both cases that it the saints who made the jokes, not the hagiographer or the patients.⁵²⁷

With this train of thought we arrive at the questions who and to what extent, obeying to what mechanisms create the miracle narratives. The most obvious answer is that the figures who shape the story: the saints, the patient and the hagiographer. Developing, however, a bit further this issue, it is important to touch upon the factor that is the most decisive both regarding the spontaneous taking shape of the events, and the conscious formation, the narrative shaping of the story is the narrative tradition. By tradition here I intend several concepts: first, that almost automatic selection, which elevates an event in a self-explanatory way to a miracle. Laymen (the patient, or eye-witness but the readers as well) and the official representatives of the sacred alike knew well what may render an event a miracle: if the wondrous intervention of the saint is experienced, if the sick is healed, the lost is found out, the sinner meets his punishment, and all within the saint's unmistakable sphere of influence. Stories that do not conform to this scheme, however interesting they are, narratable or in their genre extraordinary, not only do not find their way into miracle collections, but not even their recipient regards them miracle stories. I emphasise the working of this primarily, natural filter, because further below it will be noteworthy to observe cases, when the traditionally transmitted story

in fact is at amiss with the requirements of any of the schemes (e. g. the patient dies instead of recovery). In such cases a more cunning narrative technique becomes necessary, a sort of narrative twist in the story so that they could at the end find their way into the miracle collections. What the requirements were of the given genre or narrative scheme, could be certainly controlled more directly by the authors and transmitters of the stories, on then basis of both stylistic aspects and those of the content:

The research on folk-poetry has long ago noticed the phenomenon that is usually called the rule of self-correction, and what is put into practice in the case of epic songs in an institutionalised context. In this way, the singers of Uzbekistan, for instance, discuss at their assemblies the new versions, and those, which do not conform to the traditional style and traditional epic world, they dismiss.⁵²⁸

Putting aside this primary role of tradition that shapes the history of the text in various chronological phases, we can return to the three sources of the formation of the narrative, what I mentioned above. The first was the saint: the saint's actions, attributes and gestures are strongly determined by the saint's own story, his or her *Vitae*, miracles performed earlier, by the saint's reputation, just as the features and deeds communicated by iconographical representations. In part on the basis of all these the saint's suppliant as well obtains a certain attitude towards the saint, characterised by personal expectations and anxieties alike. Given the fact that we are dealing with incubation, the dream medium of the miraculous events receives a particular significance, depending on the dreamer's psyche, on his or her visual world, and on the visual language, the *imaginaire* of his time – on the force of these factors in shaping the narrative I shall speak in a separate sub-chapter later.

Thus the second figure in building up the story is the patient. He has one important role, which always finds its way into the narrative and points further over the simple fact that we ultimately know what happened in his interpretation, filtered through the peculiarities of his personality. This particularity is the reaction the patient gives upon the experiences with the saint. The most interesting, of course, are the cases when the patient's hesitation, incredulity or opposition lead to the repetition of the wondrous dream-events, or even to the radicalisation of them. These reactions were based not simply on the patient's conception of the saint – they may born from his regard towards the dream itself as means of divine communication, from his sceptical or credulous attitude, and from his preconceptions about the cult place or concerning Christianity itself.

The third, and for us readers the ultimate, figure in the process of moulding the religious experience into a meaningful narrative, is the hagiographer. In what follows, I shall introduce his role

⁵²⁷ Lennart Rydén, "Kyrkan som sjukhus. Om den helige Artemios' mirakler" *Religion och Bibel* 44 (1985), 3-16; 11.

⁵²⁸ Zsigmond Ritoók, "A szóbeliségtől a szövegtörténetig" *Antik Tanulmányok* 29 (1982): 9-20, 10. ("A népköltészet kutatása már régen felfigyelt arra a jelenségre, melyet az önkijavítás törvényének szokás nevezni, s amely epikus énekek esetében szervezett keretekben valósul meg. Így az üzbégeknel az énekmondók összejeveteleken beszélnek meg az új változatokat, s azokat, amelyek nincsenek összhangban a hagyományos stílussal és a hagyományos epikus világképpel, elvetik.")

and his person, not only so far it can be deduced from the stories he wrote but paying more attention to the conscious self-presentation of his own role, in short: what is the hagiographer to the text?

The Hagiographer: as narrator, author, patient, physician, cult personnel

The question above is better formulated if we ask: in what sense we can regard the hagiographer as author, narrator, performer, compiler of the miracle stories, recorder of the text or a creative composer of it? What is the image he would like to create for himself, what kind of storyteller – collector – virtuoso roles and analogies for such roles can be found in the miracle narratives themselves?⁵²⁹

Similarly to the ongoing tradition of recording miracle narratives, the recorder of miracles is familiar from the cultic and literary context of Greek Antiquity as well. Vincenzo Longo addressed his difficultly identifiable role:⁵³⁰ in its original meaning, the Greek *aretalogos* denoted at the same time the priest recording the wondrous deeds of the divine, but an official entertainer as well. The dichotomy of the term reflects the double-faced, both religious and profane character of aretalogy itself. Instead of repeating the already described hypotheses of Reinach, Werner and Reitzenstein concerning the original role of the aretalogos, it seems more valuable to direct our attention to a testimony of Strabo, according to which in the Serapeion at Canopus there was a personnel for recording the miracles.⁵³¹

Beyond the task of recording miracles, Christian hagiography “is in search of author” in another sense as well. For in accordance with the piety and moral tune which it forms into narrative, the impact radiating from the stories works into both directions: “...in hagiography, authors deployed narrative simultaneously for the improvement of their readers and themselves. These literary acts of the making of saints were doubly generative, producing both the saints and their authors. Composing hagiography made one a hagiographer.”⁵³² Claudia Rapp formulated more markedly the same message: “The hagiographer’s function thus parallels that of the saint. Both, as it were, provide perfect models of sanctity, one through his writing, the other through his life.”⁵³³

In the modern analyses of the incubation miracle collections, scholars were primarily interested in the hagiographer as a historical figure. Thecla’s hagiographer was examined as a main

⁵²⁹ on types of narrator: Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago, 1961, esp. Ch. VI, VII, VIII, personal vs impersonal narration); A. Kazhdan, *Authors and Texts in Byzantium* Variorum Reprints II, London: ???, 1979.

⁵³⁰ V. Longo, *Aretalogie nel mondo greco* Vol. 1. Epigrafi e papiri (Genova: Istituto di Filologia Classica e Medioevale, 1969), 19.

⁵³¹ *Geographica*, XVII, 801; cf. Luis Gil, *Therapeia. La medicina popular en el mundo clásico* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1969), 358, and for more: A Duprez, *Jésus et les Dieux Guérisseurs*, 73. CHECK. Check also LiDonnici

⁵³² Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 2.

⁵³³ Rapp, “Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians”, 41.

character of ecclesiastical Realpolitik, as an antagonist of Basil of Seleucia⁵³⁴, or his classical education, rhetorical training, literary and philosophical knowledge were addressed⁵³⁵, while the editor of the corpus (Gilbert Dagron) emphasised his intimate relationship to the saint and to the cult.

Our only hagiographer with a name, Sophronios, future patriarch of Jerusalem also drew attention to his own person, and to the role he played in the Arab takeover of Jerusalem.⁵³⁶ As a hagiographer, he was member of that circle of friends in Alexandria, which formed around John the Almsgiver, himself also an author of the *Vita of Saint Tychon*.⁵³⁷ To this group we owe (besides the works of Sophronios, among them the first (lost) *Vita* of John the Almsgiver) also the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschos, and the *Lives* composed by Leotinos of Neapolis.⁵³⁸ Sophronios wrote partly under this influence (and as a result of his stay in Alexandria and Menouthis) the *Laudes* and the *Miracula Cyri et Jobanni* as well.

The collections of Thecla and that of Cyrus and John are unique among the incubation corpora in what they are literary works of art by named authors (the first was transmitted as work of Basil of Seleucia, the latter, of course, in the oeuvre of Sophronios), hence they more or less escaped the usual rewritings and insertions of miracle collections. We find later additions, greatly changing the theological message of the miracles, in the material of Artemios: a collection that is though anonymous, but can well be related to a specific author. The hagiographer of Artemios, on the basis of his medical vocabulary and his polemics against doctors, has been regarded so far as a physician himself, who as a church personnel, adhered to the cult and who, by the myriad of his details on the everyday life of the capital and on the church building can enrich the social- and art historian. A recent hypothesis saw him hidden among the characters of the miracles. In the case of Cosmas and Damian we are dealing with a colourful, multiple layers of hagiographic material, building on each other for centuries. From the flow of the narrative only occasionally emerges a – sometimes named – personal voice.

⁵³⁴ G. Dagron, “L’auteur des Actes et des Miracles de Sainte Thècle” *Analecta Bollandiana* 92 (1974), 5-11.

⁵³⁵ Scott Johnson

⁵³⁶ About Sophronios’ person and about the identity of Sophronios the Sophist and Sophronios the Patriarch see: P. S. Vaillhé, “Sophrone le sophiste et Sophrone le patriarche” *Revue d’Orient Chrétien* VII (1902), 361-385; VIII (1903), 32-69; 356-387; N. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 163-164, and Cyril Mango’s references about the identity of the two (Mango, *A Byzantine Hagiographer*, 25) to the work of Ch. von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem: vie monastique et confession dogmatique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972) versus I. Ševčenko, “La agiografia bizantina dal IV al IX secolo” in *La civiltà bizantina dal IV al IX secolo*, ed. A. Guillou, 87-173 (Bari: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1977), 137ff.

⁵³⁷ More about him and about the circle of hagiographer-friends cf. H. Delehay, *L’ancienne hagiographie byzantine. Les sources, les premiers modèles, la formation des genres* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1991), 51-68

⁵³⁸ such as the Life of Symeon the Fool, the reworking of Sophronios’s first Life of Saint John the Almsgiver, the Life of Saint Spyridion; cf. C. Mango, “A Byzantine Hagiographer at Work: Leontinos of Neapolis” in: *Byzanz und der Westen. Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, Ed. I. Hutter, 25-41, (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984).

What interests me in the hagiographer, is his figure in relation to his narrative, and the picture he consciously or involuntarily provides about himself. I am looking for answers for questions such as what ambitions, especially literary – creative ambitions motivate the hagiographer and what are the narrative situations he puts himself forward or prefers to remain invisible. “Thus the lives of the saints are also the residuum of a process of authorised self-production, of the making of authors. In generating a Christian authorial persona, the author was inevitably the subject of his own creative act. Indeed, the authors of early Christian saints’ lives and miracle collections reconceived the production of literature as a highly ritualised technology of the religious self.”⁵³⁹ During the process of the creation of the hagiographer’s persona, it may be astonishing that the *reflection on the writing self* is manifest in the metaphors the hagiographer applies to himself. What he chooses to be his emblem, is based not only on his temper and self-esteem but also intimately linked to the way he perceives his work as a collector, organizer and redactor of stories who may struggle not only in selecting from the plenty but nonetheless in searching out for the best tales.

The hagiographic endeavour: The case of Thecla’s hagiographer

“the author is himself a character in the narrative, portrayed interacting with the saint or with the saint’s shrine. Subjecting themselves to a variety of models, hagiographers depicted themselves as participants in the religious system they described and endorsed.”⁵⁴⁰

Thecla’s hagiographer depicted himself as a merchant of much sought for precious stones (a topos of Byzantine hagiography⁵⁴¹) which speaks to the value of the saint’s narrated deeds, while another image of himself, the gold-digger reflects upon the difficulty of his task in obtaining these treasures, aware of the heavy chore of carrying away first the layers of soil covering the precious material.⁵⁴²

Thecla’s hagiographer, before embarking upon the saint’s miracles, still at the end of the *Vita*, signalled his future project and the indispensable help of Thecla in this endeavour. Among the motivations of writing about the miracles he mentions that some of these miracles happened to himself⁵⁴³, whereas the further reason he gives was the indirect request of Thecla, which she communicated through one of her protégé, Achaïos, a friend of the hagiographer. (Dagron: “ami initiateur, sainte inspiratrice”) In the closing section of the corpus, however, the hagiographer

⁵³⁹ Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 9.

⁵⁴¹ MT 44, for its other occurrences cf Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 405.

⁵⁴² On Thecla’s hagiographer as a historiographer (in the *Vita*) versus the researcher and social observer of the *Miracula* cf Dagron, *La Vie et Miracles*, 22-23.

⁵⁴³ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 280-281.

addresses a very much personal request to Thecla, as if in exchange for his work, namely that the saint would rescue him from the anger and malevolence of a certain Porphyrios.⁵⁴⁴

If we examine closely, when and under what circumstances the hagiographer appears in the 46 miracles of the collection, we come to the following conclusion: the hagiographer comes into sight in proportionally distributed intervals in the corpus, almost with a regular rhythm. After his first mention of himself at the end of the *Vita*, which is at the same time, is an introduction to the Miracles and accounts for his undertaking, he appears in MT 12, 31 and 41. Each of these miracles makes part of a thematic group: MT 12 is the closure of that thematic unity, which speaks about the bishops of Thecla's church (such as Dexianos, the hagiographer's contemporary, Thecla's favoured bishop; Menodoros, bishop of Cilicia and Symposios, an earlier bishop of the sanctuary, MT 7-11). This section is closed by MT 12, in which the hagiographer first tells his own miraculous recovery. It is underlined that just as the miracles of the collection are part of a longer, countless series of miracle stories that record Thecla's deeds, this healing miracle of the hagiographer is similarly just one of the miraculous recoveries Thecla performed in his favour. Putting aside that in this case he does not give the patient's (his own) name and other personal information as in the rest of the stories, the miracle-narrative in its illness – dream – healing story-pattern does not differ from the other pieces of the collection. Naturally he tells his story in a first-person narrative. But we may have the impression that this innocently starting healing miracle is just a prelude to telling a far more significant event shaped into a miracle: in connection with Thecla's healings, the hagiographer put himself into the role of a beneficiary of the miracle; when talking of himself, he starts another story, unconnected to his illness but which expresses much markedly Thecla's grace over him: the hagiographer's confrontation with the new bishop, the successor of Dexianos, in this story a dishonest drunkard, who became known in ecclesiastical history as Basil of Seleucia. From the transition the reader gets the impression that the hagiographer told previously his story of recovery not only to pass to his own person, but because Thecla's healing miracle conforming to the nature of the other miracle narratives gives credit to the following wondrous intervention into ecclesiastical politics. Along his effort to establish credibility, the hagiographer emphasises that it was still Thecla's personal help towards him, in the conflict of a priest against his bishop. According to the narration, the background of the events was formed by the circumstances of Basil's episcopal election – and as an omniscient narrator, he underlines especially the gravity of the way things happened, by not speaking about it: "that how he became a bishop, and how he got the church into his power, this, who is unworthy even to appear on stage in the theatre, now I omit."⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁴ cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 16-18.

⁵⁴⁵ MT 12. 45-46: τ μ ν π σκοπ τε γ νετο κα τς κκλησας κρ τησε, τ μηδ σκηνς ξιον, φεσθω τ ν ν.

Addressing elsewhere the significance of this miracle for theology and ecclesiastical power relations, for the moment I would only call attention to the fact, that after presenting himself as a healed patient, here the hagiographer depicts himself among the priests of Thecla's church. After this story start the miracle stories that are not connected so closely the cult place and its personnel (MT 13: There was once a military commander...; MT 14: There was once a man....)

The hagiographer's next appearance on the scene in MT 31 is an emblematic representation of how he considers his own role as narrator and how he makes Thecla perceive that: during the conscription of the miracles, the hagiographer was suppressed by fatigue and negligence – yet at this moment Thecla appeared to him, in the very place where the hagiographer usually studies his books, just when the hagiographer was transcribing a draft version of a miracle wrote on a tablet⁵⁴⁶ she started to read the already finished part and was greatly delighted by it! After this encouraging apparition the hagiographer redoubled his efforts to continue the collection. As a hypothesis, I would again point out, among what miracles this scene was described, the context, I am convinced is again a homogeneous thematic group. From MT 26 onwards Thecla appears in her quality of warrior – saint, including when the saint protects her besieged city and her sanctuary. From MT 29 retaliation – punishment miracles follow, protecting those who are under Thecla's protection. It should be noted that here Thecla's attention is dedicated to those, who are under her protection not only in general (as, e. g. the orphans of MT 35), but in direct connection with her cult (such as the cult objects of her sanctuary, the woman celebrating on Thecla's feast day or the nun living at the sanctuary). I would risk claiming that the hagiographer did not write accidentally himself into the stories where Thecla was working for “her own people”. Even if this remains a supposition, the next, last occurrence (indeed a spectacular and prize-winning appearance) of the narrator in MT 41 is the closing miracle of a well-defined thematic group, at the same time a precious reference about what self-portrait the hagiographer wished to record. MT 38, 39 and 40 each concerns rhetoricians. These are completed by Thecla's intervention of the hagiographer's behalf, on the occasion of the rhetorical contest organized for her honour. On the eve of the event, the hagiographer's ear became inflamed, which jeopardizes his participation in the contest. He is helped out by Thecla and of course wins the first prize.

Thecla's hagiographer always appears as beneficiary of miracles, moreover, as protagonist of four, detailed stories, twice of which focuses on his literary activity. Although we ignore his name, we learn far more about his personality than in the cases of our other hagiographers. At the end of the collection, he reveals a hitherto concealed, very much down-to-earth motif for embarking on writing their miracles: the hagiographer must have had a serious row with a certain Porphyrios, whom he calls a dog, a pig, a bastard. He appeals for the help of Thecla against this man and in order to placate

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Dagron's remark about the technique of writing – rewriting - copying, *Vie et Miracles*, 373, note 1: “les tablettes et le stylet servent à faire un brouillon, qui est ensuite recopié sur un quaternion de parchemin”.

his own wrath. Dagron suggested that this Porphyrios might have been the new bishop of Seleucia, (succeeding Basil of Seleucia, some time after 468) a successor of those bishops who lived under Thecla's guidance (hence the prominent stories about them!).⁵⁴⁷

Derek Krueger has recently elaborated upon the image of historiographers using hagiographer's apologies and self-fashioning.⁵⁴⁸ His model can be contrasted to the figures here: hagiographers using occasionally the historiographer's methods and self-display.

The hagiographer in the collections of Cosmas and Damian

I have already addressed earlier how the consecutive, chronological order of the KDM sections was challenged by the London Codex itself, since the latter contains miracles from all the first five series, ranging from the miracles KDM 1 to KDM 33. The miracles of the London Codex to some extent also undermine the distinction Festugière made regarding the separate "authorship" of the different sections. If instead of the "author", we concentrate on the figure of the hagiographer, the most interesting part of this collection would be, beyond doubt, Section III (KDM 21-26), especially when compared to the respective stories of the *London Codex*. The self-display of the hagiographer's *persona* attests in the most exemplary way how a compiler-hagiographer had styled himself into an author-hagiographer, by shaping consciously the description of his presence in the text, creating the reality-effect of collecting miracles by hearing them in the church and by displaying himself as a healed patient of the saints, who makes a thanksgiving gift, commissioned by a certain friend called Florentius.

The hagiographer of the VIth part of the collection (KDM 38-42) is the only identified compiler of the corpus. He was called Maximos, and belonged as a monk to the monastery that was attached to the church. The community of monks, just as the monastery-complex around the church of Thecla, was a certain repository for concerning and transmitting miraculous events. The acknowledged aim of our Maximos was twofold: to add new stories to the collection and also to rewrite the already existing miracles in a higher literary style. He gives a lot of information about his own hagiographical activity, especially in the preface of KDM 40: he sees himself far less insignificant and humble as the nameless hagiographers of the preceding miracle stories, the one who compared himself and his literary tribute to the poor widow offering two mites. Maximos calls attention not only upon the truth of the miracles, but also to the proportioned structure of the narratives, "since ... Nature made for all living creatures, that their limbs should be proportionate to the whole of their bodies; it is the same in my case: during the literary creation the parts of the narrative should necessarily be ordered proportionally, nothing can be superfluous or useless."

⁵⁴⁷ Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 16.

⁵⁴⁸ D. Krueger, *Early Byzantine historiography and hagiography as different modes of Christian practice*, Paper delivered at the 21th Byzantine Congress, 22. August, 2006, London.

This last remark leads us further in the hagiographer's introspection, as in our collections they usually do not stop at introducing their person in a simile. They consciously reflect their art of collecting and writing, and organizing the miracles. The utmost achievement of self-display is when the hagiographer writes himself and his enterprise into his stories, sometimes openly, at other occasions with subtle cunningness, using exactly his art of structuring and composing to hide himself as a hagiographer – and come to the forth as a narrative character.

Sophronios

Sophronios started the *Laudes*, the short prelude to the miracle collections, with a classical image of Greek poetry, what – despite its loquacity – recalls even Sappho's 16th fragment.⁵⁴⁹ Within the Christian poetical universe, however, the subject of praise is given: the saints, only the ways of praising them vary. With the list of ἄλλοι μὲν..., οὐ μὲν...οὐ δὲ..., ἄλλοι δὲ...τέροι δὲ⁵⁵⁰ Sophronios contrasts exultation by words: “But for me, for whom words (logos) are dearer than my homeland, μέγας δὲ ὁς λόγος στήν τήν γῆν ἔχων ἄν τιμαλφίστερος. I am convinced that the martyrs take their liking in that, as themselves also declared the Word of God: καὶ χαρῆντος μάρτυρας πέθεσθαι, ὅς Ἀγίου Θεοῦ χρηματίζαντες μάρτυρες, what is more, he continues, advancing Derek Krueger's analysis, that words, writing about the saints sanctifies the writer himself.⁵⁵¹

Sophronios, the most sophisticated of our hagiographers and the one who takes his literary mission the most seriously, compares his role and his writing method with the activity of the physician – by this, perhaps, placing himself to the nearest to the work of the doctor-saints: “Probably just like the Asclepiadaí do: mixing the painful and the useful remedies with honey purge those who need purgatives. I myself, therefore, imitate them by mixing to the previous, sweet miracles these following harsh ones, and attach these to the more pleasant things and make the end delightful...”⁵⁵²

Behind the simile there might stood not only the profession conforming to the saints' healing function, but also the already mentioned intellectual fascination of the Byzantine medical science.

⁵⁴⁹ “For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.” (transl. D. W. Myatt)

οὐ μὲν ἄπλων στήν οὐ δὲ πῶδων
οὐ δὲ νῶν φαῖσ' ἄπ' ἡ γῆν μῆλαι[ν]αν
ἄμμεναι κῶλυστον, ἄγω δὲ κῶν' ἄτ-
[τῶ] τις ῥαται.

⁵⁵⁰ These words Sophronios also quoted at the Second Nicean Synod: cf. *Patrologia Graeca*, 87.3. 3387, note 4.

⁵⁵¹ most elaborated in Chapter 4 “Hagiography as Devotion” of his *Writing and Holiness*.

⁵⁵² MCJ 32.

Elsewhere, as I touched upon it in the chapter on orality, Sophronios presents himself in his hagiographic task as Peter, when he foolishly wanted to walk on the water.

The hagiographer of Saint Artemios

Artemios' hagiographer is akin to that of Thecla in the enterprise that he establishes the credit to the earlier miracle of his saint with the help of the miracles from his own generation and those directly preceding them, what he could still recollect from still living witnesses or from the children of those. In the first lines of the collection he defines his role in a long simile: about the ecstasy of one walking in a park full of gorgeous flowers, overwhelmed by the dilemma of which to choose. It is remarkable that although this the corpus is the most of medical character, i. e. detouring to the physical features of the illnesses (male hernia), the overture of this collection is the most aesthetical: "Just as when someone enters a park and beholds the shapes of many delightfully beautiful trees and the variegated hues of different flowers uncloying in fragrance, to him everything seems praiseworthy. Then departing from there and coming to another place, he desires to report the spectacle of excellence to his neighbours also..."⁵⁵³ It was supposed about Artemios' hagiographer that behind his figure so intimately at home with the special medical terminology and with the contemporary doctors of Constantinople, we may find a physician – hagiographer, or as J. Grosdidier de Matons formulated it, be one of the *hypourgoi*, just as the protagonist of MA 22. But we should remember that medical knowledge and its termini technici were somewhat in fashion among the literary intellectuals in Byzantium, as John Scarborough aptly pointed it out: "Literary sources further verify the typical presupposition of a sophisticated medical knowledge, widely diffused among the upper strata of the Byzantine Empire; such medicine was practiced by skilled professionals, well schooled in the theory of medicine. Illustrative are the following: Procopius' *Wars* and *Anecdota* contain numerous instances of medical knowledge, often on a rather high plane; Photios' review of important books include Dioscurides, among other medical authors, Psellus' *Chronographia* gives details of the illness and death of Romanus III that rest upon close acquaintance with technical medical theory and their approaches to treatment; Anna Comenna's *Alexiad* not only has many examples of medicine and medical learning, but also the "death scene" of Alexius Comnenus, which suggests a long-standing awareness of therapeutics and medical theory; and John Tzetzes' *Letters* show a deeply embedded expertise in "ancient" medical writings, particularly Galen. ..." ⁵⁵⁴ Lennart Rydén formulated another, a bit speculative but plausible hypothesis about the hagiographer's identity. In most miracles the patients are all named, the protagonists of MA 18 and 22 are, as Rydén says, "conspicuously" anonymous. In this middle-aged,

⁵⁵³ Crisafulli – Nesbitt, 77.

⁵⁵⁴ Scarborough's Introduction DOP 38, p. x-xi.

experienced man, adherent to the cult by being a member of the All-Night Vigil Society, may not be difficult to discover the hagiographer himself.⁵⁵⁵ Recently Stephanos Efthymiadis has returned and elaborated Rydén's hypothesis, and addressed in details the two anonymous miracles. "In writing Mir 18 – he claims-, the author's main intention was not to make an objective report of a given miracle story, but rather to record reality through the emotional experience of the bachelor-hero."⁵⁵⁶ Efthymiadis sees in these two miracles a marked deviation from incubation conventions, namely that the two narratives do not involve healing but burglary, that it takes place in part in a secular environment and instead of sought dream proper, Artemios just appears in his own accord. But in view of the incubation stories in general, these miracles do not differ so conspicuously from others; we see several cases when the healers appear daytime, even outside their church, or care for the suppliants' lost and stolen property. Why and using what narrative devices these stories became incorporated into the collection, will be addressed in the next chapter; here I would only point out one remark Efthymiadis made: in his view, the hagiographer wanted to make the impression that there is some time passed between the two events, those of MA 18 and 22, as the first might happened to him in old age, the second much earlier. The protagonist of MA 22 claimed to have been serving the saint from the age of 10 and in whose devotion Efthymiadis discovered "the isolation and loneliness of the hero whose only friend turns out to be St. Artemios." (12) Making a step forward in relation to Rydén's hypothesis, Efthymiadis groups MA 15 to the miracles hiding the hagiographer's persona, the main character of which was: a free man, freely serving a man of prominence, still young, and similarly was the member of the all night vigil sodality. All opinions, however, agree, that our hagiographer must have been a learned man, with some medical knowledge and interest and who in one hand perceived his connection to the saint and his cult to be a special one and on the other who unveils an particular talent for describing the busy social life of the capital, with a familiarity with its streets, churches and church personnels, factions and key-figures, let them be actors, officials or physicians.

⁵⁵⁵ Rydén, "Kyrkan som sjukhus" 15, note 5.

⁵⁵⁶ S. Efthymiadis, "A Day and Ten Months in the Life of a Lonely Bachelor: The Other Byzantium in *Miracula* S. Artemii 18 and 22" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (2004): 1-26, p.3.

Chapter 7: Compositional structure in the miracle collections

“We must learn to treat hagiography for what it was, namely the literary equivalent of religious painting. When we gaze at the icon of St. ‘Abbacyros’ in S. Maria Antiqua, we do not regard it as a real portrait.”⁵⁵⁷

It is not enough that a text record the miraculous deeds of divine beings to be called aretalogy; what is essential, that it must be at the same a narrative as well. This means both a structure and a literary demand. The ex votos in themselves are not, but the *Iamata* are indeed aretalogy narratives, since however short the stories were, in their composition that aim was to create the visitors’ admiration – wrote Vincenzo Longo.⁵⁵⁸

My point of departure for writing here about story and narrative will be the paradigm expanded by Adriana Cavarero: in contrast to the protagonist(s) of the Iliad, the Ulysses of the Odyssey seeks immortal fame not by his deeds but through the narratibility of a story that is passed down through generations.⁵⁵⁹ Hence, Cavarero continues, “The story is therefore distinct from the narration. It has, so to speak, a reality all of its own, which follows the action and precedes the narration. All actors leave behind a story, even if nothing guarantees that this story later will get told. Simply put, according to Arendt, although there can never be a tale without a story, there can nonetheless be stories without a tale.”⁵⁶⁰

Composition

In the structural analysis of miracles and of the formal requirements of miracle narratives the decisive step was made by New Testament studies. The best of them, such as the work of Werner Kelber, turned to the texts with the demand that - while applying the methods of modern literary analysis – they would not tear out the texts from their spiritual context. The general compositional tendencies that gained ground in this milieu, Kelber described in the following way:

Despite an essential uniformity in composition, these stories display a remarkable variety in the use of commonplaces. Compositional restraints do not manifest themselves as iron grids upon the material. There is ample room for narrative manoeuvring, and no single story is quite like any other. A story can be reduced to its barest requirements or crowded with narrative detail. Virtually no limits are set to variations and combinations of auxiliary motifs. These can be dropped or developed, reshuffled into new scenes or transferred from one component part to another. Repetition of individual features is a special form of variation that serves the progress of the story. Actualization of a single motif at the expense of all others may effect transition towards a new type of story. Major components can be omitted or compressed, reinterpreted or inflated....⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁷ C. Mango, “The Byzantine Hagiographer at Work”, 41.

