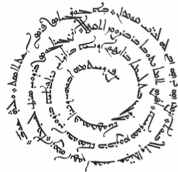
The Sleeper's Dream



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The Sleeper's Dream

Asclepius Ritual and Early Christian Discourse

Jeffrey B. Pettis

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PREFACE

This inquiry has impetus in my study of the archeological remains of ancient temples at Corinth, summer 2001. On a hot afternoon, after much searching, I came upon the remains of the Asclepius Temple. Grown over with bush and partially buried with the dust and earth of half a century, the temple in its vestige form captivated me. In New York I had been studying the design and history of the Asclepius temple at Corinth as part of my PhD field examinations. The archaeologist Carl Roebuck studied the site in 1946. The Greeks built the temple in the fourth century BCE, and Julius Caesar rebuilt it about one hundred years after Mummius' sack of Corinth in 146 BCE. The cult drew a lot of attention in the Hellenistic world. As a cult, it represents an intersection between Greek (Roman) and early Christian religion—one which raises questions about heaven and earth, and the tangible and intangible ways human beings relate to and with(in) each. The use and interpretation of dreams as salvific mediums occur as central elements of this intersection. In what follows I have set out to explore that which I see to be the poignancy of this relationship, and to consider the meaning and potency of dreaming for the ancients. My aim has been to work though these ancient dreams, to become familiar with their processes: epiphany, conflict, liminality, revelation, transformation. The specifics of this treatment include working with ancient dream-texts, language, and archaeological sources to gain a better understanding of the socio-cultural and religio-historical context and content of the sources, authors, and communities.

INTRODUCTION

> Julian moving the army against the Persians (in 386 CE), came to Tarsus, a famous city of Cilicia. While he was there, Artemius, the priest of Asclepius, came to see him; for in Aegae, also a city of Cilicia, there was a very famous shrine of Asclepius. The pillars which the high priest of the Christian people happened to have carried off from the shrine and with which he had built a temple for his own people he urged him to restore again to the shrine of Asclepius. And the Apostate straightway commanded that this be done at the expense of the bishop Zonaras. (*Epitome Historiarum*, XIII, 12C–D)[1]

The early Christian community experienced and perceived Jesus as a saviour who heals and overcomes death through resurrection. Likewise, the Asclepius Cult attests to Asclepius as one who saves through healing and overcomes death through resurrection. The similarities between early Christian cults and the Asclepius cult and the emphasis on salvation/healing, a saviour deity, and patronage by large Mediterranean populations offer a valuable comparison for readings of early Christian sources.

As a "saviour" and healer, Asclepius would have been perceived by early Christian groups as a potential competitor to their own savior and healer, Jesus. The Asclepius cult centered upon dream experience as a means of bodily healing, and early Christian groups therefore made a concerted effort to avoid giving central place and/or ritual importance to dreaming and dream experience. There were no Christian structures (temples or "dream room" *aba-*

[1] From Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998, 1945): T820, pp. 420–21.

tons) dedicated to dreams. Nor did early Christian cults give primary importance to the use of dreams in relation to bodily healing and/or salvation. Rather, early Christian groups used dreams as irrefutable and provocative material for early Christian discourse. It is hard to argue with a dream. The Asclepius cult took this seriously, and so did the early Christian groups. Religious and political authorities within the early Church (bishops, presbyters and theologians) incorporated dreams into a larger context of what may be called early Christian rhetoric.

Dreams represent a rare, vital depository of human experience, and in this way they are of particular value for the study of early Christianity. Dreams give access into the world of the dreamer: the religio-social and cultural images, practices, and circumstances of those who dream, and the cult communities associated with those who dream. The dream subject (i.e. the "dreamer") affords a vantage-point by which to read and explore the similarities, differences and significance of early Christian cult dreams in relation to healing and the dreams and practices of the Asclepius cult.