⁵⁵⁸ V. Longo, *L’Aretalogia*, 52-53.

⁵⁵⁹ A. Cavarero, *Relating Narratives. Storytelling and selfhood* Transl. P. E. Kottman, (London – New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁶⁰ A. Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 28.

⁵⁶¹ W. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel*, 49.

In the background of this compositional liberty, Kelber saw, examining the formation of the Gospel of Mark, the importance of oral composition and transmission. These criteria of (both oral and textual) flexibility hold equally true for the compositional formation of our miracle catalogues. The compositional freedom of the narrator and the general malleability of the elements of the text are framed by the internal rules of the narrative, by *the logic of the narrative*⁵⁶². In the case of the incubation stories, it means the order in which the events follow each other as well as the necessary occurrence of certain standard elements: the illness, the way to the healer, undergoing the ritual sleep, the dream appearance of the healer and the given prescriptions, followed by the miraculous recovery. Though the sequence of this basic scheme is not alterable, there are occasions, when some of the elements are missing, for example, there is no initial illness or the patient does not get healed, the cohesive force of the narrative logic is so compelling that it bends the exceptions into the essential scheme, through narrative detours or explanations. For example, the lack of illness can become either solved by a casual accident happens or the concept of illness can be used in a symbolic manner (e. g. heresy as spiritual blindness). If the patient does not believe in the miraculous capacity of the healer, his story can be shaped into one of conversion, an exemplary test-case. Punishment miracles or conversion miracles call to life a new scheme, but still under the hierarchic structural unity of the healing-miracle context. To illustrate how the missing elements are transformed and receive their due place in the story, I would recall a tale from the *Iamata*:⁵⁶³ A man, wholly sceptical, was lingering around the temple of Asclepius, by no means giving credit to the god's miracles, and to unmask the trick, one night he climbed up a tree to peep into the incubation hall and learn what going on in the sanctuary, what the believers regarded as miracles. Obviously, he fell down and got hurt; in such a way ruined - what better he could do - he turned to Asclepius and the divine intervention resolved his doubts.

The protagonist of the story had to become ill not only to get in contact with Asclepius in his quality as Healer, but at the same time also for that his story could become a narrative: becoming ill was the means, his chance to be part of the tale.

The credible and the incredible

Building up the logic of the narrative goes hand in hand with the narrator's aim to establish credibility. For the writers of miracles the chief question is if there any attempt to distinguish the historical from the mythical? Or on the contrary, is there an attempt to mix them? The

⁵⁶² I borrowed the expression from Christopher R. Ligota, "‘This story is not true’: fact and fiction in Antiquity" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982), 5. Besides the *logic of the narrative*, he points out another tendency, quoting Herodotus: "‘my logos has looked for digressions’[...] Thus on the one hand the world coming to be known, on the other the story finding its way – Herodotus speaks of various *bodoi tón logón*, ways of stories, versions; he has to decide which to take."

hagiographer's and in fact generally the miracle writer's goal is to find the right proportion of the twofold way: to fix the story into the historical context, by giving dates, places, names, and particulars that nail down the event in reality but on the other hand he is no less interested in elevating the most ordinary into the realm of the miraculous, thus often rendering the "facts" special, fitting into the pattern of divine intervention.

Including the chronological and geographical references gives credit not only to the event but also to the hagiographer: attests that he knew his craft and he was circumspect in collecting his material: Thecla's hagiographer writes that "This is why I mentioned the persons, the places and the names, so that there would be no doubt in the readers about these things but so that they grasp from near and be persuaded about the truthfulness of the research concerning what I am going to tell."⁵⁶⁴

The hagiographer may also underline his own authenticity by showing that he knew intimately the *place*, so important in incubation narratives, by being at home in the sanctuary and in its surroundings. This last aspect is the most striking perhaps in the case of Artemios' hagiographer: he not only sets his stories into the everyday life context of Constantinople but lists minute details about the Oxeia Quarter and the interior of the church or the habitual clients of the saint's vigil. Thecla's hagiographer is more focused on the exactness of the dates and naming and describing the characters of his tales, and to a lesser degree but Sophronios also links some of his stories to living and reputable persons of his day, like to John the Almsgiver, Peter the Prefect of Alexandria or to the well introduced sanctuary personnel.

Besides the factual background of the narrative, we can occasionally cast a glimpse into the device of realist fiction: what Barthes termed *l'effet du réel*, reality effect, an often superfluous detail pointing to an external reality. The most obvious of such a reality-fiction is the insistence on the testimonies, on direct sources and living descendents of the beneficiary of the miracle. To this type belongs the hagiographer's own involvement of the event or his described presence at the telling of the event, just as Cosmas and Damian's hagiographer had pictured himself and his informant as fellow-pilgrims and participants of the pannychis, while probably basing his work on a written miracle-catalogue.

When Thecla's hagiographer meticulously informs us about his testimonies, he is to establish his own credibility by way of presenting the reader with the steps of his research, his trips, his asking around. Yet this search is not only like the one his model, Herodotus represents, but emerges what was missing from the Herodotean narrative: "... the interface, what to the modern historian is, in

⁵⁶³ T 423. 10.

⁵⁶⁴ MT Prologue, 18-21: Διὸ τοῦτο δὲ προσῶπων καὶ τῶπων καὶ νόμων ἡμνημονεῖσάμεν, ὥστε μὴ δεπερῶ αὐτῶν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνοντάς μφιβεῖλλειν, ἄλλὰ ὡς γὰρ θεὸν εἶναι καὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν περὶ ὧν εἰρηκάμεν ἱστορίαν τῶς ἀληθείας.

fact, his world, le métier de l'historien in both senses, but rather more in the concrete sense, the historian's study, the books, the documents and other artefacts that constitute the material he works on. [...] it is writing with its system of spatial and temporal lags that opens the possibility of, makes room for, an intervening layer, the layer of records and remains.⁵⁶⁵ This layer is provided by the hagiographer's narrative, with the listing of the historical dates, historical persons and events, and embedding them into the context of the story. But it is not only the rhetor Isocasios or Basil of Seleucia or the Arian controversy that play a role in the miracles but references and analogies enter the miracle also from the legendary world of Thecla, whose historical authenticity as well as miraculous essence are unquestionable, such as the figure of Paul, who appears in MT 26 as an secondary reference, by no means connected to the logic of the story. Just as Thecla's legendary past, her relationship with Paul sustains the veracity of her present miracles, the hagiographer equally exploits the pre-Christian credits of the cult place, by stressing that Thecla overcame those Greek deities whose previous activity was attested by everyone.

Parallel to this there is another conscious tendency: emphasizing that the narrative is a literary – artistic fiction, underlining the epic features of Thecla's deeds. Among the literary models of the hagiographer there are Homer and Euripides – the numerous quotations, inserted half-sentences and the adjectives used for the protagonists in order to turn the stories into something mythical, a poetic artefact rather than to draw the reader closer to the objective reality.⁵⁶⁶

The parallel existence of these two tendencies and their interconnectedness on the narrative level may originate from the characteristic of the miracle itself: a phenomenon, that in the world of reality needs verification, proofs by the means of reality. But at the same time the truest element emerging from the essence of miracle is the tale, the legend, the divine, the heroic, what is hard to grasp for the senses. This double character, however, can well radiate from the hagiographer's intellectual attitude: he was one of the last remaining examples of the class of ancient rhetors of classical learning that was near to extinction, for whom literature obviously starts with Homer and in whose eyes grasping the divine and extolling the beautiful, be it Christian, is done by means of the best of the ancient literary tradition. Besides all of his aesthetic and authorial consciousness, he had chosen admittedly the task of establishing credit and safeguarding the authenticity of Thecla's miraculous activity and that of the cult site. But at the same time an other effort is also visible: to establish some elements of the new Christian *paideia*. In my opinion, this is why the references to classical authors are so frequent. Scott Johnson writes that naming his classical examples, identifying

⁵⁶⁵ Ligota, *This story is not true*, 5.

⁵⁶⁶ Thecla flies over the sky on a flaming chariot (MT 26); her coming is described as flying in a number of miracles (MT 11, 12, 35, 46), in MT 11 with a Homeric simile, cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 97. A dialogue between a Greek rhetor and Thecla uses a Homeric line between Achilles and Thetis (MT 38), Thecla's favourite bishop is paralleled to Diomedes

his quotation show a second-rate intellectual.⁵⁶⁷ But in view of the hagiographer's intention of establishing Christian *paideia* – not so much on his personal level, but for the surrounding Christian community, these picking and naming of Classical authors becomes an education programme as well, Homer, Euripides, Plato and Herodotus become watchwords indicative about what should be retained and re-applied by Christian hagiography.

In connection with writing about the miraculous, Fernandez Marcos stated that Sophronios was surprisingly credulous and bereft of critical spirit.⁵⁶⁸ I have already noted the inadequacy of this remark: Sophronios aptly applied the rules of miracle narration, which has nothing to do with his personal beliefs. He himself, as all hagiographers and in fact all miracle-tellers, becomes the “measure of the miraculous”. This *mesure du thôma*, in François Hartog's analysis of Herodotean storytelling,⁵⁶⁹ has an important role in the building up of the narrative: the reader (listener) expects the miraculous, and when the narrator starts telling the extraordinary, he steps out from the narrator – reader (me and you) bipolarity, and creates another one: us (I and you, my readers) and they. That is, by being the measure of the extraordinary, the narrator establishes the grouping based on considering what is miraculous: for me and for you it is unheard of – for them, their habitual custom.

When applied to the Christian miracle narratives, the *us* – *they* opposition, defined by the miraculous, receives another dimension: *us* narrator and readers, all of us, who believe that this story is a miracle versus *they*, those who do not share this common thought world of the miraculous. This latter category in the case of incubation miracles includes those who regard healing as a result of medical knowledge or attribute the recovery to other agents than the physician-saints, or who are reluctant to acknowledge the events as divine intervention.

Chapter 7. 1. Compositional structures and individual characteristics of the collections

Before turning to the structural analysis of each miracle corpus, I would point out some general observations on hagiography, those, which concern the relationship between the means and the intentions of the hagiographic narratives. Most of the secondary literature on hagiography underlines that one of the basic elements of the stories telling the life of saints and miracles is the *expansion* of the chronologically and geographically fixed character of the miracle into the timeless and spatially not bound possibility of the miraculous. There are countless tools in the miracle

(MT 3), the country of temple robbers is Laistrygonia (MT 28). For all the Homeric references see Dagrón, *Vie et Miracles*, 157.

⁵⁶⁷ S. Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: a literary study*, ?

⁵⁶⁸ Fernandez, *Los Thaumata*, 171.

narratives in order to achieve this expansion: the anonymous character of the beneficiary of the miracle, the long distance miracles, the intermediary roles of images, words, gestures, dreams and remembrances; while on the structural level, such means embrace repetition, circularity, the numerous occurrence of the same miracle-type or the working of the same miraculous cure on several patients; they include also the function of portable objects, empowered by the *dynamis* of the miracle-worker (such as the holy wax, a piece of soil, ash, oil, water from the cult site), or the forms of personal devotion, which are not linked to the cult place but still have the potential to evoke the miracle. That the universality of the miracle is embedded not only in the universally held theological background but also in the characteristics of the miracle narrative itself, was the best summarized by Michel de Certeau:

In these diverse ways the hagiographical account breaks the rigor of daily life by freeing the imagination, introducing once again the repetitive and the cyclic into the linearity of work. [...] We encounter here a *poetics of meaning* that cannot be reduced to an exactitude of facts or of doctrine without destroying the very genre that conveys it. In the shape of an exception and a deviation- that is, through the metaphor of a specific instance – the discourse creates a freedom in respect to daily, collective, or individual time, but in a non-place.⁵⁷⁰

This observation as a basic framework of hagiography, and Certeau's expression, the *poetics of meaning* are worth to keep in mind during the analysis of the incubation collections. I shall later return to the question how these collections conform to this form – and theological - paradigm of universality.

Compositional structures in Thecla's miracle collection

The entire of collection of Thecla consists of 46 miracle stories. If seen in their entirety, the stories reveal a very much conscious and artistic arrangement, which is manifested primarily in the creation of thematic groups, the skilful distribution of these groups and the sought variety of the subsequent topics. The order inherent to the collection has already attracted the attention of scholars: first Rademacher outlined the compositional units of the stories,⁵⁷¹ and later Festugière reflected upon his results. It is worth revisiting and comparing their methods of analysis even knowing that none of the two could work on the entire corpus, since they knew only the version with a large lacuna.⁵⁷² Thus they analysed only 28 + 1 (?) miracles. Rademacher, for the stories that were found next to each other in the incomplete corpus, established the following grouping: MT1, the first

⁵⁶⁹ Hartog, *Le miroir*, 243-245. Further, Hartog elaborates more on this concept: "Traduction de la différence entre là-bas et ici, le *thôma* produit finalement un effet du réel: il dit, je suis le réel de l'autre; là-bas en effet les choses, les *érğa*, ne peuvent être que *thômasta*." (*Le miroir*, 249)

⁵⁷⁰ M. de Certeau, "A Variant: Hagio-Grafical Edification" in *The Writing of History*, Trans. Tom Conley, (New York: Columbia University Press), 274.

⁵⁷¹ Ludwig Rademacher, "Die Wunder Theklas" in *Hippolytus und Thekla: studien zur Geschichte von Legende und Kultus*, 121-126, (Vienna: A. Hölden, 1916).

⁵⁷² The lacuna in the manuscript gr. 1667. that served the basis of the edition, is between miracles 1 and 18; the copist still marks the miracles with the original numbering (MT 1, 19), but even this telling sign disappears in the next

miracle is followed by 4 miracles concerning women; then by 7 punishment miracles, and again 7 miracles of “benevolence”, and the collection terminates with 4 other miracles on women. In this way, with the “help” of the missing stories, it was tempting to formulate the hypothesis, that we are dealing with an utterly conscious, thematical planning, a collection symmetrical both in its numerical proportions as well as in its topics (4+7+7+4). Festugière, similarly ignoring the missing parts, judged the hypothesis *tout à fait artificielle*.⁵⁷³ The discovery of the lost parts naturally alters the picture, yet, having done away with Rademacher’s numerical neatness and exaggeratedly harmonious plan, it is difficult not to see a willed thematic grouping and well-structured units, selected and arranged with care. In his preface written to the French translation of Thecla’s miracles, Festugière himself was also hesitant about how to judge the artistic – literary awareness of the hagiographer. For he had in mind, against the picture provided by the collection, a great number of examples from early Byzantine hagiography, with all of their casualties, multiple redactions, different traditions of transmission, that is with the most characteristic features of the hagiographical type: “ils ne sont pas là en vertu d’un dessein préconçu et d’un raffinement d’artiste; ... chaque chapitre, sauf exception, a amené l’autre, tous les miracles ressortissant à un même sujet forment une sorte de petite unité dans l’ensemble.”⁵⁷⁴ (It may be part of Festugière’s forming of his opinion, that he could see the miracle narratives from a different point of view and value them in their own right, in themselves not (only) as elements of a textual corpus. By this I intend what a classicist expressed concerning Ovid’s *Tristia* and *Letters from Pontus*: scholars who analysed them they all characterised the texts as monotonous and repetitive; but such readers are to blame themselves – runs the critique – if they run through the whole corpus at once.) When summarizing his impression on the composition of the collection, Festugière returns to a metaphor that was dear to him on previous occasions as well:

En résumé, à lire Basile [that is, Thecla’s hagiographer] ligne à ligne, on n’a pas du tout l’impression d’un cadre rigide imposé du dehors, amis tout d’abord, à première vue, d’une ordonnance assez lâche où les miracles sont enfilés comme des perles. Bientôt pourtant, dans l’enfilage, des groupes se distinguent, qui forment chacun une unité. Et ces groupes se relient, soit par ressemblance soit par contraste. Tout l’art consiste alors à conduire doucement de groupe à groupe, ou à ménager les contrastes. C’est là qu’est le vrai raffinement, la vraie »Künstelei«. Non pas dans une sorte d’architecture à pavillons symétriques, très éloignée du génie grec, mais dans la *ποικιλία*.⁵⁷⁵

As I addressed earlier in the chapter on the hagiographer, Thecla’s writer himself unveils to the reader the process of his research, his taste for selecting the stories, and arranging them, highlighting his personal role in shaping the composition. At the beginning of MT 28 he enlists the consecutive steps of his activity, underlining, that he did not find the miracle stories together, (μὴ θόμα πάντα, μηδὲ παρὰ ἑνὶ πύκνῳ, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ὅπως πύκνῳ εἰρημένῳ), and that not only

generation of manuscripts. Thus the continuously numbered 31 miracles form the basis of Pierre Pantin’s edition in 1608, on which the *Patrologia Graeca* would also rely cf. Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 140-144.

⁵⁷³ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*, ..., 25.

⁵⁷⁴ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*, ..., 28.

⁵⁷⁵ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*, ..., 31-32.

the gold-digger's work – search required endurance but the artful arrangement of the pieces was no small task either:

I was collecting the miracles methodically, which, with time passing, had been mixed up, fell into oblivion and had faded somehow, running into all directions away from the criteria of memory, order, place and stories. But nevertheless I must tell that story, which I have found only with difficulty, searching it with so much fatigue.⁵⁷⁶

The hagiographer thus was in the possession of the *taxis*, the force of a form-creating order. Hence it seems legitimate to try to establish a new thematic grouping of the miracle collection, in part following Gilbert Dagron⁵⁷⁷ and considering the conclusions of both Rademacher and Festugière. Dagron's categories are occasionally replaced by my interpretations in the following way:

⁵⁷⁶ Quote the Greek, Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 362.

⁵⁷⁷ Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 29-30.

Introduction

1-4: Victory over ancient pagan deities (Thecla and her immediate cult place)

5-6: Saving Seleucia and Iconium (the place of the cult in a larger context)

7-12: The priests of the sanctuary (5)

7-8: Dexianos (contemporary, Thecla's priest already under Symposios)

9; 9b: Menodoros

10: connecting link: Symposios

11: a relative or compatriot of Symposios

12a, 12b: the hagiographer vs. Basil, bishop of Seleucia

13-15: noblemen;

15-16: journey by sea and journey by land

18-21: women: 4

21-22: theft

23-24-25: eye-complaints

26-27-28: Thecla as warrior

26: Thecla appears on her feast day on the sky, upon a carriage in flames; similarly protects the town of Dalisandros during a siege

27: protecting the town of Selinunte during a siege

28: protecting her own sanctuary

28-29-30: protection of her sanctuary and cult:

29-35: punishment, protection of her people

29: revenge, protection of her cult and feast

30: revenge, protection of her cult

31: the hagiographer, Thecla appears and encourages him

32: punishment of Dexianos

33: punishment of Orention (woman-affair)

34: punishment (woman-affair)

35: punishment, for stealing money from orphans

36-37: healing spring

38-40+41?: Greek rhetoricians

38: a Greek rhetorician, converts

39: Greek rhetorician, refuses to convert

40: Greek rhetorician, suppliant of Sarpedonios, refuses to convert

41: healing of the hagiographer – who can be classified as a converted Greek rhetorician

42-43-(44)-45-46: women

Epilogue

Thecla's corpus is the most structured of the miracle collections, the thematic groups and the connecting themes, the reappearing figures are well-elaborated, in sharp contradiction to Johnson's statement, that "the *Miracles of Thekla* are more casual in their approach to collection, arranging their material with no real structure or overarching argument."⁵⁷⁸

The phenomena that to the same person several miracles can happen, (Dexianos, Symposios, or the hagiographer) is not unknown from the other miracles collections either. It may betray that we are dealing with a person or persons close to the hagiographer, perhaps a personal acquaintance of him.⁵⁷⁹ It can similarly point to a markedly oral source (hearsay, personal connections, witnesses,

⁵⁷⁸ Johnson, *The Life and Miracles*, 196.

⁵⁷⁹ Familiar also from the miracles of Artemios (MA 19-20).

survivors, temple personnel), in which tradition it is possible that information accumulates in a way to form narrative groups centred on single figures.

Are there any signs in Thecla's corpus that differ substantially on the basis of thematic grouping from the four other collections? The first striking feature is the repeated, triple appearance of the hagiographer, at more or less identical paces, in three different groups of the beneficiaries of the miracles. The second characteristic, which becomes conspicuous not so much on the basis of the thematic classification but more by observing the participants of the miracles, is the detailed description of the figures. It does not mean only the lack of anonymous characters: the figures are strongly characterised, not just by their names, but the reader are dealing with individuals. Even in the rare cases of unnamed protagonists, it is underlined to what places, professions they belong to. The characters without names are from Cyprus or Eirenepolis; though it is well-known from the *miracula*-literature, that the geography of the sacred has a well defined range, here it is even more true that the scenery of the miraculous remains well within certain limits. Unlike the geography of Sophronios, for instance, where the hometown of beneficiaries of the miracles range from Damascus to Rome. Neither the extension of the real geographical borders, nor the creation of a *non-place*, commented upon by Michel de Certeau,⁵⁸⁰ are typical of the Theclan corpus. In accordance with the closed geographical space of the narratives, their time is limited as well.⁵⁸¹ But how can this time "be closed", or taken under control, towards the past, which made Thecla's "mythical" death, her disappearance between the opening rocks, as the starting point of the cult? The most important factor is that the hagiographer consciously frames his narrative within the context of both time and space that can be still grasped by the memory of the preceding generation. This compositional method or redactional attitude is the most authentic way to obtain the cohesion of the narrative. For the sake of comparison (and counter-example) it is enough to recall the commonplaces generally familiar from hagiography, that claim that the truth of the miracles are firm as a rock. Instead of the reiterated affirmations Thecla's hagiographer prefers other methods. First, he put emphasis on the documented (!), pre-Christian activity of the cult place, hence Thecla's appearance was by no means an *ex nihilo* legendary event, but the transition of the cult place, with its healing function, from Sarpedonios the previous healer, to the new Christian owner. And who could doubt the credit of the cult predecessor? The presence of those figures, who turn initially to Sarpedonios, expect the miracles from *him* – and occasionally also attribute it to him –,⁵⁸² even when their story does not end with conversion or the acknowledgment of Thecla, they authenticate the cultic continuity and thus the legitimate overtake. Furthermore, the hagiographer used another tool to bring nearer the

⁵⁸⁰ M. de Certeau, "A Variant: Hagio-Grafical Edification", 281.

⁵⁸¹ On the geography of the sacred and the circularity of a closed time cf again Certeau, "A Variant: Hagio-Grafical Edification", 280.

⁵⁸² MT 40.

mythical, and to revive the unverifiable past miracles of the saint: into the stories, which are well-dated, geographically specified, and elevated to the authenticity of a document with the dates, the name of the bishops, and witnesses, in the midst of all these he inserted that miracle of Thecla, in which she rides on her flaming chariot from Seleucia to Dalisandros, a story that brings her the closest to the deities of Greek religion.⁵⁸³

Compositional structure in the miracles of Cosmas and Damian (KDM-CL)

The formation of miracle-material of Cosmas and Damian is more complex for the two obvious reasons that we are dealing with the accumulation of stories over centuries and that we have two separate collections treating in part the same story-material with different literary ambitions. Deubner's more popular and more diffused miracle collection, on the basis of the presence and absence of prologues at the beginning of the sections, as well as on indications of time, was divided into six series: I, Prologue, KDM 1-10; II, without prologue 11-19. KDM 20 added form the 5th section; III, Prologue, KDM 21-26; IV, without prologue KDM 27-32; V, Prologue KDM 33-38 (much later than the previous ones); VI, Prologue, KDM 39-47 + epilogue, by Maximos the deacon probably at the end of the 13th- beginning of the 14th century.⁵⁸⁴

From external evidence, we can be certain that by the beginning of the 7th century miracles from the I – III series were circulating.⁵⁸⁵ There is also evidence that stories from the series I – IV were known, probably by the 9th century, as far as in Egypt. This evidence comes from the London Codex, which contains 21 miracles present also in the KDM corpus. If we disregard the later Vth part as well as the 13th century part of Deubner's collection, and if we consider that from the London Codex roughly 10 miracles are missing because of the missing folios in the middle, but include the *in vita* miracles, we end up with 24 miracles present in both collections, and 14 miracles unique to the London Codex.

Interestingly, the first two miracles of the Codex are *post mortem* miracles, taking place in Pheremma, at the church built upon the tomb of the saints. These stories in the Deubner-version figure as *in vita* miracles.⁵⁸⁶ There are no organizing principles in any of the two collections, which were used in the other miracle-corpora: no extraordinary beginning with a special miracle, no thematic grouping or link between the stories thought reappearing characters (familiar from all the other three collections), no patients in consecutive miracles with the same name, same illness or same provenance. (The only possible exception in the KDM is that non-Christians, the Jewish woman and the two pagan Greeks, figure only in the first series.) This has a result that the collections of Cosmas

⁵⁸³ MT 26.

⁵⁸⁴ The division was first established by Deubner, reproduced in Festugière, *Sainte Thecle...*, 87.

⁵⁸⁵ On the basis of the already mentioned testimony of Sophronios in the *Thaumata*, who knew KDM 2 and KDM 24.

⁵⁸⁶ CL 1: the peasant who swallowed a serpent and CL 2, about the wife of Malchus

and Damian do not seem to be “finished” as the three other composed and arranged miracle corpora but presents the miracle material as a possibility for infinite additions.

The parallel stories of the two collections (without the *in vita* miracles) are the following:

- CL 5 – KDM 1
- CL 6 – KDM 3
- CL 7 – KDM 33
- CL 9 – KDM 6
- CL 11 – KDM 25
- CL 13 – KDM 11
- CL 14 – KDM 27
- CL 21 – KDM 17
- CL 22 – KDM 20
- CL 23 – KDM 9
- CL 24 – KDM 19
- CL 25 – KDM 13
- CL 26 – KDM 23
- CL 28 – KDM 28
- CL 29 – KDM 31
- CL 30 – KDM 32
- CL 33 – KDM 21
- CL 34 – KDM 22
- CL 35 – KDM 26
- CL 36 – KDM 29
- CL 37 – KDM 30

Already at the beginning, there is a noteworthy shift: the CL starts telling posthumous miracles that took place in Pheremma, in the church built on the saints’ tomb (CL 2-3). In CL 5, however, the text speaks of a harbour. We cannot be in Pheremma any more (near Chyrrus, in Cilicia), yet the text does not mention Constantinople (what it does often later). We are probably dealing with an involuntary shift to the miracles taking place in the capital, which escaped the attention of the compiler/narrator. Furthermore, CL 16 bears the title “About another paralytic” – but since the preceding miracle was not about a paralytic, it may be legitimate to suppose that the compiler selected from a larger (or differently arranged) collection.

If we observe side by side the stories present in both corpora, there are some general tendencies that can be noticed. In the Deubner-corpus (KDM) the social position of the patients gains a major emphasis. For instance, characters vaguely defined in the London Codex in the KDM

become representatives of the imperial court or of Byzantine aristocracy, through the embellishments and additions to the core of the stories. We encounter the following professions on the KDM: palace officer 3-4-16, 21 (39, 40); noble: 24, 26; merchant: 10; clergy or relative of clergy: 12, 22, 23, 27 (38). The same phenomenon of uplifting the patient's social standing can be observed in transforming a simple character of CL 13 into the protagonist of KDM 11 who had also servants around him, or at other occasions the KDM speaks about the sick man's own physicians. In the same vein, priests of the London Codex are given higher ecclesiastical rank in Deubner's corpus, or, appear as secondary character as in KDM 22 where the deacon of the church was added to the story, missing in CL 34.

In the KDM the symptoms of the illness receive more details, as well as the circumstances of the patient's stay in the church are described more abundantly. For example, in KDM 33 (in contrast to CL 7) the patient is said to have suffered for two years. Just as in this pair of miracles, the illness was described in the KDM as caused by a demon. Similarly, the illness of the woman in CL 28 becomes an illness caused by a demon in KDM 28, just as in CL 7 compared to KDM 33. Demons or the machination of the devil figure in KDM: 4, 12, 28, 27, 33, 36, in contrast demon is mentioned only twice in the London Codex (CL: 15, 33), but even in these cases demon is not the cause of the illness (but urges the patient to leave the church when the saints do not appear quickly enough).

The importance given to the sanctuary itself underwent a similar change: unlike the simple references of the London Codex, the KDM dedicates more attention to the spatial descriptions of the church interior, just as we find in the contemporary collections of Artemios and of Cyrus and John.

Most of the tendencies can be observed comparing the same miracle in the development of CL 26, a story that found its way very much enlarged into the KDM 23. The London Codex defines the protagonist simply as a priest, the KDM describes him as a priest of high rank, from Constantinople, who is also acting actively in ecclesiastical matters. Ordinary doctors of the CL became the patient-priest's own physicians, moreover, when their treatment fails, he calls for the Chief Physician of Constantinople. Conforming to the tendency that details of the KDM story are becoming more and more complex, here such new additions are the description of the various medical treatments, the exact localization of the patient in the church building; the *London Codex* speaks of two illnesses afflicting simultaneously our man, while the KDM writes about two consecutive illnesses, which necessitate two separate miraculous interventions. At the end of the KDM story the saints teach the patient a special prayer that would protect him from illness in the future; after this detail the hagiographer describes the healed man as his close acquaintance.

The latter aspect is a major narrative difference can be observed on the example of CL 33 – KDM 21 as well. The miracle is recorded in the London Codex just as any other one in the collection, while in the KDM it is styled in a way that the healed patient tells his story to the hagiographer. As I

treated it earlier, this is the first of the miracles from the set of KDM 21-26 where all the stories were described as collected by a patient who heard them from his fellow pilgrims while in the church. I see in this artfulness an indication that the London Codex was earlier than the collection of the KDM – so far the composition is concerned (not necessarily the circulation of the individual miracle stories).

Despite its tendency for the paucity of wording, the London Codex may occasionally contain more information. It might be the case that there were details which generated less interest in the KDM hagiographers, but it is more likely that the core of the London Codex-stories also lived their own life until they became recorded in the way known to us (and even afterwards) and during this formative process became enriched with elements important for that actual community/audience. The anonymous converting pagan of KDM 9 is called Dioscuros in the parallel miracle of CL 23. This was the miracle in which the pagan addresses the saints as Castor and Polydeikes and which story Deubner regarded emblematic for identifying Cosmas and Damian's cult-predecessors. Maybe not initially but surely by the 6th century Cosmas and Damian were called not just brothers but twins; a time when the features of popular pagan deities were still known. In the latest section of the KDM they have several miracles averting shipwreck. Can it be that the Dioscuroi were just created to be part of the story, to characterise the pagan's error and Castor and Polydeices had nothing actually to do with the cult but only with the miracle-narrative? It could have been plausibly the patient's omitted name, Dioscuros that recalled in the hagiographer's mind the Dioscuroi. Yet the same argument works backwards as well: the pagan received the name Dioscuros because he was invoking the Dioscuroi.

Additional information sometimes can be clearly exaggerating. In CL 6 we learn that the sheep, who turned out to be the means of the cure, was called Cosmas. But it was added that he was called Cosmas not so much because of the saints, but because his previous owner was called Cosmas (a circumstance missing from the KDM). Similarly, CL 17 mentions that the sick person saw in dream the saints, in the form of two priests of the church, who were called Cosmas and Damian, to the saints' honour. But in fact they were saints Cosmas and Damian. Characterising is likewise overdone in CL 18, with two men as patients, both of them with a cataract on their eye, both called Thomas, one of them is rich, the other is poor.

Elsewhere the elaboration of details is more meaningful. In the same story told of CL 22 and KDM 20 about a father and his sick son the father is anonymous in the KDM and we learn of him only that he was a strongly believing Christian. The CL is more loquacious: the man has here a name, Seurianos, and we read that he "governed the province of the people of Arcadia". Arcadia was a division of Egypt, in the first report about the codex Rustafjaell explains that

in a manuscript written in Egypt we should naturally expect the scribe to claim honour of the relics for his own country, and, if the text is sound, it is possible that some Egyptian locality lies hidden in it. But without further evidence it is difficult to come to any safe conclusion. The text certainly bears other traces of its Egyptian

origin [...] But an Egyptian colouring is given to miracles, which in Deubner's text might be referred to Constantinople.⁵⁸⁷

To the discrepancies of the same stories told in CL 21-KDM 17 Rustafjaell adds that "the change points definitely to a Jacobite country."⁵⁸⁸ A further a local feature can be the description of the protagonist of CL 2, who was characterised in the London Codex as member of the *philoponoï*, an element missing from the parallel version of the KDM story.

More conspicuous is the meticulous attention paid to the patient's theological position. Let me compare CL 35 with the KDM 26 to highlight how the above described general alterations work:

Following that, a wise and pious woman arrived at the port of delivery, that is to the church of saint Cosmas and Damian, with a horrible disease on her breast. The deacon of the church in the imperial city, a pious man, had the habit of going to the church in the midst of the preparations and there he was praying in the evenings and at night until Saturday. While the woman incessantly begged the saints so that she would find a cure, the deacon came, as was his habit, in order to pray that Saturday night. As he lay down to sleep a bit, the saint appeared to him and said to him: "Tell the woman with the pain in her breast: You will find relief for your breast. Home in peace and you will find recovery." At midnight the priest had awoken and having come to his senses he thought: "How can it be really the messages of the saints this one, by which the indicated woman would find recovery? How can I give proof to the cure? For if I go and tell the woman this: "You have got rid of your illness" – she would probably ask me, saying: "Man, the illness has gripped me. You deceived me with careless words, which I have never heard from the saints." With these thoughts he started to pray. The saints appearing to him ordered him to tell the woman the same things. Yet he thought that it was an imagined dream (*oneirm phantasia*), and the talk of the saints just empty words. After his prayer he lie down and fell asleep. For the third time the saints appeared and with menaces they told him: "Go, tell quickly to the woman all that we have told you. For your and for her persuasion: the woman feeling pain on the side of her breast when seeking under her bed will find a remedy - , with which if she anoints herself, she will soon be freed from the illness." So when the day broke, the deacon went to the woman and said to her: "You are freed from the illness gripping you." The woman, watching him anxiously, said to him: „It does not befit you to mock someone in such a sorrowful situation with deceitful words. Since you know that the saints - just as they did cure many others before - are indeed able to cure me as well, if they want it." The other replied: "I do not say these things, instead I came here to tell this on the saints' orders. As for the remedy that cured your illness, you will find it under your mat, as they prescribed me to tell you." The woman quickly started to look for the remedy and under her mat she found it.⁵⁸⁹

In this story the main character is the woman with a pain in her breast, about whom we learn that she was wise and pious and she came from somewhere else to Constantinople. The narrator of the KDM shapes this figure into a high-society aristocrat woman, almost unapproachable because of her social position. In the CL story, the meek deacon of the church acts as intermediary. A familiar motif from ancient as well as Christian incubation miracles that the priests or temple personnel became the mouthpiece of the healers, often as the (healthy) recipients of the curative dream. In the Deubner collection the story undergoes radical changes: there is the man in the centre of the story, who at this time is not a simple deacon of the church, but a heretic – a heretic priest in a high ecclesiastical position in his own sect. That the saints address the dream to him is not only a test of belief in them, but an attempt to make the heretic acknowledge the truths of Orthodoxy, and convert

⁵⁸⁷ Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt*, 97.

⁵⁸⁸ Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt*, 97.

⁵⁸⁹ CL 35, Rupprecht, *Cosmae et Damiani...*, 46-47.

him. Hence, to the more or less similar narrative events a fundamentally different theological background was added.

Reginald Grégoire wrote⁵⁹⁰ that the hagiographic text is at the same time *existentialist*, that is decisive for a history of a community, *political*, as it denotes a framework of the system of social networks and *structural*, because of the narrator - redactor. The further comparison of the two versions of Cosmas and Damian's miracles would provide us with the possibility of seeing the change that took place in the collective memory of the cult, and the old and new functions (political, ecclesiastical and cultic) the miracle records had in two different communities.

⁵⁹⁰ Reginald Grégoire, *Manuale di agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica*, 2nd edition (Fabriano: Monastero S. Silvestro, 1996), 238.

Compositional structures in Sophronios' Thaumata

Scholarly attention to Sophronios' writing technique mainly focussed on his style and rhetorical repertoire.⁵⁹¹ Besides Sophronios' stylistic brilliance and prose rhythm,⁵⁹² John Duffy observed some structuring features as well, together with the hagiographer's compositional vanity, which manifested itself in his "self-confident linguistic exuberance".⁵⁹³

In the collection there are types of narratives; short, condensed stories are altering with those describing extremely detailed events. The concise shorter miracles were probably based on the votive records or some sort of miracle-inventory of the sanctuary – despite the hagiographer's silence on such records. The material for the longer stories Sophronios might obtained from oral sources, from the dreamers themselves. The size of such stories was often six or seven times longer than the "votive-type" narratives.

Contrary to Thecla's hagiographer, who in order to secure his credibility, often cited carefully his sources and his research work, or to the hagiographer of Artemios, who supported the veracity of his stories by giving geographical and chronological proofs, Sophronios struggled to put himself and his story-telling talent into focus. Not even such indices he allowed, what we find in the collection of Cosmas and Damian: the artificially created fiction of research, of listening to witnesses. He rather created an *ex nihilo* narrative strategy. He emphasised the most his own compositional intentions, he created the image of himself as the structuring mastermind.

Overall structure: 70 miracles 7 + 0

1-35: Alexandrian patients

1: first miracle with Ammonios from Alexandria

8-9-10: Christodoros' family

10-11: three sick children called Mary,
daughters of church personnel (reappear in 60, 67)

13-14-15: alphabetical connection⁵⁹⁴

19-20-21: female patients

24-25-26: female patients

In 24: two stories, a rich and a poor woman, both called Julianna

⁵⁹¹ J. Duffy, "Observations on Sophronios' *Miracles of Cyrus and John*" *Journal of Theological Studies* 35 (1984), 71-90.

⁵⁹² "he was one of the first to employ almost exclusively the so called 'double dactyl' clausula" Duffy, "Observations," 75-76.

⁵⁹³ Duffy, "Observations," 73.

26-27: protagonists called Theodora and Theodoros

28: two stories: a rich and poor man

29-30-31-32: punishment miracles

30-31: pagans

33-34: women, not ill, on pilgrimage, miracle happens on their way

36-50: Egyptians and Libyans

36-37-38-39: Monophysite heretics, Communion

46-47: cures by bath

51-70: Foreigners

54-55: illness caused by magic, remedy: pork

55-56: patients from Cyprus

70: cure of Sophronios

For the main structure of the corpus Sophronios himself gives explanation: he deliberately included 70 miracles, because, he writes, 7 is a magical, 0 is the perfect number (3384D).⁵⁹⁵ This corpus is divided into three parts: 35 is dedicated to Alexandrian patients, 15 to Egyptians and Libyans, and the last 20 to foreigners. The last among the foreigners, that is the concluding miracle of the collection is Sophronios' own miraculous recovery. MCJ 1 starts with the story of Ammonios from Alexandria, yet this alphabetical order is not carried through the corpus, but we shall find examples when stories are linked together on the analogy of the patients' names. Within this larger grouping the most striking are the miracles placed into the middle of the corpus, most importantly MCJ 36, which inaugurates the punishment miracles performed on Monophysite heretics and hence most markedly express the saints' (i. e. the hagiographer's) Chalcedonian standing.

Sophronios - unlike Thecla's hagiographer – he was not working in consecutive thematic groups. He established his three major units on the basis of the provenance of the patients but besides this, there are small story-islands among the miracles: a few stories are linked together, by a sometimes stated, sometimes implicit connection. Sophronios is at his best when it comes to the internal structure of the individual miracles. This first of his story-islands and the most stronger in their interrelatedness, contains the stories ordered around the *oikonomos* of the church, Christodoros. By its concentration on a single individual it is also unique as such in the collection. Sophronios

⁵⁹⁴ Duffy, "Observations", 72-73.

⁵⁹⁵ cf. the explanation of Fernandez Marcos, which I already quoted in connection with the *libelli miraculorum*: Augustine in the *De vera religione* tells how he collected and arranged miracle stories. He also mentions that he recorded 70 such miracle stories, some of which were also read aloud during the liturgy in the church in Hippo. Fernandez's hypothesis is that Sophronios might have been influenced by this fact to choose 70 stories. (*De vera religione* 25. 47, cf. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 158.) (Honestly I do not find it probable. Sophronios loved to show off and was also loquacious enough to refer to Augustine if he had been his example.)

presumably knew him well, and he perhaps was also a source of many of the miracles. It is impossible to decide, why he acquired this distinguished position, perhaps because of his importance in the sanctuary or because of his closeness to the hagiographer. MCJ 8-9-10 record the miraculous cures of Christodoros, that of his wife and then of his daughter, but as a secondary character he appears also near the end of the collection, in MCJ 67: in this case he is thought not the patient, the beneficiary of the dream-recipe that he has to communicate to the sick suppliant. Out of this first story-island a second is born, linked by the analogy of names, a device that Sophronios applies elsewhere as well. Christodoros' daughter is called Mary; she was suffering from tooth- and ear complaints, and being a child, her parents turn to the saints.

Within the same miracle (MCJ 10) another story follows, again about a girl called Mary, similarly with pains in her ear. The next miracle (MCJ 11) remains in the same line, with its protagonist called Mary, who was the daughter of a certain John, at Sophronios' time the deacon of the church. Just as Christodoros, this John the deacon also reappears later, in MCJ 60.

After diverse miracle-stories, the next thematic units are of MCJ 19-20-21 and 24-25-26, all with female patients. Within these groups Sophronios establishes another connection: in MCJ 24 he tells two stories, about a rich and a poor women, both named Julianna. The protagonist of the closing woman-miracle (MCJ 26) is Theodora; her name-pair leads to the male protagonist Theodoros of the following miracle (MCJ 27), with Sophronios himself underlining the name-analogy as his basis of structuring the stories. In the next MCJ 28, mirroring the double miracle of the rich and poor Juliannas, we read again a double story: a rich and a poor man recover by the same miracle, with the help of one to the other – a motif familiar both from Artemios and from the miracles of Cosmas and Damian as well.

This group is followed by a set of stories, which the hagiographer himself marks as a thematic unit: MCJ 29-30-31-32 with punishment miracles. Besides being punishment miracles and falling at the same time to the larger structural division, that is miracles to Alexandrians, this group has an additional characteristic: all the protagonists are pagans, either acknowledging proudly (as the famous Gesios in MCJ 30) or Christianized recalcitrant pagans (as MCJ 31). There is one important remark on Sophronios' structural organization at the end of MCJ 30: he writes that there are miracles of saint Cyrus and John, which were performed by Cosmas and Damian also, such as, Sophronios gives his examples, are the one with the paralytic man and mute woman, or the story of the Jewish woman with cancer. These occurred similarly in Menouthis, but Sophronios writes to have avoided their inclusion on purpose, and instead – he says – he wished to concentrate only to those events that are unique only to Menouthis. Besides that the two miracles Sophronios recalled here would not have had a thematically relevant place in this group, since they are not punishment miracles, it is worth noting that the two concerning miracles of Cosmas and Damian do not figure in the (truncated)

London Codex, hence Sophronios probably knew the more widely spread collection of the saints (the KDM).

At the end of MCJ 32 he writes that this is the end of the section dedicated to the miracles happened to Alexandrians, but then, goes on and repeats the same, at this time definitely, at the end of MCJ 35. Was it the case that the hagiographer, having in mind the would be unity of the 70 miracles of the collection, wanted to complement the first, coherent part? Also the miracles attached for this purpose, MCJ 33 and 34 reveal similarities: both concern two women, who were initially not ill but were making a pilgrimage to the church, to honour the saints and an incident happens to both of them on their way.

MCJ 36 inaugurates the second larger section of the collection, the group of 20 stories that record miracles that happened to Egyptians and Libyans. It would be interesting to know whether the patients coming from different parts placed their votive tablets randomly, or if there were separate sections on the church wall for the Alexandrians, foreigners etc, or this grouping was arbitrary and Sophronios searched out himself to the miracle stories linked by provenance.

This is the section where Sophronios' conscious composing can be observed at its best. It manifested itself congenially in the selection and elaboration of the stories at the crucial strategic points of the corpus. We should now loose from sight that Sophronios, unlike most hagiographers, knew in advance, how many stories he wanted to collect, thus it may not be exaggerated to observe that in the centre of the corpus there are those narratives, which characterize the entire collection, or even his whole endeavour, with explicit theological message.

The miracles opening the second half of the collection (36-37-38-39) all focus on various (Monophysite) heretics, on taking Communion in an Orthodox way as the condition or means of cure, and in all cases, confront the opposing principles of faith.

In the closing miracle of this group, in MCJ 39, Sophronios – just as he often does, tells two stories under the flagship of one miracle. While in the other cases there was some slight connection between the two narratives, if nothing else, the protagonists” being both patients of the saints, here he uses a particular way of “tie-in sale”: MCJ 39 is about a paralysed heretic, who by no means wants to accept the teaching of Chalcedon, the creed what the saints emphatically confess. The physician-saints heighten the man's pains, in this way forcing him to receive Communion in the Orthodox way. After repeated protests, the patient finally gives in and the end accepts the right faith and gets healed. This event reminds Sophronios to the church servant called Menas, who is not sick at all but also a heretic. Menas in his dream witnesses that the saints receive in front of him the Eucharist (!), then they whip him and warn him that he could stay in their church as a servant only if he turns away from his erroneous beliefs.

After some stories of diverse themes, MCJ 46-47 form the next smaller unit: MCJ 46 incorporates two stories where for the cure both of the patients have to take a bath in the water of Siloam in Jerusalem; taking a bath is similarly the cure in MCJ 47 as well.

Before the section on Egyptian and Libyan patients ends with MCJ 50, Sophronios in MCJ 49 corrects himself, saying that as this miracle is a punishment story, its place should be among the thematic *Strafwunder*-group in the Alexandrian part. This attests that when recording his stories piled up on each other, he did not lose sight of the compositional units he himself created.

The third and last larger unit, MCJ 51-70, narrates the miracles that happened to foreigners, and just as at the head of the previous greater section, the opening story of this unit is also a prominent one. The beneficiary of the miracle MCJ 51 is an abbot, and – argues Sophronios – he is a leader in the church, his story merits to be a leader among the subsequent miracles. In line with the protagonist's leadership, the miraculous event is just as extraordinary: the saints ask from God that the dying abbot would return to life and in addition, he receives twenty more years.

MCJ 53 tells two miracles: the first concerns the master, the second one his servant. It may be plausible to suppose that such double healings were recorded on the same *ex voto*.⁵⁹⁶

MCJ 54 and 55 address maladies caused by a demon and the means of the cure is in both cases pork – in both stories there is a secondary character for whom swine is a religious taboo. MCJ 55 links further to the next miracle MCJ 56, as the patients are in both cases from Cyprus. In the subsequent miracle stories there are no thematic connections.

I formulated the hypothesis that Sophronios' chief compositional talent can be observed in the individual stories. What he skilfully adds to the raw material – name, provenance, illness, miracle occasionally follows to a great extent the form criteria of saints' *Vitae*, some elements of which rely on the encomium- tradition. MCJ 54 is probably the most representative in this respect and its close analysis may sufficiently highlight my point:

About Isidoros the epileptic: the narrative starts with a *laudatio* of elevated tone about the town of Damascus (the hometown of the hagiographer as well) and followed by a compact little genealogy of the patient: Isidoros' father was Dionysios, a nobleman from Damascus, whose forefather was the famous philosopher “Nicolaos, the tutor of Herod and teacher of the children (?) of Antonius and Cleopatra”, from whom twelve generations of scholars originated. Isidoros as a child was chased by a demon in the bath, an event of which details Sophronios describes profusely: after the child fell down on the pavement, his tutors carried him out of the bath but did not give great importance to what happened, regarding it the usual weakness caused by the hot vapours of the bath.

⁵⁹⁶ Just as Aelius Aristedes wrote in detail about the experiences of his servants with Asclepius or the master of the slave in Epidauros dedicated as votive gift the object of the miracle concerning both of them (T 423. 10).

Yet soon they turned to doctors, who diagnosed the illness as *epilepsy* caused by the melancholic humours. At this point the whole family embarked upon the pilgrimage to the church of the saints: the father with his son and with his wife. She was called Julia and she was – by way of some Hellenic (i. e. pagan) error – the worshipper of Adonis. For this reason she could not eat or touch swine, a fact that he concealed from her family. The curative method recommended by the saints was that the mother should smear the child from head to toe with pork fat. And while in most incubation stories, both pagan and Christian, the fact of recovery and thanksgiving would follow, Sophronios's narrative is far from ending. The mother should overcome her religious taboo and apply the fat, what the demon could not stand and thus – as if castigated by some divine force – left the boy's body. Moreover, the child obtained a life-long protection from demons and the prescription served also to correct the mother's erroneous beliefs.

The basic elements are identical with those known from incubation stories, from sources that received a more or less elaborate literary form: name, hometown, occupation, illness, curative dream. But Sophronios, in my opinion, did not only enlarge these elements and added colours to them, but the way of adding material and the parts shaped in this way result in the miracle resembling to the structure of the saints' lives. In turn, the compositional elements of the saints' lives reach back to the ancient genre of the encomium.

MCJ 60 is peculiar for its presenting the geography of the sacred: Sophronios writes a handy introduction to the miracle about how people from near and afar all come to the saints. This story is all the more exemplary as the patient comes from Constantinople. The saints' fame and miraculous power overcomes distance in a rather personal way: the secondary character of the story and the saints' mouthpiece is the well known John the Deacon, familiar from earlier pieces of the collection. He is also of Constantinople and he is the one who writes to the sick man, urging him to visit Menouthis. What makes the patient to believe, it is not the shared homeland but the fact that John describes in his letter the man's illness.

Before turning to the characteristics of encomium and their relevance for incubation miracles, I include here the analysis of the last miracle of the corpus, MCJ 70, in which Sophronios tells his own cure. What makes this narrative particular is the attempt to see to what extent the hagiographer's own story is atypical in its formal characteristics.

Sophronios divided the circumstances of his healing into two narratives: the introductory *Laudes* before the first miracle of the collection and MCJ 70 complement each other in order to give the entire story. It is not by chance that the Latin compiler of the corpus, Peter of Naples, in the 10th century combined the two stories into one. The narrative of MCJ 70 at several points differs from the other miracles of the collection, despite that Sophronios emphasises here as well how much he is familiar with the formal requirements of the incubation miracle-structure. He is carried away partly

by his own personal message, partly by his efforts to push his extensive experiences into the usual narrative elements. Accordingly, at the beginning of his story, after a longish introduction, still in first person, he quickly makes it unmistakably clear what should follow: “I shall tell soon my name, my town, my country and my monastery, where I am coming from, where I was- out of God’s will - consecrated, and afterwards, my eye-complaint and the divine visit of the saints (*episkepsis*), as I have done it in the previous miracles.”⁵⁹⁷ When he comes to the facts, Sophronios switches to the third-person narrative and in this way he continues till the end, unfaithful to his promise of concise and informative narration.

The miracle differs from the others not only by its exceptionally length but because Sophronios, in order to make greater effect, places the obligatory narrative elements into a new position: the praise of his hometown, Damascus, is not sung by the hagiographer himself, but he gives the word to the Apostle Thomas. As a patient he is not just a patient, his illness is not only an illness, but Sophronios right away assimilates himself to the blind Homer and he makes the saints call him in this way. This is all the more odd, as Cyrus and John are not at all sympathetic to Greek learning, unlike saint Thecla – of course Sophronios gives diligently an explanation that the two “authors”, Homer and himself are analogous only by the blindness. His literary aspirations evolve further when the appearing saints are described not simply dressed as monks but Cyrus in the likeness of the hagiographer’s friend, John, probably John Moschos, while saint John appears as Peter, the *praefectus praetoriorum* of Alexandria. About the illness we learn that it was *xerophthalmia* and that Sophronios was visited by doctors, and he also specifies how a Byzantine eye-specialist made the diagnosis. (A particularly interesting feature of the dream-pattern that Sophronios sees himself from the outside – a phenomenon that originates in a new dream pattern, that I shall analyse later in Chapter 9.)

Analogies between the structure of the encomium and of the miracle narrative (especially in the Thaumata) and the hagiographical reverse of this structure:⁵⁹⁸

At the end of 3rd century AD Menander, “the par excellence theoretician of rhetoric” (Delehaye), in his *Περὶ τῆς παιδείας τοῦ ποιητικῆς* listed the following elements as indispensable parts of a decent encomium.⁵⁹⁹ The essential element of the prooimion is the *αἰτιολογία*, the narrator’s apologies in front of the greatness of the task, the extraordinary character of his subject and his own humble qualities; finally he starts the *ἡρώδης* in the strict sense, commencing with his hero, listing his

⁵⁹⁷ MT 70.

⁵⁹⁸ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 2nd edition, (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1966), 141-147.

birthplace, his ethnic group, often praising the city in question (παρτ[ος, π[λις, [θνος), then the hero's family, his γ[νος and occasionally the circumstances of his birth, the preceding or accompanying miraculous events (τ[περ[τ[ς γεν[σεως), the physical characteristics of his hero, his childhood and upbringing (τ[περ[φ[σεως, [ναστροφ[, παιδε[α), detouring to his lifestyle and activity ([πιτηδε[ματα), until he arrives to the narrative of the hero's deeds (πρ[ξεις). Hippolyte Delehaye analysed those analogies and rhetorical similarities that in the panegyric literature of the martyrs follow the ancient encomium model. What is more notable from the point of view of the incubation miracles, is that such a rhetorically well-trained hagiographer as Sophronios the narrative units of his miracle stories coincide with those of the encomium. In the centre of his narrative, however, we do not find the saint, but the supplicant patient.

It is the patient's life-story and his microcosm that unfold from the formulaic beginning of the narrative, in which the obligatory requirements of the ancient Greek healing miracles (the sick person's name, hometown, profession, his illness and recovery) evolve into little story-mosaics. In addition to the patient's features, some remarks on his faith are often added: how zealous Christian he or she was, or how his or her erroneous beliefs manifested themselves, and sometimes references to his antecedents can also be found, as in the just described MCJ 54.

The identical skeleton of the pattern of course adapts itself to the protagonist of the narrative, who is an ordinary man or woman, hence the wondrous circumstances of birth, with deep theological message is missing; physical characteristics are partly or entirely replaced by the description of the bodily symptoms of the illness; childhood and growing up is often marked by the motif of the long-lasting illness, overcoming the patient from his childhood; in the place of the praxis come naturally all those activities, which connect the "protagonist" with the saints: his learning about the healers, his delusion in medical doctors, his journey to the saints, his acts of devotion or incredulity, his relationship with his fellow-pilgrims, the practice of incubation and all the details relating to his stay in the sanctuary and most importantly, his encounter with the saints and the acts, gestures, tests he has to perform in order to receive the cure.

In Sophronios's case the clash of the two literary characteristics mirrors his being at home to some extent in both traditions, which melt into an ideological and textual framework of praising the saints of the place and through them, Christ's works.

Sophronios's compositional technique may be the result of his two storytelling-milieus: on one hand, his stay in the monastery, his friendship with Saint John the Almsgiver and John Moschos, audiences and authors of saints' lives might had such a strong impact on his compositional way that his miracle story structures draw on the patterns of encomium (and its Christian transformation, the

⁵⁹⁹ Similarly to him also the Alexandrian Sophist Theon (1st century AD), in his *Προγυμνασματα*, in the chapter *Περ[[γκωμ[ου κα[ψ[γον*, for its English translation see G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric. Writings from the Greco-Roman World* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

saints' lives). On the other hand, Sophronios knew the miracle collections of Saint Cosmas and Damian and of Saint Menas, and, as himself attests, the incubation miracle stories of Isis (and perhaps those of Serapis), he was absolutely well-versed about how incubation miracle narratives are built up. The result was a rhetorically overflowing extension of both narrative traditions.

Compositional structure in the miracles of saint Artemios

The miracle collection of Artemios is well-definable in terms of time and space and it is substantially a work of a single hagiographer, with probably later additional *morale* at the end of some stories. The 45 miracles were divided differently by various scholars: Kougeas distinguished two parts, the older miracles of MA 1-17, while the second part he divided into further smaller groups, written at different times, MA 18-20, 21-44, 45.⁶⁰⁰ Delehayé echoed this division,⁶⁰¹ while Marco Dorati refined it by stating that the two parts may well be the work of a single hagiographer yet they represent two different phases.⁶⁰² The first part of the collection, MA 1-16, is characterised by shorter stories, and a dry and rather technical tone, with few details in the narrative. The miracles of the second section, MA 17-45 contain longer and more elaborated tales, characterised by the richness of motifs, describing complex situations, which Dorati calls *veri e propri racconti*. In this part we find the formulaic closures and transitory summaries in the miracles as well as the repeated appearance of characters: in MA 18, 22; MA 19,20; MA 38-40 and 43. Haldon proposed that

In respect of the collection as a whole, the miracles up to 31 have in common their relative brevity and conciseness, those from 32 on are generally much longer and more exegetical; and it seems to me that one could also make a case for a first collection having ended here with miracle 31. Later miracles, from 32 on, might thus constitute an addition, perhaps added as a single collection later in the seventh century; the polemical additions representing either a second or a third stage. The date of the final redaction must thus remain unclear, and may well lie ultimately in the ninth century, by a redactor who incorporated a few "common-sense" post-iconoclastic elements for good measure, and as represented in the manuscripts.⁶⁰³

Lennart Rydén described the individual miracles of the collection as episodes: as of those of a film series, with the same main characters and with the basically homogeneous elements of the story. We hear nowhere about such compositional ambitions, which may aim at ordering the miracles into thematic or otherwise linked groups as it was the case of Thecla's stories. Sophronios' compositional whole is equally missing, there is no numerical organization or classification of patients. In the *Thaumata* the non consecutive island-like miracle groups form at least an archipelago if not a terraferma; in the case of Artemios we can indeed speak only of islands. The saint's medical specialization for hernia – although there are a few other types of miracle working – excludes the

⁶⁰⁰ S. B. Kougeas, review of the Papadopoulos-Kerameus's edition, *Laographia* 3 (1911), 277-319, summarized also by Haldon, "Supplementary Essay", 35.

⁶⁰¹ Delehayé, "Les recueils antiques", 33.

⁶⁰² Dorati,.....

⁶⁰³ Haldon, "Supplementary Essay", 34.

patients grouping on the basis of their illness. Neither does the hagiographer exploit the other possible aspects of classification, such as the provenance or personal characteristics of patients. I found three smaller miracle groups in the collection in which the related narratives concern the repeated experiences of a single individual: MA 19 –20 tell the miracles concerning a certain George, as well as the unit of MA 38-39-40, with another protagonist called George (not identical with the previous one). The peculiarity of this group that it unfolds the *miracle's* life over several decades: we meet George as a child with his money-changer parents, who learns the craft of scales and exchange rates yet who at the age of 9 comes under the spell of the church of Saint John the Baptist (the one that hosts Artemios). He becomes a reader in the church but his parents drag him home; he falls ill and since this time he enjoys the special patronage of saint Artemios. This attracts him to become a monk, thus we encounter him in the next miracle, years later. After another struggle with his parents he takes orders and at the age of 22 he becomes an ordained priest at Constantinople. In the meantime we learn about his years spent previously on the island of Plataiai: the third miracle takes place here, when George is only an 18 year-old deacon.