What is the difference between these two communities and their perceptions and experiences of deity and salvation? Early Christians, like any of the religious communities of antiquity, drew on religious experience which they found viscerally and spiritually invigorating. The nature, perception and practice of the interplay of body and πνεῦμα, "spirit", may ultimately differentiate the two groups with regard to salvation, shedding light on what made early Christian groups viable and let to their expansion throughout the known world. Early Christian groups saw the Asclepius group as being something to take seriously, as vital and enduring for much of the Greco-Roman world. As such, the cult had to be dissociated and differentiated in their concern to root themselves in that same world. The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–340 CE) relates this tension in his words about Asclepius who is both famous and a deceiver:

> As to the God [Asclepius] of the Cilicians, great was, indeed, the deception of persons seemingly wise, with thousands excited over him as if over a savior and physician who now revealed himself to those sleeping (in a temple) and again healed the diseases of those ailing in body; of the souls, though, he was a downright destroyer (ὀλετὴρ), drawing them away from

> the true Saviour (ἀληθοῦς Σωτῆρος) and leading into godless imposture those who were susceptible to fraud; the emperor [*s.c.*, Constantine], therefore, acting fairly, holding the true Savior a jealous god, commanded that this temple, too, be raised to its foundations.[2]

Asclepius might be a healer, but he destroys souls, and is not the True Saviour, and his temple should be torn down. Eusebius has nothing nice to say about the cult and its god, and his vituperation suggests what might be an over-reaction to the popularity and staying-power of the cult which subsequently is a threat to the Church. Asclepius makes Eusebius nervous.

Salvation for the Asclepius cult occurred through a psyche-soma process—a mixture of dreams and medicine that integrated the masculine and feminine elements of spirit and body. Healing occurred through dreams embedded within Asclepius temple ritual and worship inextricably connected with the manipulation of forces (real and perceived) of the natural world. For early Christian groups, salvation follows out of the mixture of dream and Word. Dreams contributed to and became part of Christian *kerygma*, enriching early Christian "proclamation" as life-force. For early Christians, healing occurred through dreams as part of a burgeoning prowess (and manipulation) of early Christian Word and rhetoric.

SURVEY OF DREAM INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH

Approaches to the examination of ancient dreams go from general to specific. Dreams may be considered in light of religio-cultural trajectories (e.g., Egyptian verses Greek). E. R. Dodds examines what he calls "techniques" of dreams, which include isolation, prayer, fasting, self-mutilation, sleeping on the skin of a sacrificed animal, and incubation.[3] One key source for the study of ancient

[2] Eusebius of Caesarea *De Vita Constantini* III.56. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T818, pp. 419–420. Cf. Sozomenus (fifth century CE), *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.5, from Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T819, p. 420.

[3] E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951): 102–134. See also E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian*

dreams used here in this study is the literary evidence gathered by Emma and Ludwig Edelstein.[4]

Patricia Cox Miller gives the most recent critical study of ancient dreams. Her work entitled *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* presents a comparative study of the types and uses of dreams in the ancient world from Homer to late antiquity, with a focus mostly on Greco-Roman and Christian writers. She sifts through phenomena such as dreams, visions, imagination, ecstasy, and the way various thinkers and writers understand and use such terms. These thinkers and writers include Homer, Plato, Plotinus, Cicero, Philo, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine. Miller explores what she calls the "figurative" nature of dreams as "people"[5] presented in Homer's two gates of ivory and horn, Ovid's personification of emotions,[6] and Lucian's "people of dreams."[7] Miller's focus on figuration tends toward a comprehensive reading of dreams as semiotic texts—an approach she reads against Virgil.[8] She looks closely at the second century CE taxonomic work of Artemidorus, and his treatise entitled *Oneirocritica*—a collection and categorization of dreams from around Asia Minor, Italy, and Greece. Miller writes:

> Artemidorus' book is a classification both of dreams, according to types of dreams, and by dreams, according to oneric images. Systematization of the dream according to type was one of the ways in which the interpreter could "manage" oneric phenomenon by imposing a semantic structure, while systema-

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in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience From Marcus Aurelius to Constantine (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965).