About him we can only suspect that the hagiographer knew him in person, and perhaps was one of his informants. About the other George, however, the hagiographer says it explicitly: the protagonist of MA 19-20 in the time of the recording “still survives proclaiming and recounting the glory of the martyr.”⁶⁰⁴

His experiences are embraced by the miracles of the third group with identical protagonist: in this case the miracles are not following closely each other, the anonymous man, helped out in MA 18, reappears in MA 22: “it happened at some point that the very same burglary victim about whom we just spoke...”⁶⁰⁵

There is another pair of miracles, connected only by a formulaic phrase and perhaps by the analogy of names: MA 16 – 17. In MA 16 a man called Sergios from Alexandria cries out for Artemios in this way: “Saint Artemios, you were Doux and Augoustalios in my native land of Alexandria; cure me along with the many!” In MA 17 a senator called Sergios sends a sick relative of him to Artemios; to accompany and entertain him while in the church, he gives also an actor from Alexandria. As a result of a punishment miracle, the Alexandrian actor also develops hernia and he exposes himself to another patient with a following words: “See how it is! The saint who allegedly became Doux and Augoustalios of my country sent me this man’s hernia!” (Elsewhere this sort of linking is not characteristic of the hagiographer – would it be the case that the phrase remained in his mind from the previous miracle and willy-nilly he builds it into this story as well apropos of the other Alexandrian.)

⁶⁰⁴ MA

⁶⁰⁵ MA 22,

The hagiographer's style attracted scholarly attention on two fields: to a lesser degree, a few observations were made on his language and vocabulary.⁶⁰⁶ Greater concern was reserved for the literary value of his work and for its reflecting everyday life in Constantinople. Most episodes in the collection are told with an unusual enthusiasm – remarked Lennart Rydén – and posed the question whether such literary merits of the text as its entertaining and exciting characteristics were due to the hagiographer or were inherent of the saint's legendary material. In the latter case, went on Rydén, the hagiographer realized and respected the literary values of the stories and did not enhance them with superfluous additions. If the first hypothesis is true – what Rydén considered the more likely case –, then the hagiographer measured out well the possibilities of the material and transmitted them by elaborating the spectacular and with a profuse sense of humour. Considering together the stories and their language, Rydén calls the hagiographer's way of storytelling open and apparently inartificial, which was probably viewed inartistic by the Byzantines intellectuals.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁶ J. Grosdidier de Matons, "Les Miracula Sancti Artemii: note sur quelques questions de vocabulaire" in: *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière. Antiquité, Païenne et Chrétienne*, eds. E. Lucchesi and H. D. Saffrey, 263-266, (Geneva: P. Cramer, 1984); M. Lopez Salva, "Observaciones lexicales a los "Thaumata" de Artemio y de Cosma e Damián" Cuadernos de filología clásica 8 (1975): 303-320.

⁶⁰⁷ Rydén, "Kyrkan som sjukhus", 12-13.

Chapter 8: Narrative Techniques

Comparing above the same stories of Cosmas and Damian in two different narratives brought us close to the construction of the individual miracle stories. In what follows I would like to call attention to some narrative elements, the most characteristic of the Christian records of dream healing. I am going to introduce recurrent story patterns, themes and motifs and hope to show how they may point further than the skill of the hagiographer or the rules of miracle-writing. In the last thirty years of Byzantine scholarship a growing attention was paid to the narratives techniques and story-units of Byzantine hagiography.⁶⁰⁸

Yet this interest is not without precedents in incubation studies: Otto Weinreich already examined the rhetorical *topoi* and folklore commonplaces in the ancient Greek incubation-material.⁶⁰⁹ What may prove to be the most interesting during the close reading of the narrative units of incubation stories, is that there are some patterns, themes and narrative devices that are similar in the ancient pagan and in the Christian dream-tales. For example, navigation metaphors are frequent in the Christian incubation miracle narratives, especially in the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, for the whole process of the ritual. The illness is a “sea of troubles”, the healing sanctuary is the “harbour of health”, Cosmas and Damian succour in shipwreck, the saint appears as captain of the ship. The explanation may not be their association with the Dioscuroi, protectors of the shipwrecked, for it was a common motif in the incubation stories of Lebena and Epidaurus as well.⁶¹⁰

Gerd Theissen and George Tinker applied Propp’s analysis on the healing miracles of the New Testament. Theissen set six major themes of miracles (he termed them exorcism, healing, epiphanies, rescue miracles, gift miracles and rule miracles), with their characters of the miracle-worker, the sick person, the demon, the crowd, the opponent and the disciples. He distinguished altogether thirty-three motifs in all the miracle-themes, starting from the coming of the miracle-worker to the spread of the news of the miracle. Regarding healing, Theissen subdivided further the means of healing into a, the healing touch, b, the healing word or presence, c, the application of medicament and d, healing associated with the performance of a prescribed act.⁶¹¹

While Theissen concentrated only on healing itself, Tinker viewed the stories in their entirety and established his following categories:

⁶⁰⁸ Excellent bibliography is Christian Høgel, “Literary Aspects of Greek Byzantine Hagiography. A Bibliographical Survey” *Symbolae Osloenses* 72 (1997): 164-171.

⁶⁰⁹ O. Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder* (Religiongeschichte Versuche und Vorarbeiten 8.1. Giessen, 1909), 175-201.

⁶¹⁰ Girone, *Iamata*, III. 1; 3a; IV, 1 and Herzog, *Die Wunderheiligen*, C56, C63.

⁶¹¹ Gerd Theissen, *The miracle stories of the early Christian tradition*, transl. F. McDonagh, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 47-72.

- A, the problem is introduced (the sick or maimed person)
- B, tension is build up (resistance is introduced or difficulty is heightened)
- C, the healing moment is described
- D, the healing is demonstrated
- E, Reaction of the crowd is described

In Greek hagiography first Festugière analysed literary commonplaces and folklore motifs,⁶¹² and later Giulio Guidorizzi carried further the application of the Proppian model on Byzantine hagiographical texts.⁶¹³ These categories can account for almost all the characters and featuring objects of incubation healing stories:

- a, Helpers: i: outsiders; ii: close acquaintances or i, deliberately ii, involuntarily
(i: priests, doctors, other incubants in the church ii, family members, friends)
- b, Obstructing figures (e.g. doctors – can be both a and b)
- c, Companions - fellows (fellow supplicants, other patients)
- d, Helping objects, obtaining these objects...(mostly the curative objects, medicine or supernatural remedies)
- e, Obstructing objects or phenomena and hindering circumstances
(objects causing illness; unbelief, delayed appearance of the healer, not recognizing him...)
- f, the way (to the sanctuary, to the healer, also in a symbolic sense)

However neat it may seem, the applicability of the Proppian pattern to the healing miracles is more due to the richness of the pattern itself, than to its particular relevance to the hagiographic material. Yet it raises an important question for the healing narratives: who is the real hero of the story? While in most stories of saints' miracles, where the central character is beyond doubt the celebrated saint, the narrative of incubation healings concentrates on the sick persons; it is the patient we learn the most from the stories and all the episodes focus around him, not so much around the healer. Only the miracle-collection as a whole has the physician-saint in its imaginary centre, as the ultimate source of all single miracles, but the individual stories concentrate always on the patients.

It proves more useful to turn to Barthes's classification of narrative elements, and distinguish in the miracle stories what he calls *cardinal units* or *nuclei* of the story and *sequences* and who also returns to the concept of defining characters not by who they are but purely by what they do.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² A. J. Festugière, "Lieux communs littéraires et thèmes de folk-lore dans l'Hagiographie primitive" *Wiener Studien* 73 (1960), 123-152.

⁶¹³ G. Guidorizzi, "Motivi fiabeschi nella agiografia bizantina" in *Studi Bizantini e neogreci*, a cura di P. L. Leone, pp. 457-467, (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1983).

⁶¹⁴ R. Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" In: *Image, Music, Text*, Trans. S. Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 79-124.

The cardinal units of incubation miracles are alike in the Asclepieian-type and in the Christian incubation narratives:

- 1, patient's name-provenance-profession;
- 2, the illness;
- 3, the way to the sanctuary;
- 4, the incubation dream, apparition of the healer;
- 5, the advice for cure given or miraculous cure (in dream or awake)
- 6, recovery;
- 7, recognition and declaration of the miracle.

In contrast to Theissen's and Guidorizzi's models these core elements are chronologically consecutive in the incubation stories. When the miracle narrative must limit itself to an epigraphic *ex voto*, these elements are present in their barest form, but when there is the possibility to enlarge the concise votive tablet or write out directly the story, around these nuclei of incubation miracles a few other circumstances can be added:

- 1, personal characteristics of the patient
- 2, details, symptoms and sometimes the *cause* of the illness
- 3, the way to the sanctuary may include previous failure of seeking cure (at doctors); may be realised by the initiative of someone else (family, friends or the spread of the healer's fame); can happen at the healer's initiative (invitation dream)
- 4, variants of incubation-dream: when someone else incubates on the behalf of the patient; when dream is delayed; when the healer comes at daytime; dream dismissed as phantasia; repeated dreams; healers not recognised
- 5, precondition of cure; punishment
- 6, partial cure, restoration of initial state after punishment
- 7, punishment remains

These units follow each other in a precise order, a natural course of events and narrative order as well. For these patterns it holds true what Lord says about the units of oral poetry, that they both follow a narrative logic and at the same time freely adaptable:

Although the themes lead naturally from one to another to form a song which exists as a whole in the singer's mind with Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end, the units within this whole, the themes, have a semi-independent life of their own. The theme in oral poetry exists at one and the same time in general and also for any individual singer's forms of it. His task is to adapt and adjust it to the particular song that he is re-creating. It does not have to have a single "pure" form either for the individual singer or for the tradition as a whole. Its form is ever changing in the singer's mind, because the theme is in reality protean; in the singer's mind it has many shapes, all the forms in which he has ever sung it, although his latest rendering of it will naturally be freshest in his mind. It is not a static entity, but a living, changing, adaptable artistic creation. Yet it exists for the sake of the song. And the shapes it has taken in the past have been suitable for the song of the

moment. In a traditional poem, therefore, there is a pull in two directions: one is toward the song being sung and the other is toward the previous uses of the same theme.⁶¹⁵

Naturally, the limits of length in the miracle narratives set a framework to this free-flowing compositional creativity. Below I shall analyse some of those units, which are additional to the main pattern and reflect more the variations of the basic miracle-theme.

1. The first among such episodes that can be elaborated as the hagiographer wishes is **the formation of the work itself**. In the ancient pagan collections just as in the Byzantine corpora direct divine cooperation is frequent. A popular frame of this motif – also independently of incubation – is the dream of the aretalogos – hagiographer, in which the appearing divine being encourages (or orders) the future narrator to record his stories. Among the Greek example are the Imouthes – Asclepius aretalogy⁶¹⁶ or the story of Thessalos the physician,⁶¹⁷ whereas the vision of Thecla's hagiographer fits nicely to the Christian examples:

I was neglecting my work, writing down the miracles, I was lazy to take the tablet and the pen, as if I had given up my research and the collection of the miracles. I was in such state of mind... when I saw with my very eyes that St Thecla sat by my side, to the place where I used to consult my books, she took my notebook from my hand in which I have transcribed the last miracle. And behold! she starts reading it and takes pleasure in it and indicates me with a smile that she likes what I wrote hitherto and that I should continue this work, not to leave it incomplete, until I succeed in understanding what others know and learning all from them with the utmost care. After this vision I was seized with terror and zeal to pick up my tablet and pen and carry out everything she ordered.⁶¹⁸

The saint appearing to his hagiographer and helping him in writing in itself was also a *topos*. Very much like in the case of Thecla, Cyril of Scythopolis also benefited in sleep the encouragement of his subject, Saint Euthymios, who appeared to the despairing hagiographer with an apple dipped in honey, which he brought to Cyril's mouth to provide him with sufficiently sweet eloquence.⁶¹⁹

2, More specific to the incubation narratives is **the invitation dream**: the description of the invitation dream has a twofold role in the story: both on the level of the cult experience and that of the narration, the invitation dream introduces the healer already before the miraculous intervention. It brings closer the healer and prepares the dreamer and the readers alike what to expect. The invitation dream after serves for the healer to identify himself, to reveal his bodily appearance to the dreamer and to attest his or her medical – wonderworking competence. A common variant of the dream invitation is when the patients initially sought cure from doctors and was deeply discouraged before the proposed operation. Thecla's hagiographer told us (MT12) how the saint appeared to him

⁶¹⁵ A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 94.

⁶¹⁶ T.....

⁶¹⁷ See: Festugière, "Lieux communs littéraires," 126-129, he quotes Byzantine examples as well. For another common motif, analysed by him, the rediscovery of a lost manuscript, see: idem, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* (Third edition, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989); "Les fictions littéraires du logos de révélation", iii: "Révélation par la découverte d'un livre ou d'une stèle".

⁶¹⁸ MT 31.

in a dream when he was scared because of the imminent amputation of his finger. Similarly, Cosmas and Damian appear to the sick woman's husband who was worried over the life of his wife the night before the surgical intervention (KDM 28).

Another aspect of the dream-invitation is that the healer (pagan or Christian) did not only prove his sphere of influence and the power over the dreamer's illness but at the same time he also defines the - territorial - limits of his capacity. The invitation to the cult place – as Dorati and Guidorizzi underlined – at the same time means that the healers do not heal anywhere. Their power has a spatial field of force and the patient must get within this sphere:

“In questo dobbiamo certo riconoscere un'affermazione della centralità dello tempio, ma possiamo anche leggere, nella crescente importanza del motivo, una sorta di compromesso tra una sfera d'azione che s'è sempre più espansa nel corso del tempo, di pari passo con il sempre crescente prestigio di divinità come Asclepio, e una funzione guaritrice che non s'è mai del tutto sganciata dagli originari limiti territoriali delle potenze legate all'incubazione, che possono operare solo nel territorio cui sono vincolate.”⁶²⁰

For an analysis of the cult experience itself the invitation dream sheds light on the psychology of the dreamer: his inner preparation, his doubts and anxieties as well as his hopes about the miracle, and also about his expectations about the healer. The dream invitation – already a miracle itself – always promises a further miracle. For the sick man it emphatically promises the miraculous cure – preparing thus the ground for removing what may actually block his chances of recovery within himself. In a certain sense, the dream invitation is an oracle: a narrative unit and a part of the ritual experience that recall again and again the strong connection of healing and divination in incubation, fading in its Christian practice.

The appearance of the healer bridges the gap between the patient and the sanctuary in the lack of other intermediaries. That is, if the patient lives too far or if he has no friends, family members who advice him to go to the sanctuary, the invitation dream solves this difficulty. Moreover, it also bears testimony that not only the suppliants may choose the object of their devotion or source of hope but the holy healers can also select their patients.

3, Punishment miracles concern always a ritual offence or an act interpreted as a ritual offence. The punishments of incubation narratives stay within the framework of illness: it can be the initial illness, the healer's refusal to heal, making the once miraculously healed illness return or, in extreme case, allotting death. Punishment miracles in Asclepieian incubation stories were already in the focus of attention of Herzog and LiDonnici. Both of them addressed their presence in the miracles from the point of view of the sources. Herzog held that the punishment stories were inserted by the official cult propaganda⁶²¹. LiDonnici contrasted his view, arguing, that if the

⁶¹⁹ Cf. Rapp, “Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians”, 40; the *Life of Euthymios* is in R.M. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* (Cistercian Studies 114: Kalamazoo, 1991), 1-92.

⁶²⁰ Dorati – Guidorizzi, “La letteratura incubatoria”, 354.

⁶²¹ Herzog, *Wunderbeilungen*, 56-57.

wrongdoing-punishment were followed by the patient's making amends and by his repentance as well as by the healer's forgiving (healing or the restoration of the original situation), it is more likely that the patient in question himself had made the recording.⁶²²

If we were to examine among the miracles the punishment miracles only, they in themselves reflect important characteristics of the cult and of the cultic healer: in the general cultic background we see Asclepius punishing those opposing himself: those who do not believe in his power or who are reluctant to pay the offering they made initially. Thecla is the keenest about wrongdoing to those under her protectorate: the sanctuary and women especially. Compared to the other incubation saints, Thecla is the quickest to punish with death⁶²³ – a phenomenon telling about her wider sphere of operation. In sitting judgement over those who committed a sin against herself or those under her protection, Thecla – not unlike Pallas Athena or Artemis – bears traces of an autonomous divine being, what manifests itself also in the fact that she the most often inflicts death out of her own decision. Just as she does in the miracle in which the temple-robber brigands met their death;⁶²⁴ here Thecla is described as *imitatio Christi* in her anger and her act is paralleled to the allotment of death for the impiety of Sodoma and Gomorrha. Thecla can also appear as an intermediary, taking the initiative, but eventually turning to Christ for the final authorization: once she visited a man in dream, somebody who embezzled the money of orphans; the saint angrily informed him that she has pleaded the case before Christ and that he has been sentenced to die within a week, an event that duly took place and became recorded in the narrative.⁶²⁵ Herself can also use an intermediary, as she did in the case of a man, who had desired a woman, seen at Thecla's feast. For the man dared even to ask the saint to grant him to obtain her, Thecla carried out his death sentence through a demon that attacked the man with such a horrible illness, that he died within three days, in the midst of spectacular sufferings.⁶²⁶ Similarly death awaited those two thieves, who not only robbed a gold treasure of Thecla, but seduced one of her virgins as well. The aim of the detailed description of the sacrilege and the punishment is explained by the hagiographer at the beginning of the miracle: he wished to include this "fearful" miracle in order to turn the readers away from impiety, sacrilege and any conduct that is unworthy of the martyr – and because his concern was to tell stories that are *useful*.⁶²⁷

⁶²² LiDonnici, *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions*, 40, note 3.

⁶²³ It is not surprising that these three death-punishment miracles form a thematic group – MT 33-34-35 – within the collection, just as the Strafwunder cases of Cyrus and John are grouped together – MCJ... -.

⁶²⁴ MT 28.

⁶²⁵ MT 35.

⁶²⁶ MT 33.

⁶²⁷ MT 34. On this sort of moral- edifying concern (using the examples of our sources) cf. P. Maraval, 'Fonction pédagogique de la littérature hagiographique d'un lieu de pèlerinage: l'exemple des Miracles de Cyr et Jean' In *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés IV-XII. siècles*, Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2-5 mai 1979) 383-397, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985) and Vincent Déroche, 'Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles? L'exemple des miracles de Saint Artémios' In *Les saints et leur sanctuaires à Byzance*, eds. Ch. Jolivet-Lévy, M. Kaplan, J-P. Sodini. 95-116, (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1993).

Saint Cosmas and Damian are the most concerned with general shortcomings: they punish not only non-Christian pagans (not healing them unless they convert), but also the believing Christian who has a passion for horserace⁶²⁸ (where punishment becomes the vehicle of the miraculous cure and at the same time of abandoning the vice). They may induce an illness and then cure it in order to manifest their grace on the incredulous⁶²⁹ or they simply inflict an illness for a serious ritual offence and never make amends.⁶³⁰

Cyrus and John have an eye mostly for theological – dogmatical concerns: they punish harshly, by inflicting pain, using violence, by rendering the patient ridiculous, but only the non-Christians and not-enough-Christians, that is the non-Chalcedonian heretics.⁶³¹ Similar to punishment and largely used by Cosmas and Damian and by Artemios is the cure by teaching a lesson: the rich must give money away, the suspicious husband can be cured only by his chaste wife and this is the point where most social barriers dividing the patients must go – at least in the dynamics of the narrative.

One type of punishment miracle beyond doubt belongs to those recorded by the authorities of the sanctuary: punishment by death. The death of a patient in itself can be interpreted as a failed miracle; as such, it calls for a shift in the narrative point of view. This turn of the narrative either transforms the customary illness-miracle-recovery pattern into a punishment miracle, viewed, written and interpreted by others and shifts the message of the divine miraculous power onto theological grounds and calls attention that there is an absolute minimum in order to be healed (or spared).⁶³² In a different way the shift of emphasis from a miracle of non-healing can be narrated from a witness – who in turn becomes the true protagonist of the miracle, and the dead or non-healed person just a catalyser of the *habitual* narrative.⁶³³

4. The narration of the third, a narrative technique that prevailed in other context as well, especially among the dream miracle narratives. A story in Thecla's collection⁶³⁴ provides the view of an outsider of the miracle, parallelly presenting the beneficiary of the miracle and the saint, moreover, her testimony at the same time serves to verify that the miracle was not only a dream but reality. The

⁶²⁸ KDM 11

⁶²⁹ KDM 16, KDM 37

⁶³⁰ KDM 43

⁶³¹ MCJ 12, 13, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 49, 67, analysed in details in Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 180ff.

⁶³² Emblematic is the case of a pagan who pretended to be a Christian, even to the point of taking the Eucharist in his efforts to disguise himself. He was immediately seized with convulsions and three days later he died. MCJ 32.

⁶³³ In KDM 12 the hagiographer of Cosmas and Damian made an outsider the protagonist of the story, another patient (Martha), who during the ritual dream witnessed the death of her neighbour: the saints appeared and under her eyes gave a small tablet with a message (πιττῆκιον) to the elderly woman who was lying next to her. When Martha woke up, she reproached the divine physicians for neglecting herself, while caring for her neighbour. Soon she caught sight that in the church funerary preparations were in course and learned that the woman next to her had died. She fervently prayed then to the saints: "Good masters, great doctors, I want to leave, do not approach me for a while! I beseech you that you would heal me, I do not need this sort of departure!" The following night the saints rebuked then finally healed her.

inclusion of the outsider witness figures in several other early Christian miracle narratives, as the migrating popular story of the paralytic man and the mute woman attests.⁶³⁵ Here the character of the events renders impossible that any of the directly involved protagonists would tell what happened: to the paralytic man who is seeking cure through incubation, Cosmas and Damian appeared in his dream and prescribe as the means or condition of the cure to approach the mute, aristocratic woman lying nearby. After repeated dream visits, the man took courage and crawled to the woman, who started to scream out of terror, while the paralytic had run away. The ‘third’, the one who slept between them closes the narration of the story with the affirmation of the double miraculous cure and the subsequent marriage.

The story I have analysed above, when comparing CL 35 with the KDM 26, presents another way for the narration of the third: The heretic (incredulous) man receives the saints’ appearance, so that he could indicate the remedy to a (believing) sick woman. The narrative focus is shifted from the incubant patient to another outsider, who becomes a witness and – as the main target of the saints’ apparition – the protagonist of the incubation story. This miracle involves searching for the means of cure and thus leads to another narrative episode: to that of finding objects.

5, finding objects:

Directions given in dream to find objects, that ensure the cure is a narrative unit familiar already from the Asclepieian incubation stories. The god may specify the location of a lost person⁶³⁶, of lost treasure⁶³⁷, but may turn the search for the object into the cure itself, as the blind man was told to search for his ointment bottle, indicated precisely by Asclepius, and when he was to find it, his eyesight returned.⁶³⁸ The Christian incubation healers are likewise concerned about giving indications in dream to find curative objects or – as a variant – to find the object that caused the illness. The Christian incubation stories are longer and often more complex than their pagan predecessors and this fact facilitate the combination of motifs in the narrative. Thus finding a lost treasure in Thecla’s collection overlaps with her general care for women (MT 21: finding the stolen wedding-belt), her never failing vindication of violating her cult place as well as the power of her all-seeing “divine eye” (MT 22). In the key-case of Artemios (MA 18) finding the stolen objects unwraps a series of events that allow us a glimpse into matters of the everyday life of the church and into personal tensions among the Saint’s followers.⁶³⁹ In all these three cases it is also important that the saint identifies the

⁶³⁴ MT 46.

⁶³⁵ KDM 24, the miracle was also confirmed among the deeds of Saint Menas -MM5- and Cyrus and John as well.

⁶³⁶ Epidaurian Stele B, 24 = T 423. II. 24

⁶³⁷ Epidaurian Stele C, 3 = LiDonnici, “Tale and Dream”, 104-15, where the localization is in the form of an enigma.

⁶³⁸ Epidaurian Stele C, 22 = LiDonnici, “Tale and Dream”, 128.

⁶³⁹ For a detailed analysis of the miracle cf. L. Rydén, “Kyrkan som sjukhus”, 16, note 5, and S. Efthymiadis, “A Day and Ten Months in the Life of a Lonely Bachelor: The Other Byzantium in Miracula S. Artemii 18 and 22” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (2004): 1-26.

culprit. In the Artemisian miracle such elements also become entwined with the story as the recognition of the stolen objects and the saint's ordering forgiveness towards the thief.

Another framework of finding objects is when the healer indicates the means of the cure. This can be not only something miraculous but a completely simple object, viewed and used with a hope which born out from the fact that the saints had indicated the object. Thus in the London Codex Cosmas and Damian in dream gave a walking stick to a paralysed man, encouraging him to try to move his legs and hands while supporting himself with the cane. When the man awoke, found the walking stick on this mattress and hence believing in the dream, practiced with the stick and became well.⁶⁴⁰

A variant of this motif is in which it is not the sick person directly who receives the dream-indication but someone else. In such case, the finding of the curative object can also serve as a test of faith, as in KDM 26, where Cosmas and Damian appeared to the incredulous heretic and indicated the means of cure for a noblewoman, hidden under her mattress.

A further form of this narrative unit comes from the borderline of magical beliefs and religious rituals: finding out the object that caused the illness - not in the medical sense, of course, but by way of sympathetic magic. MCJ 35 contains a folktale-like motif about the object fished out from the sea. It tells the story of a certain Theophilus, who fell victim to sympathetic magic and his hands and feet became paralyzed. In his incubation dream the saints advise that he should make himself carried to the sea and find the fisherman who is just casting his net into the water. Theophilus is to pay the fisherman, so that he would cast his net *for him*, and what he gets, will become the sick man's remedy. The object fished out is a small wicker basket, locked with a key and blocked with some pieces of lead. The fisherman found that the price paid by the sick man is insufficient for that curious object and as a result of their quarrel, they go to the dispensator of the church, who wants to examine closely the casket. With difficulties they open it and found a cruel and horrible sight: a small human figure, in the form of the sick man Theophilus, made of metal, its feet and hands pierced with four nails, one for each limb. As they extracted the nail from the right hand of the figurine, the man's right hand got healed and so it continued with all his paralyzed members.⁶⁴¹

A similar magical machination caused the illness of Theodoros of Cyprus in MCJ 55. The saints prescribed him the rather magical cure and at the same time revealed him that the object, which caused his illness, was hidden in his house. Thus he had sent a servant back to Cyprus and on the spot indicated by the saints, under the threshold of his bedroom, they found the noxious object.

⁶⁴⁰ CL 16.

⁶⁴¹ M. W. Dickie in his „Narrative Patterns in Christian Hagiography” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 40 (1999) 83-98, analysed some of the miracle stories of Symeon Stylite the Younger, and concluded that „The form in which stories about saints healing the effects of magic-working are told has not been studied. (mentions Magoulas, and one for latin hagio). There is a standard narrative pattern to many of them. It must go back well into the fourth century, but in this case what the prototype is for the story-pattern is a mystery. The same is true of stories about the opposition a

Though the object was not specified as in the detailed description of the defixatio figure, it served to identify the culprit, whereas its removal contributed to the effectiveness of the saints' remedy.

In the two cases above, the objects were noxious ones and finding them was a voluntary act. But the saints may make their patients find curative objects as well, also without seeking them out. I call "parallel objects" the ones that first seemed to be something else but turned out to be the object of the miraculous cure. Artemios once appeared in dream to a sick man and gave him a gold coin (to buy a drink) and the man, awakening, felt happily that in his hand he was still grasping the coin. But when he examined it closely, he recognized that it was a wax seal, bearing the image of the saint, which when melted, cured his hernia.⁶⁴² Thecla also had sent to a dreamer the image of a precious stone, with all colours, which had miraculous powers to heal but when the man woke up, found nothing alike. In the meantime, his relative was on the way to see him and on the road he found a beautiful pebble – which our man identified with the one sent by Thecla.⁶⁴³ Cyrus and John gave a fig to a sleeping patient that would cure him. After his initial delusion of not finding it when awake, the man starts telling his dream to his wife – who just caught sight of the fig next to them.⁶⁴⁴ Dorati and Guidorizzi put these cases of finding objects into a larger category, that of real testimonies of the dream experience but I found that too vague to call it a proper motif. In their view it could encompass all sorts of proofs of divine intervention (blood, scars and other physical signs) together with everything the healers indicate in dream and which exists in reality.⁶⁴⁵

I see the theme closer to when the healers indicate in dream strangers who turn out to be helpers (voluntarily or accidentally). The saints may foretell the precise place and time where and when a person, whom the dreamer needs, could be found (e. g. MT 9). They describe him more in details, giving the dreamer the man's name, profession and address (MA 26, KDM 18) send a numerical clue: the first man you meet when passing the gate towards the sea (MCJ 18), the fourth camel by the well (MCJ 13) or the healers could appear in dream to both parties and the mutual exchange of their dream would make the recognition possible.⁶⁴⁶

6, Narrative devices: wordplays, riddles, enigmas

Though the healer saints may foretell the future,⁶⁴⁷ the close relationship between incubation healing and giving oracles rather manifests itself in those dream-recipes, where the remedy is told in

saint encounters and the charges made by his fellow-clerics about his miracle-working being nothing but sorcery: they too have a characteristic form." (86-87).

⁶⁴² MA 16.

⁶⁴³ MT 38.

⁶⁴⁴ MCJ 5.

⁶⁴⁵ Dorati – Guidorizzi, "La letteratura incubatoria", 362-363. They related the motif of the precious stone – pebble found in Thecla's miracles to Bellerophon's dream in Pindar (*13th Olympic Ode*) who saw Athena in dream giving him a golden horse-bit, which he duly found in his hands.