[4] Edelstein, *Asclepius*, Part I pp.1–452. References to Edelstein in this study are from Part I, unless otherwise noted. For a listing of all the sources used by Edelstein, including translation and publication information, the reader should consult Edelstein, *Asclepius*, pp. 453–470. For a bibliography, see Maria Girone, *Iamata: Guarigioni Miracolose Di Asclepio in Testi Epigrafici* (1998).

[5] Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 17.

[6] Ibid., 23.

[7] Ibid., 27.

[8] Ibid., 26.

> tization of the dream by the kinds of images that appear in them was another managerial technique for controlling meaning by imposing a semiotic code.[9]

An understanding of Greek and Roman culture cannot occur without paying attention to its various forms of religious experience.[10] Dreams are a phenomenon of human experience. Dreaming involves the whole of the human being—imagination, mind, emotion and body. Dreams reflect in symbols and imagery an inner world of the dreamer and the outer world with which the dreamer interacts and to which her dreams respond. The liminal quality of dreams, conjoined with what Miller refers to as the "quick-silver intractability" of dreams, yield their inherent poignancy out of which healing, resurrection and re-bodiment issue for cults of both the Asclepius and the early Christians. Because human nature in its deeper structural basis is slow to change, historical dreams provide valuable material for understanding the world and thought of antiquity in general and the early Church in particular. Marie-Louise von Franz notes that

> [The] reason for studying historical dreams lies in the fact that human nature in its deeper structural basis, does not change much within a few hundred years, so that we can look upon such historical dreams as still valuable case material through which it is possible to study some deeper typical reactions to the human psyche.[11]

In other words, von Franz is saying that dreams constitute valuable material for understanding and reaching into the ancient world, and the people and culture of that world. They contain psyche-soma movement which can be quite revealing—even centuries later.

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[9] Ibid., 80.

[10] Georg Luck, *Ancient Pathways and Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals, and Magic in the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000): vii.

[11] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Dreams: a Study of the Dreams of Jung, Descartes, Socrates, and Other Historical Figures* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1998): 66.

OVERVIEW

The Sleeper's Dream looks comparatively at the religio-cultural background and significance of dream texts and practices of early Christian groups and the Asclepius cult. Part One considers the nature of ancient dreams and the workings of the Asclepius cult, and Part Two focuses on the orientation of early Christian cults to dreams and healing. Chapter 1 surveys the history of dreams in antiquity, how the ancients defined and understood dreams, and the significance of Asclepius cult dreams and historical and architectural history of the Asclepius cult, with a specific focus on the Asclepius temples at Epidaurus, Corinth, Cos and Pergamum. The geographical location of temples and the importance of the natural environment, the socio-historical backgrounds of temple patrons, and the growing popularity of the cult are considered. Temple ritual and worship, literary and archaeological testimonies of dream appearances of Asclepius, and testimonies of healing through incubation also receive attention.

Chapter 2 examines the ancients' relationship to the nature and practice of (Hippocratic) medicine intricately connected with the Asclepius cult rituals and worship, including the types of herb and medical applications. References to dreams in antiquity often include references to pharmacological and medicinal applications. The chapter explores the significance of the cult's rooting of dreams in body, and also the nature of temple ritual practices of natural healing. These include purification baths, sacrifices made to the deity, dream incubation, and the application of natural mineral and plant remedies (ointments, solutions, applications). The fourth century CE the text "Isis to Horus," from the *Codex Marcianus* offers a collection of alchemical sayings and practices which shed light on the ways the Asclepius cult used and perceived earth healing methods. The *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (c.30 BCE–c.600 CE) provides background for the use of plants and healing through a collection of pharmacological spells, incantations, formulas and incantations.