⁶⁴⁶ CL 15, CL 18, KDM 39.

the form of a wordplay or a riddle.⁶⁴⁸ Alexander the Great was besieging the town of Tyre, Tyros, he saw in a dream that he was chasing for long a satyre before capturing it. His dream interpreters were happy to inform him that the satyre (*satyros*) was nothing else than the promise of the successful siege, for *sa – tyros* means: Tyros is yours.⁶⁴⁹ Naturally enough, in the besieged city people had dreamt that their protector god, Apollo, would depart and side with Alexander, so the citizens nailed the god's statue down to prevent his leaving.⁶⁵⁰

There are similar word-play counsels from Asclepius, where the figure of Pallas Athena stood for taking Attic honey,⁶⁵¹ or when Asclepius offered his fingers to be eaten and hence the sick man could deduct that fingers=*daktyloi* indicated eating date=*daktylos*.⁶⁵² As the examples show solving the riddle to find the indicated recipe could happen by playing with the word or through analogies between the image seen in dream and its further indications. Steven Oberhelman saw the 4th Book of the Hippocratic *Regimen (On Dreams)* as exponent of the same analogy-principle, pairing the visual representations of the dream with symptoms of illnesses.⁶⁵³

Christian hagiography also exploited the sort of wordplay when the name of a figure appearing in dream is itself an instructive allegory. In one of the miracles of Saint Demetrios Saint Eutaxia appears, whose name meant “Good Order” and who should never leave the saint and his city.⁶⁵⁴ A similarly allegorical but more concretely recipe-like advice was given in dream to a patient of Saint Cosmas and Damian. In a miracle that figures both in the London Codex (CL 6) as well as in the KDM corpus (KDM 3) a sick man received in dream that his remedy would be to drink the “pubic hair of Cosmas”. He was quite astonished by the apparently unholy order, and kept wondering in the church, thinking about the solution of this riddle. Suddenly, he heard that one of the church servants called by name a sheep, which was given as a thanksgiving gift to the saints, and was called also Cosmas. Illuminated, he called for a barber and they cut and dissolved in water the pubic hair of the sheep Cosmas and as he drunk the liquid, he immediately became well. Even before we learn of the solution, the narrator at the beginning of the miracle drew a parallel between Christ, the source of the saints' healing power, and the actual means of the cure in terms of spiritual and real

⁶⁴⁷ KDM 26.

⁶⁴⁸ Steven Oberhelman, “The Interpretation of Prescriptive Dreams in Ancient Greek Medicine” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 36 (1981): 416-424.

⁶⁴⁹ Artemidoros, *Oneirocritica*, 4, 24.

⁶⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 24, 3; for more cases of gods or their statues appearing in dream when a Greek city suffered hardships, see Charles Stewart, “Ritual Dreams and Historical Orders: Incubation between Paganism and Christianity” In *Greek Ritual Poetics*, eds. D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos, 338-355, Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2004), 340-341.

⁶⁵¹ Aelius Aristeides, ... T

⁶⁵² Artemidoros, *Oneirocritica*, 5, 89.

⁶⁵³ Oberhelman, “The Interpretation of Prescriptive Dreams”, 420.

⁶⁵⁴ *Miracula Demetrii* (MD), ch. 76-87; (in Paul Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de saint Démétrius: Vol. 1. Le texte* (Paris: CNRS, 1979) cf. Delehay, “Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints” *Analecta Bollandiana* 43 (1925), 63-64 and 72.

lamb. Another wordplay - recipe for the cure was given by Cosmas and Damian (KDM6) advising a patient not to eat food that begins with the letter *a*.⁶⁵⁵

Exactly because of its pagan connotations, Thecla's hagiographer overtly claimed that the saint did not work with riddles and enigmas; methods that, according to the hagiographer, belonged to the traps of Greek daimones. Nevertheless, when it came to interpret one of his own dreams, he could not avoid dealing with the inherent symbolism of dream. The hagiographer suffered from anthrax and he was told by his doctors that his finger must be amputated. Full of fear, he fell asleep and (very strangely) saw himself being asleep in the atrium of the church, and was attacked by wasps. Thecla entered and having taken off her shawl from her head, she started to chase away the wasps from the hagiographer's body, agitating with her hands and trampling them with her feet.⁶⁵⁶

A more enigmatic dream⁶⁵⁷ foretold the hagiographer of his excommunication. In a dream, prior to receiving the actual sentence, he saw a midget, a short black boy (who was, it seems, a real figure of the town), and offering the hagiographer a dirty and black coin. He reluctantly took it – and next day, with the news of his excommunication, interpreted the repellent black boy as the bishop, Basil of Seleucia and the dirty coin as given him instead of the host. Though Thecla's hagiographer dispelled the enigmatic character of the dream as pagan, from the actual dream-content and from the dream-narrative he could not entirely rule it out.

Sophronios, in contrast, found pleasure in the riddles of the saints, “who dispelled my Homeric blindness with ingenious dreams, full of riddles, because they took pleasure in such things”⁶⁵⁸ but oddly enough he did not record proper dream riddles.

On the borderline of the enigmatic there are those curative means that incorporate a theological (Trinitarian) symbolism: three Muscat seeds,⁶⁵⁹ three beans taken to be in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit,⁶⁶⁰ similarly the three jujube berries as a symbol of the Trinity in Artemios' collection.⁶⁶¹ More complex is a pagan's dream in KDM 10 who saw, while asleep in the church of Cosmas and Damian three children eating bread – of which he could not take a share, in spite of his desire. This symbolic witnessing the Eucharist in dream counted as the profanisation of the mysteries.

⁶⁵⁵ KDM 6, Festugière identified the food beginning with *a* with barley (*alphita* in Greek), *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien*, 107, note 21

⁶⁵⁶ MT 12.

⁶⁵⁷ Still in MT 12

⁶⁵⁸ Sophronios, *Laudes* 9.

⁶⁵⁹ KDM 21.

⁶⁶⁰ KDM 38.

7, Repetition: While the description of the events of a saint's life is ruled by a chronological sequence, with the miracles the hagiographer had the task to establish some framework, not based on a linear-logical development. Sometimes there is a deliberate attempt to connect the stories into a sequence with the transitions that link the consecutive miracles.⁶⁶² But more often was the case that the narrator re-told again and again the saints' intervention on different people, re-starting, developing and concluding the miracle story again and again, „le récit miraculeux est volontiers haletant, répétitif comme une incantation, chronologiquement disloqué, tenu à bout de plume par un enquêteur et témoin qui ne se veut jamais simple auteur.”⁶⁶³ Sophronios expressed this essential repetitiveness of the miracles with the image of the poor patient of the MCJ 18 following the rich one of MCJ 17 just as in the marketplace.

Repetition and a certain “monotonous” character in miracles do not confine to the narrative only. The essence of miracles is that they can be, that they will be repeated. The repetitions within and the repeatability of the miracle evokes the possibility that miracles would occur again and again.⁶⁶⁴ That a miracle witnessed or recalled refers to miracles left untold was a topos familiar from ancient aretology as well: Eunapios wrote at the end of the *Life of Iamblichos*, that following one of his miracles, his disciples did not dare to put the thaumaturgic power of their master to the test, because on the basis of one miracle they gave credence to all other ones.⁶⁶⁵

In the eyes of the believer – reader – patient references to biblical healings do not only recall the activity of Jesus and connect on a theological level the saints' working to that of Christ, but they also establish an analogy between the healing miracles. This analogy between the cures of the saints and those of Christ is present both in the narrative as well as on the level of the events, showing the possibility of an infinite repetition of the healing miracles of Christ. This analogy promises and at the same time also proves the possibility of repetition. In this aspect repetition focuses on the individual, it has, however, a role for the community as well. Reginald Grégoire analysed this communal role starting from the statement that on the narrative level, all miracles are a result of a communal consciousness. The repetition of miracle-motifs reflects that the communal consciousness expressed an already solid communal experience. In the miracle Grégoire identifies a strengthening factor of

⁶⁶¹ MA 45.

⁶⁶² How it was achieved in Thecla's corpus, Dagron illustrated in *Vie et Miracles*, 153; see also Johnson, *The Life and Miracles*, 116. Most “chronological” are those miracles of Artemius, where events happened to the same person at different stages of his life (MA 38, 40, 43 or MA 19-20).

⁶⁶³ Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 152; “La nécessité miraculeuse n'apparaît que si l'on retire un peu de sa logique propre (ou de son illogisme fondamental) à l'enchaînement des faits...” (ibid.)

⁶⁶⁴ “Lo schema oggettivo che inquadra le esperienze soggettive dei singoli malati fa di esse non più una serie di avvenimenti unici e irripetibili, ma un manifestarsi di fenomeni ricorrenti e ordinari, quasi di 'routine', di cui tutti i fedeli, presenti e futuri, possono beneficiare. Ciò è in linea con le esigenze propagandistiche di un tempio come Epidauro, ma anche con le convinzioni di un devoto come Elio Aristide: l'oggettivazione delle esperienze individuali vissute attraverso la pratica incubatoria, sottratte al singolo e consegnate alle forme di una tipologia fissa, diviene una garanzia della ripetibilità dei miracoli, e di conseguenza della possibilità per tutti i fedeli, presenti e futuri, di beneficiarne.” Dorati – Guidorizzi, “La letteratura incubatoria”, 361.

the community's reality, repeatedly confirming the identity of the healed patient, the healer and the surrounding community as well as their entwisted relationship.⁶⁶⁶ They define each other, and the miracle defines all of them and their interconnectedness, or in other words, they create each other and the miraculous cure transforms the participants into healed patient, healer and witnesses. Grégoire nicely shows how these three identities become two by the end of the miracle narrative: the miracle-worker and the community of his believers.⁶⁶⁷ At the beginning of the narrative, the patient is distanciated from the community, he receives individual characteristics, through his name, origin and the singularity of his illness. At the end of the story, he – as one who experinced the thaumaturgical capacities of the healer, as many others around him, he becomes reintegrated into the community. What rendered him unique, disappers; his leprosy, blindness etc, thus in one hand he returns to his own normal context. On the other hand, he would not be again the same as before the miracle, but will make part of those believers, who are not simply Christians but who personally experience the power of that particular healer. I would add that as the participants of the miracle become arranged into the individual healer and his community of believers, the formula that is often closes the miracles rearrange again these two poles. The statement that thanksgiving is due “not to the saints but to Christ working through them” makes the healers themselves also beneficiaries of Christ's grace, contrasting the whole Church, the community of living and once alive followers with the *Solus Medicus*.

Repetition, within the unity of each story and in the entire miracle collection, had an almost liturgical function. In the same way the consecutive narratives point to the future repeatability of Christ's past miracles, the repeated motifs in the miracles confirm the reality of the told and retold stories.

8. The role of dream in building up the story

Recently a new scholarly interest has manifested itself in the structuring role of dreams in narratives.⁶⁶⁸ What earlier Husser commented on the role of dreams in Old Testament narratives, the most fruitfully can be used for incubation miracles as well:

Dreams also appear to be a compositional technique particularly well suited to the structuring of a narrative text. They do so in the following two ways: Integrated into the situation described at the outset, the dream henceforth serves as the common thread, unifying the different elements in the narrative and bringing it to its conclusion. The plot is developed between the dream, which forecasts the outcome, and its realization,

⁶⁶⁵ Eunapios, *Vita Iamblichi*, 459, 52), cf. A. J. Festugière, “Lieux communs littéraires et thèmes de folk-lore dans l'Hagiographie primitive” *Wiener Studien* 73 (1960), 134.

⁶⁶⁶ Reginald Grégoire, *Manuale di agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica*, 2nd edition (Fabriano: Monastero S. Silvestro, 1996) 301.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. 302.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. *Il sogno raccontato*, cura di Nicola Merola e Caterina Verbaro (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 1995) or **Il Sogno raccontato nella letteratura, Programma di ricerca di interesse nazionale** Coordinatore Scientifico: [Remo Ceserani](http://www.unimc.it/sogno/sogno.htm) (Università di Bologna) sito: <http://www.unimc.it/sogno/sogno.htm>

expected at the end of whatever perepeteia the author cares to imagine. [...] Another way in which dreams may structure a text is by permitting and indeed provoking the symmetrical organization of the text. Organized around an axis corresponding to the awakening of the dreamer, the narrative takes form of a diptych, the panels of which often mirror each other word for word: the scene experienced in the dream will be lived out again in the wakeful world, for the dreams act as an initial prophetic element or instruction given to the hero of the story.⁶⁶⁹

That dreams reproduce experiences of reality mean that they reproduce also the forms in which these experiences were obtained. The healers initiate a dialogue, often asking, what a physician would ask. But more interesting is that the dialogue form survives when the dream is told and then in turn, written down. There is a necessity and demand that the dreamer should retell word-by-word his experience. This is not the personal character or intimacy of healing or of cult experience. The role of dream-dialogues and the importance of reconstructing them are rather different, generic to the dream-experience itself and timeless custom of recalling it as close as possible. When the dream becomes a narrative, the encounter between the two parties repeats itself, with the help of the recalled or re-created dream-dialogues. With the direct speech the story becomes alive, the experience becomes authentic. I venture to say that the persistence of dialogues in incubation stories also bear an impact of the real-life experience between the patient and doctor and the careful repetition of “what the doctor said”, not only in terms of the recipe, but for the sake of reproducing the authentic diagnosis. Elderly people still switch to quote in direct speech what the doctor said to them.

Dream versus *phantasia*

The role of telling the events and its relationship to sight is all the more important as the dream-miracle is visible only to the beneficiary of the miracle – in order to verify that the miracle actually happened, or sometimes in order that the miracle could happen, the dreamer should tell the dream with his own words. Prior to this communication, the dream should reconstruct in his mind what he saw and heard, that is he is to create a meaningful and narratable story. It is a recurrent motif that the first test of the dreamer’s faith whether he or she narrates the dream, in other words, whether he regards it as a true dream. At some occasions the patients are convinced to have seen not a real dream but a *phantasma*.⁶⁷⁰ The *phantasma* is a deceiving apparition, lying and without authenticity, which is not worth of being told openly and act according to it. The 18. miracle of the London Codex illustrates the sick man’s hesitation when the dream prescribes something unheard of:

CL 18: Thomas was blind because of a cataract and thus unable to practice any craft, lived also in extreme poverty. He arrived at the church of Cosmas and Damian and to these wisest physicians he complained both of his illness and of his poverty. The servants of God ordered him the

⁶⁶⁹ Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*. Transl. Jill M. Munro, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 103, and the whole Chapter 6.5 “The Literary Function of Dream Accounts”; cf also his *Le songe et la parole. Etude sur le rêve et sa fonction dans l’ancien Israël* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994).

following: If you want to regain your health, borrow from this and that man 20 nomismata and buy birds. They also appeared to the future money-lender and instructed him to give 20 nomismata to the man who would come to him, and they gave the personal characteristics of Thomas. When next day Thomas reaches the indicated man's house, he is ashamed of the whole issue and it took him a considerable time to have courage to tell the dream-appearance of the saints and their prescription. The other man in turn also revealed his own dream (recognizing Thomas even before he told his dream) and thus they signed a surety that eventually led to the miraculous cure.⁶⁷¹

The reason for doubting the dream-ness of the dream and relegating it to the realm of *phantasma* can be that the saints order something blasphemous, an act that would disregard social and financial differences, or would expose the patient to ridicule, as the two examples from the KDM best illustrate: Cosmas and Damian advise a high-standing lawyer to look for a certain paralyzed butcher and have himself shaved by those trembling hands. When the butcher tries to excuse himself from the task, the lawyer angrily thinks that "he saw a chimera, not a real dream-sight."⁶⁷² Sharper is the way of expression in KDM 39: a patrician saw in his dream the saints ordering him to receive slaps from a sick actor in the church in order to get healed. He thought that it was not a true dream, but, as Festugière translated, "une tromperie et une dérision, inventée, pour l'outrager et le couvrir de ridicule, par un démon jaloux et qui en voulait à son honneur."

The reality of the dream and the truthfulness of it had serious criteria in Antiquity.⁶⁷³ The importance of narrating dreams was certainly not limited to miraculous or healing dreams only. As the word *opsis* shows, which denotes seeing, sight and dream as well, the dream was part of the visible world. In the realm of Herodotean dreams, for instance, the dream-experience is an *autopsia*,⁶⁷⁴ that is, the event seen in dream makes the dreamer a direct and authentic eyewitness.

The very act of defining whether a dream is a real one or not, may have in itself a role in shaping the narrative: for example, dreams seen at certain hours (midnight or midday), with special clearness (with recognizable persons appearing) or repeatedly, as often dreams repeat three times,

⁶⁷⁰ e. g. MT 33, KDM 2, 3, 12, 39; CL 35 (KDM 26), MCJ 18.

⁶⁷¹ for more on the same motive cf. B. N. Nelson and J. Starr, „The Legend of the Divine Surety and the Jewish Moneylender” *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-1944), 289-338.

⁶⁷² KDM 34.

⁶⁷³ Recall the distinction in Homer (*Odysseia*, 19, 562-567) between the true and false dreams that come through the gates of horn (*keras*) and ivory (*elephas*), what he links to the verb *kraino* (fulfill) and *elephairontai* (deceive). The concept went through the whole Classical and Hellenistic period from Plato and Vergil to Geza Roheim's *The Gates of Horn and Ivory*. Cf. A. Amory, "The Gates of Horn and Ivory" In *Yale Classical Studies* 20: *Homeric Studies*, 3-57, Ed. G. S. Kirk and Adam Parry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); D. Del Corno, "I sogni e la loro interpretazione nell'età dell'Impero" In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II: Principat 16.2, Ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1605-1618, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980); A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1978); E. Lévy, "Le rêve homérique" *Ktema* 7 (1982): 23-42.

⁶⁷⁴ Hartog, 278-279.

seem more veridical.⁶⁷⁵ In a more complex way, different sort of dream-sights can be combined in the story, as Dagron pointed out in an analysis of MT 33:

L'hagiographe joue parfois sur la triple origine des rêves; ainsi lorsqu'un jeune débauché, tombé amoureux d'une femme aperçue à la messe, voit la nuit suivante Thècle lui en faire don (mais il s'agit bien sûr d'une maladie qui le dévorera.) Ici se mêlent dans la même représentation onirique stimulus physique, fantasme démoniaque et avertissement divin, mais par rouerie, pourrait-on dire, et sans que la maîtrise du songe échappe à la sainte.⁶⁷⁶

In this punishment miracle a lustful man sees Thecla in dream, encouraging him to take the woman he saw during the saint's feast. This dream, of course, was the result of the man's own passion, but since it was exactly what he wanted, he took it for a divine apparition.

⁶⁷⁵ Dagron, *Rêver de Dieu*, 41, examples are in his note 19.

⁶⁷⁶ Dagron, *Rêver de Dieu*, 41-42.

Chapter 9: The medical in the miraculous

1, Doctors in the miracles: their narrative role

Doctors as alternatives to ritual and religious healing are natural counterparts to the physician saints in the miracle stories. I am convinced that a great part of the doctors' role and their opposition to the saints were devised on the level of the narrative and must be interpreted so, without forcefully envisaging a real conflict between the two parties. The picture we get about them is a multifaceted one, they are presented as rivals, or those challenged and put to shame by the holy healers, or they represent the mundane world, to whom the sick people first turned – erroneously, before discovering the true source of *soteria*, physical and spiritual salvation. But doctors in the miracles were perceived not only and not even chiefly as negative figures. Occasionally they were also depicted as cooperating with the saints, as their means to carry out surgery and their medical knowledge is even praised occasionally – so far the purely bodily health is concerned: when doctors fail, it also could be an indicator that the malady is a result of something not merely physical.

Even the hagiographers, the persons closest to the saints and the most knowledgeable about their healing capacity did not hesitate to turn to doctors – who may fail to combat the illness, but the fact nevertheless shows that we cannot speak of a clear-cut animosity. Thecla's hagiographer told us in MT 12 that he first went to doctors with his anthrax on his finger and only when they proposed to amputate it, he decided to seek help with the saint. Similarly, Sophronios also sought first the Alexandrian doctors' advice with his diseased eye and as they could help, he went to Saint Cyrus and John.

Doctors, as coming from the domain closest to the saints' activity, also mirror what was going on in the field of healing in contemporary society, in what esteem or contempt physicians were held in Byzantium. For the moment, however, I shall put aside the presence of doctors in its social aspect (and leave it for a further discussion in Chapter 8.3: Mirroring Society) and concentrate on their narrative role in the stories. Accordingly, as characters in the stories, doctors were pictured as 1, patients - often together with doctors as exponents of Greek (pagan) learning 2, put to shame by mock-cures 3, non-doctors as healers, 4, doctors in a non-healing role.

1. At the intersection of the doctor as patient and as representative of Greek learning, the most illuminating is the story of Gesios⁶⁷⁷, where the lesson of the Cyrus and John was addressed to Greek religion and philosophy together with medicine, personified by the most remarkable Greek

⁶⁷⁷ MCJ 30.

physician and scholar of the end of the 5th – beginning of the 6th centuries.⁶⁷⁸ Gesios attributed the miraculous cures of Cyrus and John to the treatments prescribed by Hippocrates and Galen and claimed that they were not supernatural or miraculous. When his back, shoulders and neck became ill, the saints prescribed for him in three subsequent dream visitations the following remedy: “By declaring that you are wise you have been proven rather a fool; fetch the pack-saddle of an ass and wear it over your pain-ridden shoulders....”, put a large bell around your neck and a horse-bit into your mouth and be pulled around the church at midday by one of his servants, shouting: *I am a fool!* And they do not forget to ask in a fourth dream appearance: “Tell us where Hippocrates set down the medications for your infirmity? Where does Democritus prescribe anything?”

The great figures of Greek medicine and natural science occur again in the *Thaumata*, as human and divine medical knowledge is opposed: a patient “relieved, went to Cyrus and to John, the fellow-martyr of Cyrus, exponents of divine medicine, not of that one, which made Hippocrates, Galen and Democritus doctors, “who are talked about (only) on the earth.”⁶⁷⁹ But Sophronios also had his esteem for good physicians. He praised the knowledge of Zosimos, who was a chief physician from Byzantium,⁶⁸⁰ as well as he extolled the doctor –patient of MCJ 55, Theodoros, whom he described as a well-versed and famous physician and who could not cure his own paralysis only because it was caused by magic; but the remedies he tried – wrote Sophronios – were otherwise useful in non-magical paralysis!

As this example shows, the failure of medical treatments could be an indicator that the cause of illness – as so often in miraculous healing – was not something physical. KDM 47 speaks about a sick monk, to whom the physicians applied all the treatments of Hippocrates and Galen, which were supposed to be useful. The sick physician of the London Codex⁶⁸¹ likewise merited the hagiographer’s praise, who wrote that “Menas, the doctor was an expert in his craft, an honest man, skilled in the art, who knew illnesses by experience...” After trying all his knowledge on himself he turned to Cosmas and Damian who did not treat him with the slightest derision or despise. In MCJ 13 Sophronios neatly drew the separate spheres of medical and ritual healing. Elias the leper, carried

⁶⁷⁸ On Gesios references are in Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander”, 6, note 43: Photius, *Bibliothèque*, 352 B; Souda sv. “Gesios”; O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in the World of Pagans and Christians*, 169; according to Baldwin Gesios was converted to Christianity: B. Baldwin, “Beyond the House Call: Doctors in Early Byzantine History and Politics” in Scarbrough, *Symposium on Byzantine Medicine*, 15-19. On page 18 and n. 40., however see Nutton, “From Galen to Alexander: Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity”, 6 in Scarbrough, *Symposium*, 1-14; R. Herzog on Gesios: “Der Kampf um den Kult von Menuthis”, 122-123: a physician from Alexandria who was believed by both pagans and Christians an excellent teacher, doctor and man. He gave shelter to a persecuted Neo-Platonist called Heraiskos, who died there and Gesios buried him. He was a friend of two Alexandrian students who later in Gaza became Christian professors. His friends were Aineas and Procopios (whose brother was Zacharios Scholasticos), and exchanged letters; their correspondence is in Zacharios Scholasticos’ *Ammonios* (= PG 85, 1012f; 1060ff). Ammonios in his *De opificio mundi* made his tribute and homage to Gesios. Damascios also praised as teacher and physician. Gesios wrote a compendium on Galen, in 16 books which was still in use in the 10th century (Further references are in Nutton, “From Alexander to Galen,” 6, note 22, among them Meyerhof, “Von Alexandria nach Bagdad” *Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* 23 (1930), 396).

⁶⁷⁹ MCJ 43.

⁶⁸⁰ MCJ 52.

his spots as *signs*, the signs of his own wrongdoing (Ταῦτα φῶρων ἑλῶας τὰ στίγματα, τὸς μαρτυρῶντα συμβόλα...) and thus neither observing Moses's laws, nor the science of Hippocrates and Galen could help him.

In contrast, the miracles of Artemios' later commentator showed doctors in a completely different light. "So, where are the fine-sounding Hippocrates' and Galen and the countless other quacks?" – he begun one of his invectives in MA 24. The hagiographer, or more probably a later redactor of the corpus saw physicians as bitter enemies of the saint and maybe rivals to him as well; his severe attacks went hand in hand with invectives against the Jews and heretics.⁶⁸² Another tool besides castigation doctors as incredibly greedy and heartless, was denigrating medical learning with deliberate mock-cures which are absurd in the eyes of doctors and patients alike. They can be performed by the healer, just as Artemios operated in dream his supplicant as butcher, "holding butchers' tools and a cup... pierced him with a knife in his lower abdomen and took out all his intestines. Then he cleaned them, washed them off and twisted them with a rod. And the sick man saw him folding them up and making sausages..."⁶⁸³ After the cure was accomplished the (later) hagiographer zealously commented on it:

What do you, boastful surgeon, say to me? For if you had gotten hold of one of those who affected the cure, you would no doubt still require the man to name what ancient authority asserts that one cures hernia patients with butcher's tools and where it is enjoined to remove and replace their intestines. But your work contract is revoked and your scalpels are consumed with rust. Your consultation couches are useless and your blunt retractors as well.

When told in a more civilized tone, in the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, mock-cures were more often the source of laughter, being closer to the entertainment function of the miracles than to the saints' animosity with physicians.

3, Non-doctors healing: the saints might also instruct an unskilled man, emphatically a non-doctor to perform the cure in their name. The operation is often contrasted with the failure of the esteemed physicians surrounding the patient. The saints could teach outsiders to work with medical tools, according to valid secular medicine.⁶⁸⁴ In a miracle of Cosmas and Damian (KDM19) a stranger performed an operation on woman with dropsy. He made an incision with a razor, inside the saints' church telling the sick and her relatives that the saints had guided him there and that he himself would never have dared to carry out such an operation just like the woman would never had

⁶⁸¹ CL 20.

⁶⁸² MA 26, 28, 32, 38.

⁶⁸³ MA 25.

⁶⁸⁴ MA 22, KDM 19, 22.

entrusted herself to an ignorant stranger had not the divine physicians provided both of them with courage.⁶⁸⁵

The saints could involve someone, a non-doctor, in miraculous healing also without his being conscious about it, to work a miracle often in an absurd, non-medical way.⁶⁸⁶ For example, a sick man, seeking cure from Saint Artemios⁶⁸⁷, was ordered in a dream to go to a certain blacksmith and ask his help. The desperate man obeyed the prescription but the blacksmith insisted upon his having no talent of whatsoever medical cure and became more and more angry with the sick man's persistent visits and finally threw his hammer to the man who in turn got healed.

What do you say to this, o famous Hippocrates? For he ignored your divine consultation and prescriptions since he assessed neither time nor place nor age. Nor as a consequence did a man who had completed his third score of years remain uncured. For any one who may be your disciple, when he is about to operate on such a swelling of the testicles, receives the scalpel from the patient's hand more despairing than hopeful of effecting the cure [...] if death should follow the operation, a short funeral hymn delivers the patient from your pseudo-knowledge. Where did you hear from time immemorial that a blacksmith raised his hammer and a man with diseased testicles was relieved of suffering?" But the Hammer of all diseases, Christ our God...

- runs the comment of the redactor.

The performer of the cure on the behalf of the healer could be an animal as well. Just as Asclepius miraculously healed through his sacred snakes and dogs, Thecla also could perform miraculous surgery with the help of an animal, curing a blind child in the way that one of her sacred birds pierced the child's eyeball with its bill, which was assimilated to a medical lancet and the plucking to medical skill.⁶⁸⁸

4, Doctors emphatically in a non-healing role or acting upon the orders of the saints

Doctors can be depicted in the stories not only as spectators, witnesses of the saints' cure, but as active participants in an emphatically non-healing role.⁶⁸⁹ Reduced to passivity as doctors but elevated to active agents in the miracle, they acted as intermediaries of the holy healers, willingly admitting their own lack of means but as helpers, they were not ridiculed or challenged by the saints. When a father left his sick son in the church of Cosmas and Damian awaiting incubation,⁶⁹⁰ he left with him one of the trusted doctors of the family – not to cure the son, but to give him relief and calm him while waiting. The son asked the doctor for some remedy against his pains and when the physician fell into despair at what to do (since he was at the saints' territory!), Cosmas and Damian appeared in a dream to him, forbade him to give any medicine to the young man and assured the

⁶⁸⁵ The identical story in the London Codex (CL 24) made it explicit, that "his role was to carry this out according to Christ, in this was showing both the surgical intervention performed on the patient as well as that the saints' power need nothing."

⁶⁸⁶ MA 26, 42, 44; MCJ 18, 33, 67.

⁶⁸⁷ MA 26.

⁶⁸⁸ MT 24.

⁶⁸⁹ KDM 20, 28, 32; MT 11, MT 12.

⁶⁹⁰ KDM 20.

doctor that themselves would take care of his patient. At the insistence of the young man's request for medicine, he told him his dream, which justified his non-healing and the promise of miraculous cure was soon fulfilled.