Chapter 3 examines selected dreams of Aelius Aristides, paying attention to the relationship between dream and body, considering the significance of dream "experience" in relation to the Asclepius cult perception of materiality and the body, and looking at the significance of the temple *abaton* as a vessel of dream experi-

ence and healing, and the dream movement of "inner knowing" which results from incubation.

Over 700 early Christian Greek and Latin texts refer to dreams, some with a higher frequency of references than others. The dreams examine a range of themes, including foreknowledge, beasts, natural forces (air, sun, moon) and elements (gold, earth), chastity, "inner knowledge", soothsaying, divine instruction, religious belief, human body, immortality, death, prophecy, prayer, and warning, but I have given particular attention to those which deal with body/matter and healing. Four dreams narratives have been selected for in-depth analysis, which represent early Christian groups and religio-cultural movements and traditions of both eastern and western Christianity through the first five centuries.

The dreams of Joseph in Matthew 1–2 are examined in Chapter 4, and compared to dreams in ancient Jewish literature—specifically the Joseph dreams in Genesis. Unlike the Asclepius cult, these dreams lack an emphasis on body/materiality. Written perhaps in Antioch, Syria about 90 CE, an examination of the orientation to dreams on the part of the Matthean writing may offer insight into the Matthean Greek-speaking, Jewish-Christian community. As such, they will reflect religio-spiritual, socio-political interests of the author and the community for which he or his school writes.

The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitus (203 CE) is examined in Chapter 5. This dream text consists of four visions. The account relates the last days of the African martyr Perpetua and those who suffered with her. She was put to death in Carthage, 202–203 CE. The account is representative of ascetic, spirit-focused practices of Christianity in Asia Minor.

The dreams of the mothers of Gregory Nazianzus and Augustine are addressed in Chapter 6. Gregory Nazianzus (330–390 CE) was schooled in both Greco-Roman and Christian literature, and embraced the thought of Origen of Alexandria (185?–254? CE). In his *Oration* XVIII, "On the Death of His Father," he references the dream experience of his mother, Nonna. She tells him how he appears in the dream as a central healing figure. The consideration of Nonna's dream will move the investigation specifically into the religion of eastern Christianity. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) recounts a dream of his mother Monica in his *Confessions* (III.11). The dream includes themes such as sacrifice and the embrace of

human intuition. This may relate to the quality of "inner knowing" which occurs in dream experience in Asclepius incubation dreams.

Chapter 7 provides a full consideration of the differences between the Asclepius cult and early Christian cult orientation toward dreams. What is lost and or gained with regard to dreams and healing between the two cult movements? Most importantly, how are such differences significant for a socio-religious and cultural reading of the early Church and its Greco-Roman context? How might such significance alter the way scholarship reads early Christian dreams? Do text and healing experience go hand-in-hand, and what does it mean to say that Christian "Word" gives life (healing, salvation)? Are dreams presented more as language rather than being part of temple-ritual and practices, and to what extent, if any, with regard to dreams and healing, do the sacred texts of early Christian cults stand in for and replace sacred psyche-soma potency of the Asclepius cult? How do dreams function for Christians when and if placed within this new framework of sacred "Word"? What is the relationship between dream, rhetoric, and "power"? The (inner world) of dreams given expression in early Christian discourse offers a malleable and provocative media for (re)-defining and (re)-envisioning religio-political ideals and boundaries of the outer world. How do dreams of early Christian cults function as part of what Michael Mann terms "a specialized sphere of ideological power"?[12] More importantly, how do the early Christians understand dreams and healing/salvation to issue from that power?

Most important, however, is the question of the religio-spiritual perception of salvation and dreams by early Christian groups. What does salvation mean for Asclepius cult dreamers and for early Christian dreamers? Are there points of intersection between early Christian groups and Asclepius, and too, where are there differences? The author of the Gospel of John makes it clear that Jesus is the resurrection and the life (ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή), and whoever believes in him will not die but live always. He tells

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[12] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power From the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986): vol. 1, p. 338.