In another miracle Cosmas and Damian⁶⁹¹ ordered the doctor of a sick woman (who lay already in the church, waiting for the saints' dream-appearance) to go to her and make an incision on the spot they showed him, in the precise way they prescribed. The physician consented and taking his scalpel (operation in the church attested also elsewhere in the miracles⁶⁹²) saw that the woman's breast was already operated, and the fresh scars were exactly on the place where the saints indicated. Elsewhere the doctors carried the operation to the end, guided by the saints, operation in the church.⁶⁹³ Physicians were the most suitable witnesses. Their expertise on the medical field and their counter-position to the holy doctors made them the most authentic testimonies of the miraculous interventions.

Doctors may be described to remain without work. In MT 12 they came with their scalpels but by then the patient (the hagiographer) was healed by Thecla; he added jokingly that the doctors were rejoicing with him, but were probably also disappointed for having lost their salary.

In a variant form, the saints may involve the patient's physician by dissuading him to perform the operation and make him, the doctor, advice the patient to turn to the saints.⁶⁹⁴ A non-healing doctor in the story was the most outstanding when it was his own son who fell ill, and the father, a Chief Physician in Constantinople, took himself his sick son to the church of Artemios.⁶⁹⁵ Turning to physicians could always be in the miracle story a catalyst for the saints' intervention.⁶⁹⁶

Doctors praised, doctors put to shame, ridiculed, their competence questioned; this varied attitude towards the medical profession in the narrative may well reflect a social concern. The initial uncertainty of Christianity in which way to integrate medicine and doctors, for so long a bulwark of pagan *paideia*, into its own belief-system.

⁶⁹¹ KDM 28.

⁶⁹² KDM 5, CL 10.

⁶⁹³ CL 10.

⁶⁹⁴ As in KDM 32.

⁶⁹⁵ MA 1.

⁶⁹⁶ MCJ 40, MA 22, MA 23.

2. A medical gesture in the miraculous dream and the change of the dream pattern

By virtue of its visual quality, the dream may reflect with more accuracy than conscious iconic representations the image-creating fantasy of the dreaming community, and it can mirror its slow, culturally dependent transformations as well. The visual world of the sleeping patient is shaped by the impressions of his waking state. The culturally dependent character of dreams was in the focus of several scholars' interest since Eric Dodds, revealing the changes in the cultural experiences. Such a social and cultural outline based on dreams was given by I. Hahn, who analysed Artemidoros' *Oneirocritica*, and pointed out the dreamers' social and financial concerns, their family-issues, fears and the individual and communal experience about the surrounding reality.⁶⁹⁷

What happens in the context of the dream experience gains significance with regard to the dreamer's psyche, his visual world and the iconic language, of the *imaginaire* of his time? It needs no long argumentation, what a great impact the iconographic representations, inside and around the temple made in the formation of the dream-figure of the healer, his attributes, and clothes etc, both in Greek and in Christian incubation. The influence was so strong and to such extent personifying the depicted figure, that the man of antiquity might dream directly with the cult image, which, according to the ancient dream-interpreters equalled to the own epiphany of the deity.

The personal feature of incubation experience conforms to the earliest recorded dream-patterns of the Greeks: in the dream a *person* appears, in his or her entirely figural character. In what the events of incubation differ from the basic lines of the ancient dream-scheme, is that the non incubation-dreamer (in the dreams known mostly from literature) is a passive spectator, even if the dream-figure addresses him. In contrast, the participant of incubation gets actively involved: the healer not only addresses him, but enters into a dialogue with him, asks about his symptoms, jokes or bargains with him, or what is more, makes the cure depending on the patient's decision (Asclepius once asked a barren woman if she wanted a boy or a girl). In this active and personal involvement of the incubation dream I see the imprint of the patient – doctor relationship experienced in the real world. Independently of its medical or miraculous repertoire, in the sources of incubation from this stage the cure of the sick is immediate, on the wake after the dream he or she most often leaves the temple healed. By a few centuries later the methods of divine cures experienced in dream, along with the time-span and circumstances of the miracle underwent a significant change, while the ritual of incubation fundamentally remained the same. The change in the first place can be pointed out as the immediate miraculous cures have been superseded by the prescriptions given in the dream: the

complex therapies of Asclepius, his advice for concoctions, poultices, baths, gymnastics, diets, all which lead to cure only with time, for what they counted by no means less miraculous.

Several miracles of the Epidaurian corpus may well illustrate the relationship between the worshipper and the deity described above, shaped to some extent by the real encounter of patient and doctor: “Gorgias of Heracleia with pus. In a battle he had been wounded by an arrow in the lung [...] While sleeping in the Temple he saw a vision. It seemed to him the god extracted the arrow point from his lung. When day came he walked out well, holding the point of the arrow in his hands.”⁶⁹⁸ Thus Asclepius appears and performs the cures, sometimes giving orders to his assistants to hold the patient firm or lift and carry his bed. Six centuries later, in Pergamon, Aelius Aristeides, a resistant hypochondriac, well-versed in the varieties of diseases, recorded the god-sent dream-prescriptions, which were probably greatly influenced by his own medical knowledge as well as his fears of certain therapeutics. Yet there is more in his tales than the subconscious outlet of a pharmacomaniac: in Pergamon, around the temple, we find trained physicians, whose role was to interpret or if needed, prepare the god-sent prescriptions. We should, however, not see in this the only key to all therapeutic success. We learn from Aristeides that on the insistence of the dreamer, these doctors carried out the dream-treatment, even if it was contrary to their medical opinion. Their presence and – on the basis of the sources – immeasurable impact on cultic healing, no doubt meant a new field in temple cures. Yet scientific medicine could be not only a contribution to dream-healing but also the content of the dream as well: Aristeides once dreamed that two physicians were discussing about his treatment. One raised the question to his colleague: What does Hippocrates suggest? The other’s answer was that the patient should run a distance of 10 stades to the sea and then jump into the water. When awoken Aristeides asked the doctors’ opinion about it.⁶⁹⁹

Discussing therapy (be it a “medical” or miraculous treatment) recurs in the early Christian dream-healing narratives as well. Here the scene is complicated (or simplified) by the fact that we do not deal with separate physicians involved in ritual healing but with doctor-saints, and what is more, in the two most prominent incubation cults a pair of physician-saints worked together. It is not surprising then if the pair of physician-brothers, saint Cosmas and Damian or Cyrus and John from time to time start a discussion over the patient about how to proceed. But with this factor only the motif-repertoire of incubation narratives gained a new element, it is not about the change of the dream-pattern, even if in the background of these overheard dialogues could be the experience of the sick with practicing physicians. But concerning the face-to-face encounter of the dreamer and the

⁶⁹⁷ I. Hahn, *Traumdeutung und gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit. Artemidorus Daldianus als sozialgeschichtliche Quelle*. Konstanz: Xenia, 27, 1992) (originally: *Álomfejtés és társadalmi valóság: Artemidorus Daldianus mint társadalomtörténeti forrás*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó: 1982).

⁶⁹⁸ T 423.

⁶⁹⁹ *Hieroi Logoi* 5, 49-52.

healer appearing in the dream, there is no change; the sick met his healer in person and in private, with the exclusion of the other patients.

As the result of the Church's newly found theological and social self-definition that embraced the cure of the sick, the first monastically or church-founded hospitals were born in the 4th century. Hospitals spread fast, the activity within became well-known. I recalled in Chapter 1 Neilos if Ancyra's metaphor for Christ as a physician on duty in a hospital, and later Sophronios' simile for his hagiographical activity, selecting stories just as doctors mix the painful with the useful.⁷⁰⁰

Even more important, that the tools and scenes of medical cure became essential part of the dream-events⁷⁰¹, and much attention was paid to the treatment of scars. (Cosmas and Damian often gave a separate medicine for the follow-up care.) Along this same line, the representative of medical science, doctors, became active characters in the miracles. The saints may carry the patient in dream to a nearby hospital, to operate him there, they handle skilfully the scalpel and they are expert in techniques of bandages. The divine healers also often involve physicians into the process of miraculous healing, either showing the cure to them, or making them witnesses of the miracle, spectators of the incapacity of their own science.

The gestures of scientific medicine left deep mark in a more specific way in the thought world of the sick. In a miracle of Saint Artemios we read an account of the saint who is "accustomed to make his rounds as if he were a Chief Physician in charge of a hospital, just as many have often been convinced by experience."⁷⁰² The hagiographer connects the divine and real-medical gesture without hesitation, appealing on the everyday experience of the patients – both of hospitals and of the sanctuary. The peculiarity of the miracle is that the medical round, familiar from physicians practicing in hospitals, gets into the habitual gestures of the healer-saint. Yet here it is only the hagiographer, an *external* narrator, who shapes the story in this way. A similar outsider view of incubation is given in Aristophanes's *Ploutos*, where the narrator of the miracle is not the patient, but his companion, who spent the night in the incubation hall awake and peeping, saw the Healer going from one sleeper to the other.

The term the Artemisian hagiographer uses here was in fact a *terminus technicus* of Byzantine hospitals denoting the physicians medical round (*parodos*), and in this context it is present in a further miracle, there in connection to a flesh-and-blood Chief Physician.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰⁰ MCJ 32.

⁷⁰¹ E. g. in the KDM there are: scalpels (19, 30, 42), needles (11), tampons (23), medical lancet (47), an operating room with a pharmacy (30), and methods applied by the saints include: fastening bandages (17, 23, 27, 30), massage (22), irrigation (23) and the removal of accumulated blood or pus (1, 13, 20).

⁷⁰² MA 6.

⁷⁰³ MA 22, Crisafulli – Nesbitt, *The Miracles of Saint Artemios*, 237.

In the same meaning appears the word *episkepsis* in the miracles of Cyrus and John, at five times, to record the visit of the saints as medical rounds: MCJ 2, 9, 27, 34, 53.⁷⁰⁴ At one of this occasion, the hagiographer even indicates the position of the saints among the allopathic and homeopathic medical schools: “sanctis non contraria contrariorum secundum terrenos medicos remedia facientibus, sed similibus similia medelis sanantibus.”⁷⁰⁵

In MCJ 33 the saints doing their medical rounds appear to the Alexandrian (!) patient as a doctor of rank and his disciple. The way the dreamer formulated or recalled this scene allows us to suppose that medical teaching in Alexandria in fact contained practice and professors really took their students to sickbed. Similarly in MCJ 60, the patient from Constantinople, (the other headquarter of medical training after Alexandria) is visited in his dream by doctors, accompanied by young men, most probably their disciples. Both pieces of information complement the picture given by Alexandros of Tralles, emphasising *peira* – bedside experience.⁷⁰⁶

If the dreamer sees the healers as making their medical rounds, it results that as a patient he cannot be the only one present. And here it is where one can grasp the shift which is unknown for a dreamer in earlier centuries: the dreamer witnesses in his own dream the presence of other sleepers, observes the cure of others or their contacts with the saints.

This new awareness in dream of the presence of other patients as a result of the medical visit can constitute an independent motif: Cyrus and John appearing in a dream reproached the dreamer: ‘Why do you shout so loud and do not let sleep those others who are here with their illnesses? Do you think to be the only one here to have an insupportable dream?’⁷⁰⁷ And just as in a real hospital, it can happen that the patient cannot be saved: To the church of Cyrus and John once arrived an incurable woman and the saints brought this fact into her knowledge in a way that when performing their habitual medical rounds they surpassed the woman and only when she started to question them why they passed on the other, they sent her home to die.⁷⁰⁸ A similar scene is described among the miracles of Cosmas and Damian, with the difference that the sick saw in the dream as the saints administered something to her neighbour, and when she reproached them for neglecting her, the saints explained that they allotted death to her fellow worshipper.⁷⁰⁹ Yet witnessing others in dream can be a tool in formulating a theological message: in KDM 9 a pagan sees in his dream that Cosmas and Damian “have been doing their habitual rounds. When they reached the place where the pagan was lying, they turned aside and continued taking care of their other patients.” As the course of events remained repeatedly the same, the sick started shouting in his dream for not be neglected. The

⁷⁰⁴ Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean (extraits), Saint Georges*, 223.

⁷⁰⁵ MCJ 27.

⁷⁰⁶ J. Duffy, “Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: Aspects of Teaching and Practice”, 23; 25.

⁷⁰⁷ MCJ 21.

⁷⁰⁸ MCJ 62.

same seemingly careless attitude is present in a story of an Arian heretic, where the saints during their repeated medical rounds loudly diagnosed the sick and discuss what might delayed his cure, which was, of course his reluctance to convert to Orthodoxy.⁷¹⁰

In the shaping of the dream-pattern in Ancient Greek incubation, the fact that it reflected the patient – doctor relationship, played a decisive part, incorporating all the intimacy and personal charter of that relationship. That the dream pattern has been slightly changed on the course of centuries, it was due exactly to the fact that it followed the imagery of medical practice, which itself underwent significant changes, and so it happened that into the dream *imaginaire* formed around the healer chief physicians, specialists, professors with their medical students crept in, and alongside with the medical rounds, the other fellow-patients as well.

The appearance of the new dream-pattern in the Christian incubation narratives has only a signal value, yet this is enough to indicate how the knowledge of the waking world exercised an influence over the dream-experience. In order that in a dream the other patients could emerge, and in order that the dreamer could contemplate the church as a hospital as if seen from the outside, it was not sufficient going through the incubation ritual within a community, by being locked up with the countless others who were seeking cure in the nights of temple sleep. To mint the dream pattern into a meaningful new form, the imaginative force of the individual (or that of the community) needed the element well known to most patients from the working of a hospital, and so it could formally amalgamate the medical rounds of physicians into the working of the saints. But it can be more about than the visual domestication of a familiar medical practice. If we compare the images the patients of classical and Late Antique Greece and the Byzantine Christians formed about a healer, in other words, what made in their eyes a healer a professional, be it the god of health or a saint, we can see that in the representations of ritual healers, as skilled in surgery or in prescriptions a great part is played by the fact that these attributes were to express their authority and medical expertise.

In this context then not only the visual thought world of the individual patients altered the figure of the ritual healer but also the demands and ideas of a community about how a doctor should act. Moreover such modifications got room to become manifest by the virtue of the dream's being the medium of healing, since otherwise these shifts in imagery would have been blocked by what the patient might actually experience. The implantation of the medical visit in incubation healing and the resulting change in the dream-pattern thus could have been carried out depending on eras, cultures and the concepts about the authority of medical science.

⁷⁰⁹ KDM 12.

⁷¹⁰ KDM 17.

Chapter 10: Performance

The finality of the recording

The aims of preserving, writing and “using” the saints’ miracle collections may be set against the larger background of the finality of hagiography in general. In the recent re-evaluations of hagiographic literature Van Uytfanghe emphasised its cultic and commemorative function,⁷¹¹ while Felice Lifshitz challenged Delehayes’ definition that hagiography would serve to promote a cult and proposed instead examples, where Lives of the saints existed independently or even without their cult place and feasts. On the basis of this phenomenon, Lifshitz connected hagiography to historiography, and argued that hagiographic documents often represented written tradition, a historic legitimation for a community.⁷¹²

General religious propaganda was overtly one of the key elements of writing and disseminating miracle narratives.⁷¹³ While performing their cures, or sometimes even embedded into the remedy, the saints advised on everyday moral conduct,⁷¹⁴ or their miracle stories served simply to strengthen faith in general or enforce a certain theological truth in particular.

When we come to the stories of incubation miracles, and to the circumstances of their actual reading – listening, we discover their entertainment function. The instances of the stories that direct our glimpse to their own mise-en-scène, help to form an idea about how “informal” this sort of performance was, and how it was integrated into the habitual practices of the cult place (or even into the liturgy.⁷¹⁵) Werner emphasised the parallel development of the profane or entertaining aretalogy and religious one in ancient Greek and Hellenistic context.⁷¹⁶ Vincenzo Longo reached back to the origin of aretalogic *topoi*, and located it in part in the $\psi\epsilon\kappa\delta\omicron\varsigma$, in the narrative invention.⁷¹⁷

A common element in the cultic and profane miracle narratives is the incredible and all those narrative factors that arise from that. Thus miracle narratives (ritual or not) from the very beginning had a side of “entertaining, because incredible.”⁷¹⁸ This entertainment function in Christian

⁷¹¹ Van Uytfanghe, Mark. “L’hagiografie: un »genre« chrétien ou antique tardif?”, 174.

⁷¹² “Biographies of saints provided communities and institutions with written traditions; they defended the independence of communities and institutions against those who wished to subject them; they defended property rights and territorial endowments; they fuelled episcopal rivalries; they conveyed political and theological stances; they propagated an individual author’s, or group’s notion of ‘the holy’; they served, in short, for manifold purposes.” Lifshitz, “Beyond Positivism and Genre”, 97, note 7.

⁷¹³ Déroche, “Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles?”.

⁷¹⁴ E. g. One should not swear, should observe fast during Lent (MDM 6), or stop frequenting the hippodrom (KDM 11).

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium*, 100.

⁷¹⁶ H. Werner, „Zum $\Lambda\omicron\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma$ \square \square $\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ” *Hermes* 53 (1918), 239 ff.

⁷¹⁷ „pensò anziché ad una trasformazione avvenuta nel mondo greco-romano della seconda nella prima, ad una fusione dei due tipi attraverso un punto di contatto dall’oggetto comune della narrazione, ossia il $\psi\epsilon\kappa\delta\omicron\varsigma$. Dalla necessità di far accettare la „menzogna”, ossia l’invenzione fantastica (ma l’aretalogia religiosa pretende di essere documentazione!), sarebbero nati dei $\tau\kappa\pi\omicron\iota$ ” Longo, *Aretalogia*, 20.

⁷¹⁸ This type of miracle narrative found its way to ancient novel, just as, in turn, miracle stories also acquired novelistic elements. Longo, *Aretalogia*, 33.

hagiography had other aspects and sources. Michel de Certeau called one of such sides “vacation function” and illustrated it by citing the 5th century *Life of Melanie*, in which we read that once, when she was ‘sated’ with canonical books and collection of homilies, ‘she went through the lives of the Fathers as though she were eating desserts.’ Tales of the saints’ life bring a festive element to the community. They are situated on the side of relaxation and leisure. They correspond to a free time, a place set aside, a spiritual and contemplative respite; they do not belong in the realm of instruction, pedagogical norms, or dogma. They ‘divert.’ Unlike texts that must be practiced or believed, the saints’ Lives oscillate between the believable and the marvellous, advocating what one is at liberty to think or do. From both points of view they create an area of “vacation” and of new conditions outside of everyday time and rule.⁷¹⁹

There was an entertainment factor that might have been particularly related to the incubation context. The fact of illness itself, the presence, the often long term staying, of sick people, in pains, in desperation and the fears, shames concerning not only the physical symptoms but the intervention as well. In this atmosphere it was essential, both in the narrative stage as well as in the real context, to “divert,” including into the stories not just something funny, but also the ridiculous, grotesque or violent and harsh.⁷²⁰ Saint Thecla quoting Homer was probably amusing but the numerous descriptions of the saints’ physical violence in the *Thaumata* or the apparently blasphemous prescriptions in dreams were rather shocking. As we are in the context of illness and healing, the means of cures and the way or remedy were the main source of laughter. When Cosmas and Damian wanted to give a lesson to an irascible old man who fulminated against them, they appear to operate him a huge sword instead of a scalpel, threatening as they go, saying to one to the other: “Give him a nice incision! Why he is so insolent, being as old as he is?”⁷²¹ They could even be malicious; when a visitor in their church expressed how disgusting was to swallow the wax mixed with oil, Cosmas and Damian quickly inflicted her with some illness and made her not only swallow the kerote but they also forced a candle-wick into her nose.⁷²² Another bad joke evokes what could probably happen in a real hospital; Cosmas and Damian tried to operate a man, shouting and kicking and protesting in all ways against, and thus they inserted the man’s kicking legs into some railings and raised the scalpel in spite of his howling. The more absurd the order was, the more the saints’ power was manifested: poison became a medicine,⁷²³ slaps given by a poor man in the face of the rich one made them healthy,⁷²⁴ or the shave made by the paralyzed hands of a butcher could cure.⁷²⁵ Why would saint Artemios appear as a depressed stranger in the latrines,⁷²⁶ as a butcher operating with butcher’s tools⁷²⁷ or a man in the bath complaining about his towels⁷²⁸ and why would he create three testicles

⁷¹⁹ Certeau, “A Variant: Hagio-Grafical Edification”, 273-274.

⁷²⁰ Cf. Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); for an example in Byzantine hagiography cf Patricia Cox Miller, “Is there a Harlot in this Text? Hagiography and the Grotesque” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33:3 (2003), 419-435.

⁷²¹ KDM 1.

⁷²² KDM 16.

⁷²³ KDM 11.

⁷²⁴ KDM 39.

⁷²⁵ KDM 34.

⁷²⁶ MA 35.

⁷²⁷ MA 25.

for a man if not to make his patients laugh in their despair? Those recipes that involve something apparently blasphemous or make the patient make a complex series of actions involving bystanders had strong characteristics of a tale. A miracle of Cosmas and Damian include a jealous husband, a faithful wife and a blind man, all staying in the church, and the emotional involvement of the audience was just natural when the saints prescribed that to heal the blind, the mediation of a chaste woman was needed.

The theological grotesque involves not just an absurd means of cure, but it makes the reader laugh. Paul, with a horrible head-ache, received from Cyrus and John that in the morning, when he wakes up, he should leave the church through the gate leading to the sea and he should give a slap to the first man he meets on his way. The passer-by, of course, happens to be a soldier with a stick in his hand and when he received the slap, gave a terrible blow on the man's head – which thus was opened and the worms that tortured the patient could evacuate.⁷²⁹ The story at the same time still has a morale, showing that reliance on the healer's advice must be uncompromising. If not, the result is also something laughable.

The theological grotesque resulted also in turning upside down the existent social realities. What the saints' cult represented in theory, namely that the grace of healing was available for everyone with no social difference and what the ritual itself required in a practice, that the incubants, illustrious or poor, would sleep in the same space next to each other, was also expressed in the narrative level of such stories, as the often quoted KDM 24 ending with the marriage of the noble woman and the poor paralytic.

The event of reading aloud and listening to the miracle stories formed the audience-community, by the communal experience of "consuming" the miracle. Reading the miracles was a public event, not a solitary act. In the various characters of the stories everyone could find some figure to feel near. The communal event of reading together the miracles not just recalled but also evoked other miracles to happen. In MA 35 we see that a man, who waited for his cure in vain, gave a farewell lunch and when they sadly gathered together, the priests started comforting him with telling miracles, especially those when Artemios healed the patient on his journey back home. At the end, the miraculous cure happened just in the midst of listening to the previous stories. C. Connor described an even more spectacular event of Peter of Atroa:

The great public event of reading of the Life at the saint's monastery, on his feast day focused attention on the saint in a way that reaffirmed the beliefs, values, and conduct of all present. This event is described for the monastery where St. Peter of Atroa was buried in the mid-ninth century; in the Posthumous Miracles, St. Peter's biographer, the monk Sabas, is himself the beneficiary of a miracle taking place at this event: It happened that I was there at the monastery one day for the commemoration of the saint; kissing the slab

⁷²⁸MA 11.

⁷²⁹MCJ 18.

[plaka] covering his tomb – the slab was thin and without a trace of humidity – I awaited the gushing forth [anablusin] as of another Siloam. And here, during Orthros, as the marvellous Life of the saint was being read to all the assembled crowd, suddenly a flow gushed forth, and the crowd, sensing the [saint's] presence, anointed their faces fervently. And I was among them when the wound I had on one of my legs was healed after I had anointed it.⁷³⁰

The audience, the hypothetical, the real, the hoped for audience gives meaning to the narrative representation of *otherness*. This leads further to the topic who were there *others* represented and in what way.

Mirroring society: conceptions around sinners, pagans, Jews, heretics, non-Christians in terms of illness and cure

The miracle stories create narrative reference points to contrast and confirm their own message but they also reflect the actual surrounding social reality.⁷³¹ They mirror their audience, the possible future adherents of the cult or its opponents. They also reflect upon concepts around illness and healing, and allow us to glimpse into anxieties of the community. This latter is manifest in the miracles in the notion of disease as a result or punishment of sin, disease as *miasma*, pollution.⁷³² Consequently, our healing miracles echo conceptions from Greek antiquity that consider the cure as washing off dirt by means of external cleansing of the body (ablution) or applying a more unclean material.⁷³³ On the other hand, the defiled/diseased body can be cleansed/cured through the healing of the soul, by punishment miracles and orders set by the healers to confess sin as a prerequisite of the cure.

That diseases, especially skin diseases originated from pollution and could be washed away by ritual ablution is familiar from Greek ritual healing.⁷³⁴ Asclepius also applied it, but our testimony from the *Iamata* interestingly places the god's cleansing of the sick man's body into a dream.⁷³⁵ It may well happen that the cleansed spots remain as memorial to the miraculous cure but it is the most extraordinary case when Asclepius used one healed man's marks from his forehead, left imprinted on

⁷³⁰ Connor, *Art and Miracles on Medieval Byzantium*, 100; cf. V. Laurent, *La vie merveilleuse de S. Pierre d'Atroa* (Brussels: Subsidia Hagiographica, 1956), 148. For a discussion of communal reading of saint's lives see also C. Connor "The Setting and Function of a Byzantine Miracle Cult" in *Abstracts and Program Statements* for the 1990 Annual Conference of the College Art Association, New York, 69-70.

⁷³¹ Two example from contemporary Byzantine hagiography are Claudia Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries" in *Bosphorus. Essays in Honour of Cyril Mango* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1995), 31-44; and John F. Haldon, "Ideology and Social Change in the Seventh Century. Military Discontent as a Barometer" *Klio* 68 (1986) 1, 139-190.

⁷³² Robert Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1983).

⁷³³ Cf. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), esp. 6-11, and 136-138.

⁷³⁴ E. g. the account of Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, V, 5. 11: "There is a cave not far from the river at Samikon belonging to Anigros's daughters the nymphs. The traditional law is that anyone who enters it with any kind of leprosy first prays to the nymphs and promises whatever sacrifice it may be, and then wipes off the diseased parts of his body, and when he swims across the river he leaves his disgrace in its water, and comes out healthy and clear skinned." Transl. Peter Levi

⁷³⁵ T 423. 28, Cleinates of Thebes with the lice.

a cloth to punish a perjurer by putting the same spots onto his head as memorial of the miraculous punishment.⁷³⁶

Ablution of marks features in the *Thaumata* as well⁷³⁷, where we learn that after the miraculous cleansing even the birth-marks left the patient's body. Saint Artemios once used cleansing in the case of an internal disease, in a symbolical way washing away the illness itself from the internal organ, not the external symptoms: "he pierced [the man with testicular disorders] with a knife in his lower abdomen and took out all his intestines. Then he cleaned them, washed them off and twisted them with a rod, [...] and arranging them, as it were, in one coil, he put them back again into the sick man's belly."⁷³⁸ In this imagery several notions were conflated not only the one of healing washing off. The image undoubtably drew on medical practice, it is a mock-operation, and as a dream perhaps really originating from the sick man's fear of surgery; picturing Artemios as a butcher folding sausages could well have been also a grimace towards medical science. The writer of the *sermo* at the end of MA 34 spoke in a more metaphorical way, packed with the imagery of water, source, well, and ablution, of baptism as well as picturing Artemios relics as a spiritual Jordan.

Another archetype of healing diseases caused by pollution is the application of a similarly defiling material. Thecla advises dirt as medicine,⁷³⁹ but more telling is the case of Elias the leper, who was "carrying his *stigmata* as signs of his error" on his skin,⁷⁴⁰ and was advised by Cyrus and John to prepare a medicine from camel dung and smear all his body with it.⁷⁴¹ He did as he was ordered but left out his face; of course his body was cleared of the disease except for his face – a remedy that both verges on the practice of purifiers and magicians and at the same time serves as a test of faith.

"There are two distinct ways of cancelling pollution: one is the ritual which makes no enquiry into the cause of pollution, and does not seek to place responsibility; the other is the confessional rite."⁷⁴² Along ritual purification the public confession of sin and atonement in order to placate that deity who sent illness as punishment for wrongdoing was by no means a Christian novelty. Besides the testimonies of Greek Antiquity and the thought world of the Old Testament there is an intermediary group of testimonies, from the 2-3rd centuries AD from Asia Minor.⁷⁴³ The propitiatory inscriptions or confession stelai usually had the following scheme: So and so committed a sin (often

⁷³⁶ T 423. 6-7.

⁷³⁷ MCJ 8.

⁷³⁸ MA 25.

⁷³⁹ MT 18.

⁷⁴⁰ MCJ 13.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 9.

⁷⁴² Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 138.

⁷⁴³ Cf. Raffaele Pettazzoni, *La confessione dei peccati* Volume III: Siria, Hittiti, Asia Minore, Grecia (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1936); E. Varinlioglu, "Eine Gruppe von Sühneinschriften aus dem Museum von Usak" *Epigraphica Anatolica* 13 (1989): 37-50; Angelos Chaniotis, "Illness and cures in the Greek propitiatory inscriptions and dedications of Lydia and Phrygia" in *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context*. Papers Read at the Congress Held at Leiden University 13-15 April 1992, ed Ph. J. Van de Eijk et al, 2 vols, (Amsterdam: Atlanta, 1995), 323-344.

of religious nature), such and such god inflicted a punishment on the sinner in the form of various illnesses, he or she confessed the sin and made amends and set up the stelai to placate the god. In several cases the inscription ends with confirming the cure received. In addition to the story we often find reliefs depicting the parts of the body and sometimes also a reference to the sin.⁷⁴⁴

Naturally, the pattern of incubation narratives is different, nevertheless the saints and their patients often arrive at a similar conclusion but it rarely concerns an act of wrongdoing. It is rather about being in the wrong status. Nemesios the astrologue was said to have merited to be deprived of his eyesight, “with which he was studying the sky in a distorted way, inspecting the movement of the stars with too much curiosity.”⁷⁴⁵ The most common error, the state of sinning against the healers is, in one way or in another, being on the other side of what they represent. Thus the cause of becoming ill or being punished by the saints with an illness, is the sickness of the soul: being not Christian, or not proper Christian.