Martha this as a prelude to bringing Lazarus back from the dead (John 11:25–26). Ovid tells how Asclepius also raised a human from the dead and for this act was struck down by the thunderbolt of Zeus. Then Asclepius himself is resurrected and brought back to life (*Metamorphoses* II.640–48). It seems that there is a strong thematic undercurrent connecting the cult of Asclepius and the cults of the Jesus movement. Each speaks of and exists in response to concept(s) of "healing" and "salvation" in relation to dreams.

Part 1: Ancient Dreams and the Asclepius Dream Cult

Chapter 1: Dreams in Antiquity

… let him enter into …
… he will have ten days …
… entering, bathing, if …
… to be set free, let him purify completely …
… let him go toward the god …
into the great incubation room (τὸ μέγα ἐνκοιμητήριον), the incubant …
… with pure white sacrificial victims garlanded with olive shoots
… neither seal-ring nor belt nor …
… barefoot …
(*Inscriptio Pergamena*, II, no. 264)[1]

The ancient dream

Specific dream references in Homer occur as part of the larger Homeric epic, which is itself a shadowy dream of winged words and sacrifices to the gods. Homer gives mytho-poetic expression to the vicissitudes and aspirations of human beings interacting with the tangible and intangible eighth-century world. The exploration of the qualities of human beings and the query into the depths of such qualities constitute the fabric of the folkloric world of the ancient Greeks.[2] However, dreams issue out of this religio-cultural

[1] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T512, p. 291.

[2] The historian Chester G. Starr writes: "In reflection of the growing pride and individualism of the upper classes who were slowly becoming self-conscious in the eighth century, Homer fashioned a dream of emancipated heroes, competing for honor in the eyes of men, which was thenceforth to be a polar companion to the equally strong Greek feeling

event as part of the living imagination. From this culture the earliest Asclepius cult and temple (Epidaurus) will emerge in the seventh century BCE.

In the ancient world Homer presents the first clear concept of dreams. In the *Odyssey* Homer establishes a twofold division between non-predictive and predictive dreams. He refers to these as the gates of shadowy dreams (τε πύλαι ἀμενενῶν εἰσὶν ὀνείρον). They consist of the gate fashioned of ivory (ἐλέφαντι τετεύχαται, and the gate of horn (κεράεσσι). Penelope, speaking to Odysseus (disguised as a beggar), refers to these gates and their dreams:

> Stranger, know that dreams are baffling and unclear (ὄνειροι ἀμήχανοι ἀκριτόμυθοι), and that they do not at all find fulfillment for people in every case. For there are two gates of shadowy dreams, and one is fashioned of horn (κεράεσσι) and one of ivory (ἐλέφαντι). Those dreams that pass through the gate of sawn ivory deceive (ἐλεφαίρονται) persons, bringing words that find no fulfillment. But those that come forth through the gate of polished horn bring real things (ἔτυμα) to pass, when any mortal sees them. (*Odyssey* XIX 560–569)[3]

Homer recognizes the transcendent, indefinite nature of dreams. The ἔτυμα to which he refers indicates the ancient Greek understanding of predictive (ἐλέφαντι) dreams having a marked, tangible nature in which deity directly interacts in the material world and history of human beings. Although ephemeral by nature, certain dreams carry the property of supernatural agency. At the same time, dreams may deceive. They "lie and lead one with empty

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for cooperation of the group. From Gilgamesh and Enkidu there stemmed no fructifying development of man's understanding of his own nature; from the men of the *Iliad* came a steadily onrushing exploration of the qualities of mankind." Chester G. Starr, *History of the Ancient World*, 4th ed. (New York/London: Oxford University Press, 1991): 200.

[3] Homer, *Odyssey*, translated by A. T. Murray, and revised by George E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926, 1995).

hopes."[4] Thus, they carry a power to do harm, to damage and/or destroy. Homer understands the potency of dreams.