The both accidental as well as purposeful reflection on the surrounding social and religious milieu had a twofold aim: religious propaganda, and a narrative representation of the various “others”. Both tendencies coincide in the dynamics of the miracle: it is a narrative as well as theological necessity that the healers appear also to those who do not believe in their capacities or that they confront them with the authority of another healer, held more efficacious. Propaganda could of course concern rivalry between sanctuaries and not between beliefs. In this case, as Vincent Déroche pointed out, cult propaganda of a certain sanctuary could not be overtly expressed, since they saints, servants of the same Christ, could not contradict each other.⁷⁴⁶ Hence the confirmation of the saints’ efficacy can be by representing groups to which the saints (or the hagiographer) could freely oppose. This may account for why pagans remained so long in the miracles when they disappeared from the scenery of Christian Byzantium. In time of the birth of Thecla’s miracles, however, they were flesh and blood figures around and their role in the stories was far from symbolic. Gilbert Dagron summarises the hagiographical role of pagans in Thecla’s miracles in this way:

On distinguera d’abord, à l’intérieur de paganisme lui-même, ce qui est artifice littéraire ou vraie croyance, culte mort ou culte vivant; on notera ensuite tous les accommodements de la pratique, qui rend illusoire une division trop absolue des individus et de la société en «païens» et «chrétiens»; on se demandera surtout à quelle fin l’auteur des *Miracles* utilise cette oppositions: pour mieux donner à son oeuvre un ton d’épopée, ou pour mieux fonder une théorie du miracle? Le resultat est, en tout cas, un singulier et parfois inquiétant transfert de certains aspects du paganisme sur une hagiographie trop poliade (à vouloir trop opposer les choses on les rend structurellement semblables), et un portrait de Thecle décidément flottant entre un passé païen où s’alimentent l’imagination ou l’écriture de notre auteur, et une doctrine chrétienne qu’il ne trahit pas dans ses grandes lignes, mais qu’il outrepassse constamment et qu’il oublie souvent.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁴ F. T. Van Straten, “Gifts for the gods”, 101.

⁷⁴⁵ MCJ 28.

⁷⁴⁶ Déroche, “Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles?” 102.

⁷⁴⁷ Dagron, *La Vie et Miracles*, 81 (Introduction, Chapter 4: “Païens et paganism”).

As Dagron appropriately remarked, however broad the ugly term *pagan* might be, it is not sufficient to incorporate all the sort of non-Christians and their functions in the stories. In the incubation corpora, there are several groups, with different motivations to turn to the saints and with different outcome. The most simple class involves those, about whom we know only that they were “pagans”, that is Hellenes who had not yet been converted to Christianity. A more frequently mentioned set is the group of learned Greeks: professors, philosophers, sophists and rhetors, who confronted their entire cultural knowledge with the saints’ power. They may also be physicians, thus challenging divine healing as heirs to the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions.

The presence of Jews and the hagiographers’ attitude to them reflect probably the most close the ongoing change in their social and theological position in contemporary Byzantium. The examples of the incubation stories demonstrate how surprisingly fast these miracles, with their quite fixed narrative patterns, follow anti-Jewish legislation and social opinion. The most harshly treated group, however, is that of heretics: who turn against the current definition of the saints’ (or the hagiographer’s) orthodoxy.

According to the versatility of these groups, the saints’ attitude also varies – from nonchalance and persuasion to anger and violence. The outcome of the confrontation likewise had a different finale: it could occur that the healed pagan returned to his fellow-believers and told his miraculous recovery and they as well converted. Turning to the saint may have been a final step in the unbeliever’s emerging interest in the new faith, who may have been already familiar with Christians and Christian rituals. It is not rare that a sick Greek approached the saints only out of extreme necessity, under the hard pressure of illness alone. Their presence *at the cult place* was strongly connected to the fact that the relatively quick Christian replacement of the previous (pagan) healer of the site resulted that the new, Christian saint along with the cult place and the incubation ritual often inherited some pilgrims as well. Those who wanted to turn to the earlier incubation healer. The presence of various non-Christian groups *in the stories* presupposes that they were still active part of the collective memory after Christianity conquered the area. Moreover, the narrative role these real or fictitious non-Christians played served also as a model for the target audience. For those hesitant or recalcitrant or sceptical Christians who did not necessarily belong to the “pagans” of the miracles, but in the same way represented the theological “Others” – both in the stories as well as in real life. In what follows, I establish those possibly categories in which non-Christians could play a narrative role in the miracle stories and point out some instances of the undercurrent social reality.

1. The unbeliever as pagan

That Thecla’s hagiographer was the most talented narrator among the other incubation hagiographers is attested also by his most colourful picture of pagans, never described just in

themselves but by introducing life-situations of contrasting belief-systems. This confrontation might be between generations, spouses, lord and servant. What makes the evocation of this context fascinating, beyond its giving colour to the narrative, is that in this way the adherents of the old faith confront not only with the saint, but with those near them. So did the grandmother in a family where her children were already Christians, and when she turned to Sarpedonios for curing her grandchild, Thecla healed the boy rewarding the parents' faith.⁷⁴⁸ The daughter of a tolerant pagan family was healed and thus won for Christianity,⁷⁴⁹ and a pagan husband of a devotedly Christian wife was converted in reward for the woman's faith.⁷⁵⁰ Here, as all over in the collections, the events assume the context and terminology of illness; the wife prayed to Thecla for the conversion of her husband, this was thus the target, not a secondary result. Thecla, to achieve this, made the husband ill, that is, manifested the illness of his soul in bodily pains and this illness she healed then miraculously.

A Christian servant may also teach a lesson to his master, as so often in the collections the same miracle concerns a rich and a poor together. The rich Maximinos, a sceptical pagan, became Christian by witnessing the miraculous cure of one of his servants⁷⁵¹, while Thecla elsewhere settled a sceptical Christian by healing his sick horse.⁷⁵² A Christian friend could also familiarize a Greek with the idea of conversion; the stages of such decision-making is described in the KDM 10, where our pagan went regularly to pray for a vision or illumination that would eventually make decide.

It could happened that the Christian ritual experience was viewed by the unbeliever as authentic manifestation of his own faith. Thus the Sophist rhetor Aretarchos stubbornly interpreted his healing by Thecla as performed by Sarpedonios, and the hagiographer, still at home in both worlds, described how the patient defined himself after experiencing the miraculous cure with the mystery vocabulary as a follower of Sarpedonios, "his suppliant and worshipper and initiate and lover."⁷⁵³ It could also happen that in the newly converted certain Christian rituals seemed reminiscences of old habits. MCJ 31 shows the evocative character of the Eucharist as a cult experience that enabled its recipient to attain the highest spiritual knowledge and to enter a state similar to that in which a pagan would be able to prophesy or perform miracles. It also illustrates the way in which a newly converted Christian may still react in his accustomed way and hesitates between the significance of the ceremonies of the new faith and his former paganism. According to the miracle, a certain Theodoros received the Eucharist in the Church of Saints Cyrus and John. Immediately after taking the bread he fell into a peculiar trance and made a terrible noise through his

⁷⁴⁸ MT 11.

⁷⁴⁹ MT 18.

⁷⁵⁰ MT 14.

⁷⁵¹ MT 17.

⁷⁵² MT 36.

⁷⁵³ τ□□ κτ□□ κα□ θιασοτ□□ κα□ μυστ□□ κα□ □ραστ□□, MT 40, cf Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 397, note 3.

nostrils, an act – says the hagiographer – that is particularly pleasing to the demons.⁷⁵⁴ We are dealing here with a pagan magical practice, the exact meaning of which may have faded among the Christians, for, says the hagiographer, they would never perform this act if they knew its true significance.⁷⁵⁵ It does not escape the attention of the saints, however, who immediately strike the man blind.

2. The unbeliever as heir to Greek learning

Those Greeks who did not embrace Christianity were not the saints' enemies; they were a challenge – both in the narrative as well as in the eschatological sense. They often represented the hagiographers' own ideal of manhood: nobility, education, and a fidelity to a tradition that was fated to decay. In Thecla's hagiographer the positive attitude was easy to understand. He converted to Christianity but did not dream of giving up what made him a man of culture; he rather depicted her Thecla as quoting Homer, just as he was doing. More noteworthy was Sophronios' attitude who manifested himself so fierce with heretics, the saints' enemies – but what he held in praise, did not change much over the two centuries that passed between the compilation of Thecla's miracles and the *Thaumata*. Dionysos of Damascus was far from being “a worshipper of idols” or anything similar, he rather merited the highest esteem for being the descendant of the famous philosopher, Nicolaos who once was the teacher of the children of Antonius and Cleopatra, and all the twelve generations in between produced the most excellent and noble philosophers.⁷⁵⁶ If such illustrious personalities were concerned, not even conversion was necessary for them to have a place in the miracle stories. Thus Isocasios, the learned rhetor and court official under Leo I (457-474) could turn to Thecla and benefit her miracle without converting to Christianity – all the saint did was scolding him for being a pagan. The miracle took place not in Seleucia but in Aegae, where Isocasios carried as a grammarian and Sophist started and from he conquered Antioch and Constantinople.⁷⁵⁷ His relation to the place, as well as the pagan flavour of Aegae contributed to the placement of his story – but it is more curious why he ended up in the collection at all? Did his visit (even if incredulous) contribute to fame of Thecla's church? Did the hagiographer want to show Thecla learned and tolerant, truly not withholding her curative powers from anyone? Or was the famous rhetor more important to the rhetor - hagiographer, to place himself next to him, to overcome him in one aspect, as a believer? In any case, Thecla was happy to have him in her church, just as the other pagan rhetor Aretarchos, who

⁷⁵⁴ Tertullian describes the same phenomenon in his *Apologeticus* (XXIII 5): “Similarly bring forward some one or other of those persons who are supposed to be god-possessed, who by sniffing at altars inhale a divine power in the smell...”

⁷⁵⁵ For the discussion of the practice, see C. Bonner, “A Tarsian Peculiarity,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 35 (1942), 1-11; on its obscenity, see Festugière, *Sainte Thècle*, 236; for further interpretations, see Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 186-187.

⁷⁵⁶ MCJ 54.

⁷⁵⁷ MT 39, in 467 Isocasios was arrested and accused of being pagan, but at the end he was acquitted. cf. Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 91-92.

likewise remained firm about attributing the miraculous cure to Sarpedonios and not to Thecla. (And cunningly said that Sarpedonios advised him to turn to her.) Here the hagiographer was not sparing his despise, saying that however famous they were, the academic achievements of these great professors was as bad as their unbelief.

The Greek Sophist Stephanos we meet in the London Codex, knew well the philosophers, and what was more, was the author of “pagan books” (*ethnika biblia*) and was called a rhetor of Tarsus. But he was blind, in every sense, and when healed, he earned praise only when set his talent into the service of the saints, and write a book about them in an act of gratitude.⁷⁵⁸ The other learned pagan of the London Codex, Dioscuros, though he was carried to the healing sanctuary as to Castor and Polydeices (the Dioscuroi!), recognizing the saints as the new healers, converted and advertised the miracle among his pagan friends.⁷⁵⁹ (Interestingly enough, his name and his being a professor falls out from the KDM 9 version of the story.)

Doctors also belong to this category of learned Greek pagans and were often represented in the healing stories. As I have treated their narrative role in the miracles in the previous chapter, here I would like to point out that the hagiography was also sensitive to follow the shifts in physicians’ social standing. Kazhdan observed that after the popularity of the doctor-theme in 6-7th century hagiography, they disappear from hagiography,⁷⁶⁰ and when reintroduced, it took some time that they obtain the role of the saints’ opponent. At the end of the 10th century, the divine and medical healers were depicted as enemies, but again the animosity vanished by the 11th- century *Life of Lazarus Galesiotes*, which recorded miraculous healing as well.⁷⁶¹ Kazhdan explained that

... after the seventh century the medical profession in Byzantium lost its social standing; in any case the society became lukewarm and negligent towards medical doctors, hagiography ignored them, and intellectuals did not consider them as their peers. The situation began to change, probably at the end of the tenth century: hagiography about *l’an mil* wages a sharp war against secular physicians and scolds greediness and incompetence of the medical doctor who dares to match the omnipotent healing power of the saint; in other words, the doctor had become too influential to be neglected. But the anti-doctoral attack was no success: by the twelfth century, the physician enters as equal to the establishment of functionaries and literati (one of whom he, indeed, was); he becomes respected, although mocked time and again by a society that started to care for its health more than for its salvation.⁷⁶²

A much earlier phenomenon can be traced by the social interpretation of Gesios’ story (MCJ 30): Rudolf Herzog regarded it as emblematic for a rejection of Alexandrian intellectualism, not so

⁷⁵⁸ CL 10.

⁷⁵⁹ CL 23.

⁷⁶⁰ “together with hagiography, since there are almost no hagiographical texts from the eighth century”, see Ihor Ševčenko, “Hagiography of the Iconoclast Period” in his *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982) Chapter 5.

⁷⁶¹ Kazhdan, “The Image of the Medical Doctor,” 49; the *Life of Lazarus Galesiotes* is in BHG 979, and AASS nov III 563B.

⁷⁶² Kazhdan, “The Image of the Medical Doctor,” 51, see also Susan Ashbrook Harvey, “Physicians and Ascetics in John of Ephesus: An Expedient Alliance”, 87ff.

much from Christianity in general but on the part of Egyptian monks flowing in from the desert, who rejected all sorts of learning.⁷⁶³

Jews in the miracles

In Thecla's 5th century collection Jews appear as part of the community that benefits the miracles of the saint, emphasising the cultural diversity in the context of which Thecla worked and in which her attention concerned everybody.⁷⁶⁴

Among the saints that is also the great martyr Thecla, always present, always on the way, incessantly attentive to prayers and unselfishly supporting everyone: healthy and sick people, hopeful and desperate ones, people travelling by land or sea, people in danger or in safety, singles and groups, families, towns, peoples, foreigners and locals, people living here or abroad, men, women, lords and servants, adults and youth, rich and poor, officials, people in the army, at court, in war and in peace. She had often manifested herself to Jews and Greeks and showed them her miraculuous power...⁷⁶⁵

In this universality Thecla's patients also participate, as we learn, for example, that Aba from Seleucia, a daughter of a pagan Greek family, emphatically tolerant towards everyone, without any aversion to either Jews or Christians.⁷⁶⁶ When she fell from her mule and broke her leg, she likewise exploited the similarly colourful healing market, turning first to Jews (probably physicians), and to pagans who make incantations and when these proved to be useless, made an attempt with Sarpedonios and finally went to Thecla. Here we see where sick people turned usually, without any ethnical or religious strains in the background: physicians, here – as often all around in Byzantium, - Jewish physicians, faith-healers and the once-powerful local hero, and the new occupant of the ritual healing site.

Jews thus are represented in Thecla's Isauria not only as a culturally and religiously different community but by way of the prominence of Jewish physicians they offered an alternative (or rivalry) to the medical market.⁷⁶⁷ From this marked background, however, they did not emerge as individuals in Thecla's corpus and the reason for this might have been the personal position of the

⁷⁶³ Herzog, "Die Kampf...", 123-124; cf *ibidem* for the neoplatonic philosophers who flirted with Egyptian magic.

⁷⁶⁴ In general see Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: étude sur les relations entre Chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romaine (135-425)* (Paris, de Boccard, 1964-1983) and more recently *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* eds. J. Lieu, J. North, T. Rajak (London: Kegan Paul, 1992) esp. the chapters of Judith Lieu, Fergus Millar and John North.

⁷⁶⁵ Prologue, Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 288-289.

⁷⁶⁶ MT 18

⁷⁶⁷ Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 124 ("La société des Miracles"): "Des minorités ethniques proprement dites, nous n'apprenons presque rien: [...] les Juifs semblent compter beaucoup, bien qu'aucun n'entre en scène: ils sont certainement assez nombreux pour avoir une influence religieuse, que doit favoriser la compétence de quelques médecins. ... Leur tombes à Korykos sont disséminées dans le cimetière de la ville tandis qu'à Séleucie il y a tout à la fois des tombes individuelles et un *παραστατικὸν βραβών*, mais tout donne à penser que la communauté était bien intégrée à la ville. C'est du reste une tradition de la région jusqu'au temps des Croisades." For testimonies about the religious and medical prominence of Jews cf Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 93, note 5: *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, ed. J. Keil and A. Wilhelm, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931) vol. III, n. 23 and 32 for Seleucia; 205, 222, 237, 295, 344, 440, 448, 607, 679 for Corycos; E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 12

hagiographer, who, as a converted learned Greek, was more interested in figures similar to him. As a cultural reference point, Judaism appeared once again in the collection. When writing about the stylistic marks of the narrative, Dagron called attention that among the Old Testament reminiscences there is a parallel in MT 14 between the Christian wife who prayed for her pagan husband's conversion and the Biblical Anna, who was praying for a child, οὐδακίς πειροκαλᾶς τᾶ αἴτημα - "demande bien digne de la vulgarité juive."⁷⁶⁸

The case of another Jewish woman from the collection of Cosmas and Damian (KDM 2) attests that Jews also turned to the Christian saints when illness compelled them. The absolutely sympathetic approach of the miracle reflects the context in which "...Judaism remained an explicitly permitted religion. However, this situation was not only the result of incorporating pre-Christian elements into a Christian code. It was also deliberate Christian policy. Judaism had to be preserved as a living testimony to the Christian interpretation of the scriptures, to the victory of Christianity. Jews were thus sharply distinguished from both pagans and heretics – who had no right and no civil status."⁷⁶⁹ The healing of the soul goes hand in hand with the grace of bodily cure – but the miracles apply the terms sick soul or spiritual illness not only to the theologically different pagans, Jews, heretics, but likewise to a man who kept a mistress, a fanatic of the circus games, or to the unjustly jealous husband. In the KDM 2 story the Jewish woman with an illness in her breast practiced incubation and the saints, appearing three times, prescribed her to eat pork as remedy. Because of the pains, she ordered her Jewish servants or family members around her (who also stayed in the church!) to bring her pork, but they regarded the dream as an illusion and tried to dissuade the woman, emphasising that the prescription would turn her against the Law and ancestral customs. When they finally gave in and brought the pork and the woman was just on the point of starting eating, she noticed her husband coming and frightened, she hid the meat under her dress. Meanwhile, the Lord, thanks to the saints' prayer, made the illness of the woman „jump” from her breast onto the meat. As soon as she became aware of the miracle, she hastened to get baptised. It is worth noting that here the conversion, the confession of the Christian faith was a condition of the cure in a way the willingness to do it proved sufficient.⁷⁷⁰

(1891), p. 269, num. 70 for Olba; Jewish inscriptions of Cilica collected: *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*, II vols, ed. J. B. Frey, (Rome, Vatican: Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology, 1939-1951) vol, II, 39-48 and 124.

⁷⁶⁸ Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 156; in the textual commentary (*Vie et miracles*, 327. note 4) Dagron remarked that the word "vulgarity" elsewhere (*Vita* 8, 19) received the adjective "female."

⁷⁶⁹ Andrew Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 20.

⁷⁷⁰ Worth comparing with the story of a miraculous conversion of a Jew(ish family?) to Christianity, under the monophysite patriarch Timothy (518-535), in *The Chronicle of John of Nikiu*, chapter 91, Transl. C. H. Charles, (London: Texts and Translations Society, 1916), 144-145.

Eating pork as a remedy was suggested in other testimonies of ritual healing. Asclepius also prescribed it, but he was ready to suggest something else when it turned out that pork was a religious taboo for his patient:

[Domninos, 5th . A.D.] was not perfect in his manners of life, so to call him a true philosopher. For the Asclepius at Athens revealed the same cure for Plutarch the Athenian and for Domninos the Syrian, of whom the latter continually coughed up blood and had the sickness of this name, the former was ill with some disease, I know not what. The treatment prescribed was to keep sated with pork. Plutarch could not abide the health thus asquired although it was not contrary to his ancestral lawsm but rising up from the dream and leaning on his elbow on the couch, he looked at the statue of Asclepius (for he happened to be sleeping in the vestibule of the shrine) and said: „My lord, what would you have prescribed to a Jew suffering this same illness, for certainly you would not bid him to take his fill with pork.” Thus he spoke, and straightway Asclepius spoke from the statue in a very harmonious voice, prescribing another remedy for the illness.⁷⁷¹

In Lucian, Alexander the false prophet prescribed pork for a man with colic and although the text mocked overtly only the poetic capacities of Alexandre, we may suggest some irony also in the remedy: “The man complained of colic, and Alexander, wishing to direct him to eat a pig’s foot cooked with mallow, said: Μῶλβακα χοιρῶν ἐρῶ κυμῶνευε σιπῶδῶ.”⁷⁷²

Whether pork or pig fat were in fact widely recommended in ancient miraculous healing, is difficult to say on the basis of scarce evindence. One of Deubner’s references, to a dream prescription of Aelius Aristides probably based on a misunderstanding, there he did not have to eat the pork in question.⁷⁷³ But Deubner gave a nice interpretation of pig in the Asclepius’ cult, which animal thus entered the miracle stories as well.⁷⁷⁴

Pork was also a remedy adviced by Saint Cyrus and John (MCJ 54) to a sick boy’s mother, who had to anoint her son’s body with pig fat, „because the saints wanted to heal the woman’s soul as well”, since „she had an inclination for a Greek error and because of the death of Adonis did not eat pork,” a fact that she concealed from her family. In the following miracle (MCJ 55) pork as remedy is interesting from two aspects, it was a doubly magical cure. Here pork is not so much connected with the illness of the sick person (who was doctor), rather with the one who caused the illness (a Jewish *magos*⁷⁷⁵). Both the cause and the cure of the illness was magical. The saints prescribe their doctor-patient in dream to grill a lung of pig on charcoal, to sprinkle it with wine and anoint his aching feet with this. The saints also made the sick man find the object in his house that magically

⁷⁷¹ Suidas, sv. Domninos = T 427 the story continued in a rather surprising way: the privileged patient had preferred obeying the god’s command, though was not compelled to do so, to his ancestral laws: “But Domninos, trusting the dream, even if it was not in accordance with the law – the ancestral law of the Syrians – and not availing himself of the example of Plutarch, ate of the meat at that time and ever after. It is said somewhere that if he omitted one day, fasting from the meat, the illness unfailingly returned, until he was sated with pork again.”

⁷⁷² Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 25. transl. A. M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library vol. IV (London: Heinemann 1925).

⁷⁷³ *De Incubatione*, 48, note 1, referring to Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi* I. 43; cf. Charles A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works* vol. II (Leiden: Brill 1981), 285.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf the order to dedicate a silver pig Edelstein T 423.4, its interpretation and other references: Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 40.

caused his illness, and identified the agent of the magic, who was a Jew and as such was not free from the suspicion of magic: Ἐβραῖος δὲ ἐν, καὶ τοιαύτης πολλῆς ψευδῶς οὐκ ἔλεθερος·

Fernandez Marcos, analysing the miracle saw in the pig fat only the magical tool that was efficient against a magic caused by a Jew.⁷⁷⁶ However, the encouragement to eat grilled lung of pig is familiar also from the counsels of a magical papyrus: πολλὰ πίνοντα καὶ μὴ μεθεῖν· χορεὼν πνεύμονα πύσας φέγε.⁷⁷⁷

Returning to the original miracle with the Jewish woman converting to Christianity via pork, I would like to mention another curious miracle about a voluntary conversion of a Jew, which, for its central motif, has its pair among the miracles of Cosmas and Damian. In the *London Codex* of Saint Cosmas and Damian (CL 18), recording a cure performed around the 5th-6th century Constantinople, the saints ordered the blind beggar to take a huge loan to feed himself, while themselves give surety to the moneylender (otherwise unspecified) at the end both money and faith and health are miraculously restored. Another mid-seventh c. miracle from Constantinople, tells how a Christian merchant suffered shipwreck and not having his friend help for a new business, turned to a Jewish money-lender who was a specialist of financing such voyages. (Money lending in Byzantium was by no means done only by Jews, for there was no prohibition of taking reasonable interest, hence such enterprises were practiced by Christians as well as church dignitaries) The man's friends warned him from doing any business with a Jew, yet they refused to give the necessary surety. An icon, however, in a church within the Jewish quarter of Constantinople, the Chalthoprataia, miraculously uttered a voice, stating that it accept all responsibility. When it became necessary, the surety was abundantly paid and the Jew in the business converted to Christianity.⁷⁷⁸

Quite different is the picture in the collection of Artemios. In the main text of the miracles we neither encounter pagans, Jews nor heretics. However, the later added short sermons at the end of some miracles are veritable invectives, where target-enemies were indiscriminately put together: all walks of heretics, Buddha and Mani, Galen and Hippocrates, doctors in general and Jews in particular.⁷⁷⁹ The end of MA 38 runs like this:

What will you say, nation of Jews, you who fashioned a cross for Christ, you who furiously shouted in Pilate's court: "Kill, kill, crucify Him"? The very cross which you have fashioned for destruction, when made by Artemios, itself gives life. How, o brood of vipers, does Christ on account of Whom you shouted to Pilate: "Kill, kill, crucify Him" raise up men who are close to death when He Himself is invoked by Artemios? How

⁷⁷⁵ A contemporary example for the Jewish magician is the legend of Theophilus of Adana from the beginning of the 7th century, BHG 1319-1322.

⁷⁷⁶ Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, 196.

⁷⁷⁷ Carl Wessely, *Neue Griechische Zauberpapyri* (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1893), 25, cf. Deubner, *De Incubatione*, 48.

⁷⁷⁸ B. N. Nelson and J. Starr, "The Legend of the Divine Surety and the Jewish Moneylender" *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-1944), 289-338, referred to by Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, 60, note 61

⁷⁷⁹ A similar double condemnation of Jewish doctors is in the *Vita Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, 208-211, reflecting on the death of Justin I (518-527) who was treated by a Jewish physician.

do St. John (who baptized Christ) and the wonderworking Artemios along with the gloriously triumphant martyress Febronia reclaim from death those who are held by Hades through the invocation of Christ? Jewish nation, covered with shame, can you not bear to say? Artemios lays bare your actions and because of your actions he scorns you, he crushes you into the ground, he flogs you with invisible scourges, he wounds you severely and you do not feel it. But let us leave the Jews to groan and return to the miracles of the martyr.

(Interestingly, this anti-Judaic outburst is found at the end of a miracle telling the miraculous recovery of a boy whose parents were moneylenders (not mentioned that they were Jews) and when he was around nine years old, he – disgusted as he was from that business – turned his back to his parents because “recognized their vain and disreputable profiteering and the weighting of scales and their greedy and usurious rate of interest and the unadulterated exorbitance of interest on pawned objects”⁷⁸⁰ He started to visit the church of St. John from where he was dragged back home by force and as a consequence, fell fatally ill, thus his parents brought him back to the same church and first all the three of them, later only the child practiced incubation.)

John Haldon holds that the violent attacks on Jews and heretics were later interpolations similarly to some chronologically conspicuous additions. He identified the social reality behind that in the last years of the 7th century masses of refugees arrived from the provinces to Constantinople, and these harsh and arrogant invectives might serve to attract attention to the saint and his cult place.⁷⁸¹ The narratological disruption also seems to confirm that these sermos were later additions. Furthermore, Haldon also pointed out that these outbursts, most visibly the invective at the end of Mir. 41, attacked heretics appear as if mirroring the heresies condemned in the 95 canon of the Quinisext council, called together by Justinian II in 691.

And in spite of that the canon repeats the much earlier canon [381], it is tempting to suggest a connection between the mention of these sects in 692 and the fact that they also appear in the polemic after Mir. 41. This would then provide a possible date for the composition and/or addition of this text to the collection in the same period; [...] more probably, I would suggest that it reflects the results of the Quinisext itself.⁷⁸²

Along with heretics, this council also represented a new tendency towards Jews, forbidding to Christians to “associate” with Jews or turn to Jewish physicians:

No one of sacerdotal rank, nor any layman, shall eat the unleavened bread of the Jews, nor associate with them, nor summon them in illness and receive cures from them, nor in any wise bathe with them at the baths. If anyone undertakes to do this, if he is a cleric, he shall be deposed, if a layman, excommunicated.⁷⁸³

Just as in the case of heretics, the same connection may be valid between the 11th canon of the Quinisext council on Jews and the anti-Jewish outbursts of the miracles. The shift of emphasis in any case reflects the change of the society’s legal and individual attitude toward Jews by the end of the

⁷⁸⁰ MA 38, Nesbitt – Crisafulli, 199

⁷⁸¹ Haldon, “Supplementary essay”, 34.

⁷⁸² Haldon, “Supplementary essay”, 34.

⁷⁸³ Canon 11, George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone, eds. *The Council of Trullo Revisited* (Rome, Vatican: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995) with the canons in Greek, Latin and English, 81-82; yet we cannot be sure how much effect the canon had.

seventh century.⁷⁸⁴ And the hagiographic genre itself, with all its established framework of telling the miraculous, proved to be a sensitive indicator of such a change. That now the Jews were perceived both in imperial legislation and in theological debates not only with more hostility but with an alternation of status, grouped together with the heretics – who *were* to be driven back to the only true catholic faith – their theological position is altered. They were not any more the Augustinian testimony to Christianity,⁷⁸⁵ in which worldview a Jewish patient cured by a saint would voluntarily embrace the new faith or a component of a multicoloured community with mutual consideration and legitimacy as seen in the corpus of Thecla, yet not even the stereotype *other* of the mid-seventh century narratives. To the gradual loss of legal protection and the growing impatience and to the new eschatology of forced conversions a new element was given: in late 7th and 8th century hagiography a new character appears who embodies the theologically *other*: the Muslims.⁷⁸⁶

The unbeliever as heretic

In the popularization (or reinforcement) of of variously defined orthodoxies and dogmas, cult practices and miracle accounts played no small role; for in them often the very act of confession being the miracle or the saint's personal siding. Usually the heretics in the narrative are to be converted to Orthodoxy – often punished beforehand, with the other side of the saints' curative gifts, that of afflicting an illness. But rarely, as it was sometimes the case of pagans, it happened that the saints contented themselves that the heretic acknowledged their power, without their creed. The level of tolerance in the stories was a safe indicator of the surrounding theological reality as well the target audience of the various collections.

Thecla's hagiographer was only modestly interested in heretics⁷⁸⁷ and the only two miracles that mentioned them made only indirect references. From these two stories (MT 10 and 13) as well as from the credo recited by a newly converted Greek (MT 14) we may gather that Thecla's hagiographer represented what became the Chalcedonian creed. There is no real heretic protagonist in the miracles;⁷⁸⁸ I analysed earlier in the dissertation the mosaic inscription in Thecla's *martyrion*,

⁷⁸⁴ For an excellent description see: Vincent Déroche: "La polémique anti-judaïque au VI^e et au VII^e siècle. Un memento inédit, Les *Képhala*" *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 275-311 and Gilbert Dagron and Vincent Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VII^e siècle" *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 17-273, esp. 17-46; as well as Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204* (Athens: Verlag der Byzantinisch-Neugriechischen Jahrbücher, 1939).

⁷⁸⁵ *De Civitate* XVIII, 46 and *Contra Faustum* XVI, 21.

⁷⁸⁶ Cf I. Dick, "La Passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwah néo-martyr de Damas († 25 déc, 799)" *Le Muséon* 74 (1961), 109-133 and later in the *Miracles of Saint George*, Mir. 6 in J.-A. Festugière, *Sainte Thècle...*, 294-307. On this miracle see D. J. Sahas, "What an Infidel Saw that a Faithful Did Not: Gregory Dekapolites (d. 842) and Islam" *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31, 1-2 (1986), 47-67.

⁷⁸⁷ On heresies present in the area of the sanctuary thought not mentioned by the miracles see Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 43-44.

⁷⁸⁸ Theologically the most suspicious figure was indeed the hagiographer himself, we shall never know why exactly he was excommunicated.

“proclaiming to all people the consubstantiality of the holy and sublime Trinity,”⁷⁸⁹ what Symposios, that time Arian bishop of Seleucia wanted to erase.⁷⁹⁰ But the worker entrusted with the destruction fell from the ladder because of Thecla’s intervention. The hagiographer cautiously attributed Symposios’ later conversion to this event: his return to Orthodoxy was expressed by his public confession of the dogma inscribed on this very mosaic. The other heretic sidetrack concerns the monophysites; apropos of a figure loosely connected to the protagonist of MT 13 Saturnilos or Saturninos, the hagiographer angrily attacked the unorthodoxy of priest Severus, the confidant of the exiled empress Eudocia – Athenais and showed Thecla in the light of protectress of Orthodoxy as she repeatedly favoured Saturnilos, who – by the emperor Theodosius II’s order – killed the heretical Severus.⁷⁹¹

Theological standing receives more marked importance when the heretic stands in the centre of the miracle story, confronting with the “orthodox” saints, as so often in the collection of Cyrus and John and occasionally in those of Cosmas and Damian.

Orthodoxy was defined from various angles, often contradicting to each other and that hagiography of the popular miracle working saints was used to advertize theological propaganda – both accidentally and consciously. Moreover, the context of illness and healing facilitated the manifestation of the contrasing credos, since it is a situation when the sick heretic may turn to the “orthodox” healer saint nevertheless of the acknowledged differences of belief.

The reasons for which non-Christians and heretics turned to the saints moved in a wide range, as did the results of their consultations: one might find his way to the saint through Christian friends or family members, sometimes out of an intellectual curiosity, or turn to the healers only in despair over their illness. As a consequence of the cure, the healed and converted suppliant may return to his co-religionists, and after he narrates his own experience, the story may end with the conversion of the entire group. In special circumstances, giving up their former pagan or sectarian beliefs, they might become members of a lay community centred on the cult; or, official church personnel, priests, wardens, deacons, and even, as it happened to Thecla’s protégé, the saint’s hagiographer.

Cosmas and Damian also had a hagiographer, who was a heretic – and remained so, as the wholly curious story attested in KDM 26. A man, member of an unspecified heretical sect, although he was not sick, went to the Saturday night vigil of the saints and falling there asleep, he underwent a strange test of faith. The nature of heretics is being incredulous – wrote the miracle writer and thus Cosmas and Damian appeared to the man not to convince him of becoming orthodox (no attempt

⁷⁸⁹ MT 10.

⁷⁹⁰ Symposios became Orthodox in 381; Basil of Cesarea in his *Letter* 190, written in 374, mentioned Symposios and referred to their debate over the Eucharist.

⁷⁹¹ On Severus and his death cf Dagron, *Vie et Miracles*, 17 and 323, note 3.

for this in the whole miracle) but to dispel his incredulity (in the miracle working capacity of the saints). The healer indicate the remedy for a sick noblewoman lying nearby and our man was doubly tried: whether he believes the repeated dreams and whether he had the courage to approach the dame and tell her the saints' indications. After that all that had happened, the saints benefited the heretic with an oracle, saying that he would become the head of the sect. Meanwhile he started to frequent regularly the saints' church and when the oracle came true in the time indicated, he had set himself the task of writing the saints' miracles. He considered collecting the miracles as a vehicle to approach Orthodoxy but he never became an overtly Chalcedonian.

Yet soon neither simple conversion was enough: with the radicalization of Christological debates, the healer could require the confession of a particular credo as did Thecla, appearing in her real form in daylight, to a blaspheming Greek nobleman, with the following words:

Hence, now that you have understood who I am, and have paid a convenient price for your incredulity, stand up, go, get baptised, approach the mysteries, prostrate yourself, confess the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the uncreated and consubstantial Trinity who is the creator of all things, intelligible and sensible, visible and invisible, who carries and directs all, governs and rules all; in addition to these, confess the real presence through the flesh, the advent and coming of the Only-Begotten (I mean the Incarnation and the birth from Mary the virgin, the *Theotokos*), confess His cross and His death, His Resurrection and Ascension; then both your body and your soul will become healthy, and happily you will inhabit this earth, happily you will live, and happily you will go to heaven, where you will live with great surety with Christ the Lord.⁷⁹²

This is a clear summary of everything that a person newly converted to Christianity, and, what is more, Orthodox Cyrillian Christianity, had to believe and perform. The taking of the Eucharist is here an intermediate element of the act of confession, which follows baptism and takes place together with the statement of the *credo*. (The taking of the Eucharist acquired a central role in numerous miracles of incubation healers: it is important to stress that it figured exclusively in connection with pagans, Jews or heretics and became the most elaborate symbol of what the saint or his hagiographer defined as Orthodox.)⁷⁹³

A more subtle definition of Orthodoxy is expressed in a miracle of saint Cosmas and Damian, KDM 7, where a mute and deaf woman was healed while and by singing the Trishagion, the liturgical exponent of Trinitarian theology in line with the Nicean and Chalcedonian creed. But antiheretical propaganda was usually sharper and the definition of Orthodoxy more complex.

Among the miracles of Cosmas and Damian (KDM 17) we read a story about an Arian, called an Exakionite.⁷⁹⁴ The narrative begins with a short prologue about how magnanimous the

⁷⁹² MT 14

⁷⁹³ I developed this theme in the article "Mysteries for the Uninitiated. The Role and Symbolism of the Eucharist in Miraculous Dream Healing" in *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy: Issues of Doctrinal History in East and West from the Patristic Age to the Reformation* eds. I. Perczel, R. Forrai and G. Geréby, 97-130 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006).

⁷⁹⁴ Arians were called Exakionites in Constantinople during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395), becauseu their meeting place was in the Exakionion quarter, cf. Festugière's references to Sozomen and Theodoret, *Saint Thècle, Saint Côme et Damien...*, 134-135, note 71

saints are that they heal not only the believers of the right faith, but also the enemies of Orthodoxy. The sick man, arriving at the church, did not dare to undergo incubation together with the rest of the patients, exactly because he was well aware of being considered a heretic. Thus he was waiting for the curative dream in an external hall. During the first visit of the saints he witnessed in his dream how they dissuaded each other from saving him, saying, let him wait, if he is delaying to convert: the orthodox patients have priority. In the second dream the dialogue is similar, but finally one of the saints urges the other to heal the heretic, as quickly as he can, so that he would not occupy the place of the orthodox, - and after a miraculous intervention they order him to leave the sanctuary, “because we hate you for your heresy”.

For the viewpoint of the saints, the hagiographer and his readers Orthodoxy in this miracle labelled the credo established by the Council of Nicea (325), and which was confirmed by the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), in the centre of which stood the definition of Christ’s double nature: at once divine and human. In Nicea they condemned Arius, who taught that Christ the Son was subject to the Father, and not of the same nature with him. In Ephesus they condemned Nestorius who emphasised Christ’s human nature: as Mary gave birth to the human Jesus, he denied the epithet *Theotokos*, the Bearer of God. The theological answer to the teachings of Nestorius was the Monophysite movement, which proclaimed the one, exclusively divine nature of Christ, a teaching that from the 5th century onwards was supported by a decisive majority in Asia Minor, Syria, Persia and in Egypt (and with time became an independent church). In Chalcedon, with the support of the emperor Marcianos and Pope Leo, the diphysites triumphed, those who believed in the two natures and their consubstantiality. At the same time, by forging ecclesiastical authority from the political leadership of Constantinople, they made their credo the cornerstone of Orthodoxy.

In the version of the same miracle of the Arian heretic, the London Codex identifies the protagonist as one “who had two illnesses: one was the grave physical illness, the other, spiritual one: the heresy of the diphysites.”⁷⁹⁵ All the details of the story are identical: the patient did not dare to sleep inside the church, “knowing well, that he is of a creed contrary to that of the saints”, and the saints sent him away with the same words, signalling the priority the Orthodox patients should enjoy – only the orthodoxies are turned upside-down: here the dyphysite Chalcedonian is the heretic, and monophysites are numbered as Orthodox.

The same theological message is conveyed in the 19th miracle of the London Codex, the protagonist of which is “a Nestorian man, who also accepted the latter sect’s hateful teachings, separating Christ after the Incarnation into two natures and never admitting His Mother to be the Bearer of God. He fell ill with a horrendous disease.” Since his life was in peril because of an abscess

⁷⁹⁵ CL 21

on his chest, he wanted to see his daughter for the last time, who lived as a nun in the monastery next to the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian:

While the heretic was lying there and invoking the saints, somebody appeared to him and very angrily demanded that he should bow and say: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God,” and everything that follows up to the verse “The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us.” When the man immediately confessed this, the other added “Consequently, if the Word is God and the Word was made flesh and dwelled among men, then He is in no way divided, but is one and His nature is one; and the one who gave birth to Him, having given birth to God the Word in the flesh, is the Bearer of God.” Having said this, he vanished.

The saints appeared again to the man and testified that it was they who wanted to make him say this confession and also revealed that bean would be the remedy for his illness. “The man, having done as he was ordered, quickly found relief from his sickness. And until the end of his life he remained a right confessor of the one, undivided nature of God the Word and of that the Virgin Mary is the Bearer of God...” The text is clearly based on an anti-Chalcedonian creed. The error attributed to the “Nestorian” is that, according to him, Christ exists in two natures after the Incarnation. That is simply the dogma of Chalcedon, which the Anti-Chalcedonian author of the miracle calls Nestorian. This miracle must have been dear to the scribe or to those who had commissioned the manuscript, since these two folia, where the record is, are outstandingly decorated in comparison with the simplicity of rest of the codex. (Although initials decorated with plain red or brown lines are not rare in this MS, this miracle begins with a beautiful, big initial M; still more significant are the highly elaborated floral decorations at the bottom of the page, which are absolutely unique in the codex.)

In the narratives of the London Codex there are several characteristics, which may point to that collection having been written in Egypt or, that a story-material known from elsewhere or the version of the text that served as the basis of the copy, gained a local colouring. In the background of these features lies the fact that the major part of Egypt, (together with Syria) did not accept the Chalcedonian credo. Seeing side by side the two versions of Cosmas and Damian’s miracles, the questions arise: whether the London Codex was a Monophysite reworking of a diphysite text, written in Egypt for the anti-Chalcedonian adherents of the cult? Did a Monophysite incubation cult exist at the place where the collection was read? Or quite the contrary: instead of representing a Monophysite reworking, the *Codex* attests to a healing cult of originally Monophysite character (it actually did originate from Syria): a cult that after it reached the capital and it became really popular there, underwent a theological and dogmatic transformation? Rewriting hagiographical works because their content was at at one point considered heretical can be illustrated by the 6th century *Passio* of Cyrikos and Julitta, the earlier version of which Theodore of Iconium found inauthentic and heretical and thus he decided to replace it with a “true” and truly Orthodox version.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁶ Rapp, “Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians”, 38 (The *Passio* itself: “Sanctorum Cyriaci et Julittae actae graeca sincera nunc primum edita” *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882): 201-207)

It was the seventh-century hagiographer, Sophronios, the later patriarch of Jerusalem, who gave the cult of Cyrus and John a marked Orthodox standing through the miracles. In an Egypt that was Monophysite, for Sophronios personally Orthodoxy meant the Chalcedonian credo, and he voiced his faith using the saints themselves as his mouthpiece. Hence Cyrus and John lecture in a dream a heretic, a follower of Julian of Halicarnassus: “They talked to him in doctrinal terms, explaining the truth preached in the Church and in this way they ascertained the teaching about the saving union of Christ, our God.” (MCJ 12) Just as in this case, the healers make on other occasions as well the confession of Orthodoxy as the condition of the miraculous cure, and as an outward sign they usually request the taking of the Eucharist in the Orthodox way. What was the unorthodox way of Communion is depicted in a miracle of a man, who was one “of those who cut themselves off from the Catholic Church [...] namely he was a heretic, a follower of Julian of Halicarnassus.” (MCJ 36) In a series of incubation dreams, instead of bringing a cure, the saints first inflict pain upon the man until he promises to take Orthodox Communion; and then to test his state of mind the saints visit him again in disguise and invite him to receive the Eucharist together with them. The man refuses, and according to the custom of heretics, he asked for oil from the lamp burning on the saints’ tomb instead of bread and wine. This miracle opens a separate unit within the miracle corpus of Saints Cyrus and John, in the centre of the collection. Their prominent placement within the corpus attests the importance that Sophronios the hagiographer attributed to them. These miracles (36, 37, 38 and 39) all describe the saints forcing heretics (monophysites) to take the Eucharist in the Orthodox way and confess the creed of Chalcedon. In the next episode (Miracle 37), Communion is regarded as a cure for spiritual blindness. This fundamental conceptual unity of bodily and spiritual healing is expressed in the patient’s double infirmity: the blindness of his faith is his heresy (he is a follower of Theodosius and Severus, that is, a Monophysite from the Chalcedonian point of view, and a subdeacon of the community), of which the blindness of his eyes is rather an outward symbol. He waits in the church for a cure for more than a year but refuses to take Communion. Once in a dream he sees himself praying for health at the tomb of the saints, who appear and lead him to the altar, offering him bread. They all, the saints and the patient, receive it, and drink wine afterwards; finally the saints advise him to do the same when awake. In the morning, he quickly fulfils this order, and on the third day his eyesight returns, together with the illumination of his soul. But soon he relapses, because he must take the post of his dead father, who was the head of a Severian community. Saints Cyrus and John appear in front of him on his way home, give him a slap, and take away his regained sight. When he understands why, he repents and after a period of incubation lasting three days and nights, he is visited by a dream referring to the miracles of Jesus. He wakes up cured and becomes a monk, the servant of the martyrs.

The protagonist of the next miracle (Miracle 38) suffers from the same diseases, blindness and heresy. After four months of fruitless waiting, the saints appear in a dream dressed as monks, and invite him to the sacristy, where they offer him bread with the image of the cross impressed in it. Three times Cyrus hands the man the bread; three times the man drops it involuntarily. Cyrus sighs and sadly regrets that the man never came to receive the Eucharist, and hence they cannot grant his wish. When awake, the patient hurries to Communion:

He hastened to the Communion of the Catholic Church and after partaking in her mysteries his eyesight was restored. Because of this, even his servant has become one of the faithful sheep of the Saviour, considering clear madness, although a Barbarian, to fight against God, the saints, the Catholic Church and the orthodox faith.⁷⁹⁷

But when our man is asked by his servant whether at home they will also retain this new habit of taking the orthodox Communion, he answers thus: “While we are here, we do what the saints order. When we leave, we keep our own doctrines as before and the faith transmitted by our fathers.” Small wonder, then, that divine punishment strikes him with pains and restores his former blindness. When the saints reveal him the cause, a more elaborated initiation, a real *mystagogia* is necessary. The man receives the sacraments directly from the hands of a beautiful maiden in bright garments, Ecclesia herself, the Bride of Christ. The protagonist of another miracle from the set of forced Eucharist stories (MCJ 39) was Peter, a prior of an Egyptian Monophysite group, which, like many others, refused to accept the Council of Chalcedon. Seeking cure in the Church of Saints Cyrus and John, when he hears that the condition of cure would be the taking the Orthodox Communion, he said it was a bad idea and he cursed the Chalcedonian synod, “because – says the hagiographer – out of irrationality and barbaric feeling the Egyptians show a great hatred against this sacred council, just like once against the people of Israel, who were their relatives and parents. Hence Peter said that neither he wanted to obtain health, nor consent what was brought together at the synod of Chalcedon.” But the saints repeatedly confess their Chalcedonian faith and urged Peter to take Communion.

While he was still hesitating whether to partake in the mysteries, they said: ‘Is it not sufficient for you, o Peter, to believe as we do and to join us in the matter of faith?’ But he dared to answer them again in the following way: ‘Is this true? You, the great servants of Christ, also believe like the council of Chalcedon?’ And the saints approved that they agree with the sacred multitude of the holy men and that they believe according to the faith of the council of Chalcedon. They also declared that the definition of the aforementioned council constitutes the correct faith and the God-inspired preaching.⁷⁹⁸

The personal conviction of the hagiographer, the Chalcedonian Sophronios, contests what was considered Orthodox in the surroundings of the cult by most of the pilgrims. Through their hagiographer the saints are Orthodox in a way contrary both to their cult place and their suppliants. The majority of the miracle collections I was dealing with share the Chalcedonian propaganda of

⁷⁹⁷ MCJ 38.

⁷⁹⁸ MCJ 39.

Sophronios, attacking the teachings of Arius, Nestorius, Theodosius, Severus, and Julian of Halicarnassus but the monophysite London Codex's definition of Orthodoxy allows a glimpse into the variety of Orthodoxies and the changing definition of it, phenomena that point to shifts of emphasis the rivalling healing cults underwent, and to changes of theological climate within the same cult itself. The laudable skill of all these hagiographers of miraculous healing is that they exploited in their theological propaganda the very form of incubation narratives, by picturing the healer's recitation of a creed as a recipe, and presenting the Orthodox Eucharist and other gestures of confession as thaumaturgic remedies, functioning in the same way as prescribed herbs or exercises.

Conclusion

The history of Byzantine incubation as reflected in the dream miracle collections represents an organic development, and also a voluntarily embraced continuity. It was a transmission of the cult, the formation of the source material and the way of recording, the narrative pattern as well. This transmission from the pagan practice to the Christian incubation ritual concerned the elements of the cult, that is, the cult place, the cult function (healing) and the technique of healing as well as the ritual (temple sleep) and the medium (dream). It is common to both pagan and Christian incubation practice that the sacred place was more important than the figure of the healer. Sleeping there, at the specific sacred precinct is essential to the ritual itself, even if it involves that somebody other than the patient has to go to the place. This centrality of the cult site generated the rivalries between different cult places of the same healer, even in the Christian context, what adds a particular feature to the otherwise universal character of Christ's power and the everpresence of His grace manifested through the saints. The key position of the place has various other results for the ritual and for the narrative as well. It explains the importance of invitation dreams, the lack of healings at a distance, which is mostly limited to miracles on the way to or from the sanctuary. It explains why the Byzantine incubation saint acts as the master of the house, inhabiting his specific "home". In the Christian context this characteristic amalgamated two other aspects: the pagan concept of the sanctuary as the god's (and his cult statue's) abode and the Christian localization of the relics. Menouthis is an extreme example for how the place called for inventing and "accommodating" its new Christian occupants, who gained all their importance solely as the new masters of the healing place. Menouthis is also a case work for how much the cult practice, the ritual itself was linked to the place and attests that it was not enough to establish new Christian occupants with the same cult function (healing) but it was necessary to accommodate the rite of temple sleep as well. Furthermore, the miracle stories and collections celebrate the sacred space, the fame of the sanctuary, not so much the healer in general.⁷⁹⁹

It is remarkable that the healing technique of the saints show much closer resemblance with the healing gestures and means of Asclepius than with those of Christ. Van Cangh established the outline of the two healing techniques and a glance at it will suffice to determine which paradigm the incubation saints followed:⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁹ "... la centralità del santuario, tanto nella pratica quanto nella rappresentazione dei miracoli: Nelle raccolte pagane – come in quelle cristiane – i prodigi interessano in quanto legati a un determinato luogo: non tanto le *aretai* di Asclepio, quanto le *aretai* dello stesso Epidauro, non i miracoli di Cosma e Damiano, ma i loro miracoli nella chiesa di Costantinopoli. (.....) ad emergere è dunque la gloria del santuario ancor prima di quella della divinità." Dorati, "Funzioni e motivi", 97.

⁸⁰⁰ Van Cangh. "Santé et salut dans les miracles d'Epidaure, d'Apollonius de Tyane et de Nouveau Testament" In *Gnosticisme et monde hellénistique*, ed. Julien Ries et al., 263-277 (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982), 269-270.

1. In Epidauros healing in sleep, in dream, with incubation, inside the temple, at its most sacred, specific space. Jesus healed during daytime, patients who are wide awake, outdoors, without sacred place.
2. Several miracle cures in Epidauros verge on the extraordinary, the means of the cures display the miraculous. There is nothing like that in the Gospels, Jesus healed with his word, sometimes accompanied with a simple gesture, without performing wonders.
3. Asclepius besides surgical interventions often applied complex treatments, which echo (however miraculously) contemporary medicine. Nothing of this sort with Jesus, who heals with the word or with the laying-on of his hands or with his saliva.
4. In Epidauros priests of the deity also took part in the cure, they explain the dream, help with the prescribed cure. Jesus acts alone.
5. the richness of the Asclepian sanctuaries in contrast to the free healing of Jesus
6. according to Van Canghai, Asclepius expected faith in his thaumaturgical powers and severely punished the sceptical while Jesus heals also the incredulous.

The healing gestures of the incubation saints differs not only from the paradigm set by Christ but from the contemporary model of other Byzantine saints (living saints, stylites, ascetics or cults around the relics).

The Christian acceptance of the dream as medium of the cure also acted as a structuring principle both in the cult experience (the visual encounter and dialogue with the healers and in their capacity to act in a way otherwise unimaginable) as well as in the story pattern of the miracles.

In addition to having a structural role, the dream account is a simple compositional technique whereby authors can introduce a dialogue between God and a human being. This oneiric dialogue may have some concrete end and be the opportunity for a direct intervention on the part of God in the evolution of the dreamer [...] But this dialogue may also be the form chosen in order to develop some aspect of teaching or for theological reflection [...] provides the setting for a real debate [...] or the opportunity to underline certain theological principles at the key point in the story.⁸⁰¹

What Husser wrote concerning Biblical dream as a framework is strengthened by Stroumsa's observation, that "in a sense, however, the place of dreams in the medieval imaginaire seems paradoxically closer to their place in pagan antiquity than to the place they occupied in the Christian psyche."⁸⁰² Similarly, the development and handling of the sources of the incubation experience were also analogous in the pagan and Christian context. The order of the formation of the sources in chronologically consecutive: votive objects, oral tales, miracle narratives. This logical succession of the stages that led from the religious experience to the literary shaped miracle stories and then to structured miracle collections was in part accidental, as with the Christian overtake of the pagan cult, the channels of cult experience naturally remained the same. But the continuation of the development of testimonies and the passage from the cure to the miracle collections was at the same

⁸⁰¹ Husser, 104.

time a purposeful act. The Christian recorders of dream cures voluntarily adhered to the ancient model of transmission. This voluntary aspect is attested by the fact that the Christian hagiographers did not only use the same naturally developing oral and material sources but the miracle stories establish a network of references to these sources as part of the narrative pattern. The inclusion of the votive testimonies of the miracle as well as the representation of the telling of the miracles within the stories not only attested to their presence but also generated them and perpetuated their being part and parcel of the cult experience. I found it revealing to examine the “reality” of these references. They can be either true testimonies to objects, votives, proofs of the cure as well as to the oral source and context of the transmission of the miracle. They can of course be fictitious references. But in both cases they are part of the narrative, of the rules of how to tell/write an incubation miracle story. Studying the formation of these miracles and their close adherence to the practice they recorded I arrived at the conclusion that the scheme of incubation miracle narrative was a specifically strong pattern; we may say that it was a narrative form, but it was a form which could be filled only with one content. My analysis of the compositional structures of the miracle stories investigated into what was actually the incubation narrative pattern, of what elements was it build up and how much this construction was influenced by the personality and literary aim of the miracle writers. But it was not only the hagiographer who composed these stories; the saints, the patients, the dream-imagery of individuals as well as of a community, the milieu of the cult place also contributed, just as the rules of the incubation story itself shaped its own formation. I could follow how a way of telling a cult experience was so intimately linked to the practice itself, that with the Christian overtake of both cult and the way of recording it brought in such elements of Late Antique Christian hagiography that were often foreign to Byzantine miracles. The tenacity of the incubation story-scheme can be ascertained not only by its resistance over centuries, even with the change of religious climate. But by an example that the frame was so strong, once associated with the incubation saints, that it entered into non-incubational hagiography as well. The appearance of Cosmas and Damian in the legend of Saint Dometios brought along not just the mention of incubation but its integration into the saint’s Life and into his cult.⁸⁰³ But something more happened in the *Vita* of Saint Theodore of Sykeon; the figures of Cosmas and Damian placed the story into such a narrative framework, the elements of which are identical with the miracle scheme the saints habitually applied and which was probably well known to Theodore’s hagiographer.⁸⁰⁴ The event took place not in the saints’ church, but in Theodore’s “home”, in his monastery and we are not dealing with voluntary sleep, neither invoking the saints, but the narrative at several points coincide with the incubation pattern, even at points that are secondary to Theodore’s miracle.

⁸⁰² Stroumsa, “Dreams and Visions”, 191.

⁸⁰³ The presence of incubation could similarly evoke the figures of Cosmas and Damian as well.

⁸⁰⁴ *Life of Theodore of Sykeon*, chapter 39; E. Dawes, and N. H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints (Daniel, Theodore of Sykeon, John the Almsgiver)* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948).

After the Saint had returned to his monastery, it happened that he fell so ill of a desperate sickness that he saw the holy angels coming down upon him; and he began to weep and to be sorely-troubled. Now above him there stood an icon of the wonder-working saints Cosmas and Damian. These saints were seen by him looking just as they did in that sacred icon and they came close to him, as doctors usually do;

The story starts as if we were reading the beginning of an incubation rite, the sick man falls asleep, the saints appear in dream in their form familiar from their icon, and in the role for which the incubants usually turn to them. The narration continues with the gestures frequent in the incubation experience, with the saints' medical round, their setting up the diagnosis, with the questioning the sick man in the usual dialogue of doctor and patient:

...they felt his pulse and said to each other that he was in a desperate state as his strength has failed and the angels had come down from heaven to him. And they began to question him saying: 'Why are you weeping and are sore troubled, brother?' He answered them, 'Because I am unrepentant, sirs, and also because of this little flock which is only newly-instructed and is not yet stabilised and requires much care.' They asked him, 'Would you wish us to go and plead for you that you may be allowed to live for a while?' He answered, 'If you do this, you would do me a great service, by gaining for me time for repentance and you shall win the reward of my repentance and my work from henceforth.' Then the saints turned to the angels and besought them to grant him yet a little time while they went to implore the King on his behalf.

They succeed in postponing Theodore's imminent death and the closure of the miracle is also reminiscent to the incubation corpora:

... the Saints, Cosmas and Damian, said to the Saint: 'Rise up, brother, and look to thyself and to thy flock; for our merciful Master Who readily yields to supplication has received our petition on your behalf and grants you life to labour for 'the meat which perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life' and to care for many souls.' With these words they too, vanished. Theodore immediately regained his health and strength; the sickness left him and glorifying God he resumed his life of abstinence and the regular recital of the psalms with still greater zeal and diligence.

The miracles of Byzantine incubation reflect parallelly existing principles of faith, challenging each other, and they show even more the anxieties, expectations and power struggles of given communities. The narratives reach their reader in a way that even if theological redaction permeates the sources to a great extent, the basic layer of the miracle stories is that of personal experience. Hence the reader – listener may witness real internal struggles, when a patient is to measure what compromise he is to make as a price of healing: whether he can implore the saints as a heretic, what is the risk of breaking away from his or her family and fellows, or on the contrary: what it means to stand out for them. The fact that these stories of miraculous healing are at the same time *miroirs des corps* and *miroirs des âmes* means not only that they shed light upon man's relationship to illness, the sacred, conviction or sin but they also highlight those human situations, where the personal voice overcomes the impersonal theological message, that at the end called them to life.

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