Working with the twofold dream pattern of Homer (predictive and non-predictive), Plato (427–347 BCE) speaks of the agency of δαίμοναι—the middle creatures which "move with a lightly rushing motion both to earth and to the whole of heaven."[5] These air-born deities bring dreams to the soul where they are reproduced. The bodily passions, however, may corrupt dreams.[6] When the soul has freedom from corruption, and one's

> condition is healthy and sober, and he goes to sleep after arousing his rational part and entertaining it with fair words and thoughts… while he has neither starved nor indulged to repletion his appetitive part … he is most likely to apprehend truth, and the visions of his dreams (αἱ φαντάζονται τῶν ἐνυπνίων) are least likely to be lawless. (*Republic* 571D–572A)[7]

Plato brings to expression the relationship between dreams and the body which when kept in check by the laws and the better desires in alliance with reason will result in truth and dreams which are least contrary to law and/or custom (ἥκιστα παράνομοι) (572A). Arising within this interplay occurs a dualism between "the rational part" (λογιστικὸν) (571D) verses lawlessness and irrationality. Plato relates a split between the rational and the irrational—the tame verses the beastly and savage (571C), which does not appear in Homer. To some extent this reflects the endogamous, hierarchical

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[4] Entry, ἐλεφαίρομαι, in Henry George Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon: Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

[5] *Epinomis* 985A–B.

[6] "The rational, gentle and dominant part [of the soul] slumbers, but the beastly and savage part, replete with food and wine, gambols and, repelling sleep … it does not shrink from attempting to lie with a mother in fancy or with anyone else, man, god or brute; it is ready for any foul deed of blood" (*Republic* 571C). Plato, *Republic*, translated by Paul Shorey, LCL (1937).

[7] Cf. *Herodotus* 7.16; Cicero *De Divinatione* 1.60–61.

thrust of classical Athens to contain "otherness."[8] Although the basic categories of non-predictive and predictive dreams exist within Plato's reading, a sense of separation from the kind of dream and lore of the pre-Socratic literature of Homer takes place. While for Plato dreams maintain their transcendent, "shadowy" nature, they are framed within terms of law and reason. An objectification of the dream results.

The empirical work of Aristotle (384–322 BCE) takes further this phenomenon of objectification in the attempt to contain and analyze dreams. In his *De insomniis* (*On Dreams*), he sets out a systematic examination of dreams, distinguishing them from perception of the senses (αἴσθησις) and opinion (δόξα).[9] Dreaming occurs as part of the imagination (τὸ φανταστικόν).[10] As with Plato, the nature and clarity of dreams depends upon the emotional and physiological state of the dreamer:

> Hence, just as in a liquid, if one disturbs it violently, sometimes no image appears, and sometimes it appears but is entirely distorted, so that it seems quite different from what it really is, although when the movements have ceased, the reflections are

[8] The metopes on the Parthenon at Athens picture the conquest over what is beastly and savage to fifth century BCE Athens. The west metope's brooding vilification of the Amazon warriors works to legitimate Athenian rejection of those who are "other" (cf. depiction of Greek conflict with Trojans of the north metopes, centaurs of the south metopes, and giants of the east metopes) while simultaneously substantiating exclusive Athenian (male-centered) society. At the heart of the Parthenon is the concern to legitimate fifth century BCE Athenian dominance and endogamy. As Page duBois (1982): 64 notes: "The whole of the Parthenon can be seen … as a structure which celebrates Athens, focuses on its unity, and closes a circle. The Amazons and Centaurs represented on the metopes are emblematic of all that the city closes out. Their bestial, single-sex cultures, their chaotic, disordered, unruly force, must be set in contrast to the ordered, reverent progress of the Athenians." Page duBois, "Introduction," in *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982) 64.

[9] Aristotle, *On Dreams* 458b.5–25.

[10] Aristotle, *On Dreams* 459a.23.

> clear and plain; so also in sleep, the images or residuary movements τὰ φαντάσματα και αἱ ὑπόλοιποι) that arise from the sense-impressions are altogether obscured owing to the aforesaid movement when it is too great, and sometimes the visions appear confused and monstrous, and the dreams are morbid, as occurs with the melancholic, the feverish and the intoxicated; for all these affections (τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθη), being spirituous (πνευματώδη), produce much movement and confusion. (*On Dreams* 461a. 14–24)

Elsewhere Aristotle recognizes that dreams are by nature irrational and distorted: "Stimuli (κινήσεις) occurring in the daytime, if they are not very great and powerful, pass unnoticed because of greater waking impulses. But in the time of sleep the opposite takes place; for then small stimuli seem to be great."[11] He notes the efficacious quality of dreams, which can influence daytime actions. Dreams of the night begin actions in the daytime, because "the way has been paved for the intention to do these actions in dreams at night (τοῖς φαντάσμασι τοῖς νυκτερινοῖς).[12] Some dreams also have special causes, where, for example, a person might have certain foresight about a close friend he cares about.[13] Aristotle does not accept the divine origin of dreams, since some of the lower animals also dream (ἄλλων ζῴων ὀνειρώττει Τινά). He makes no connection between dreams and divination: "Even common persons (εὔτελεις ἄνθροποι) have prescience and vivid dreams, which shows that these are not sent by God."[14]

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[11] Aristotle continues: "This is clear from what often happens in sleep; persons think that it is lightening and thundering, when there are only faint echoes in their ears, and that they are enjoying honey and sweet flavors, when only a drop of phlegm is slipping down their throats, and that they are walking through fire and heating about certain parts; but the true state of affairs becomes obvious when they wake up." *De Divinatione* 463a 10–18.

[12] *De Divinatione* 463a 22–32.

[13] *De Divinatione* 464a 25–29.

[14] *De Divinatione* 463b 15–17.

Aristotle tries to identify the human process of the phenomena of dreams, and yet within his description there exists a sense of the inexpressible. A dream cannot be contained. One senses Aristotle's exasperation as he attempts to capture the essence of the dream and bring it onto the Lyceum examination table.

After Aristotle, Herophilus (fl. 300 BCE), the Greek anatomist and leader of the Alexandrian school of medicine, divided dreams into oracles (θεόπεμπτοι), predictive dreams (*physici*) and "constitutional" dreams (*syncrimatici*)—i.e. dreams from bodily states. The Stoic philosopher Posidonius (c.135–c.51 BCE) added what he refers to as the clear, predictive dream as a fourth classification. By the first century CE five classes of dreams existed: ὄνειρος or *somnium*: an allegorical predicitive dream requiring an interpretation specialist; ὅραμα or *visio*: a straightforward predicitive dream relating events as they occur; χραμητικός or *oraculum*: an oracle in which a dream figure appears and foretells a future event; ἐνύπνιον or *insomnium*: an allegorical or straightforward dream without predictive value; and *phantasma*: a non-predictive dream of a frightening apparition.[15]

A range of particular words for dreams exist for the Greco-Roman world. A study of the frequency of various Greek, Latin and Hebrew words for "dream" by ancient authors into the fourth century CE leads to the following observations: The most frequently used word in Latin is *somnus*. The Greek words ὄναρ and ὄνειρος occur most frequently in ancient Greek writings. The Hebrew word *hrm* occurs almost exclusively in Jewish ancient literature. The words *somnus*, ὄναρ, ὄνειρος and *hrm* refer to dreams of sleep, as opposed to day "visions" (ὀπτασία, ὅραμα, ὅρασις).[16]

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[15] See C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968) 171–195. For a helpful discussion of various Greek words used for dream in Christian sources, see Morton T. Kelsey, Dreams: *The Dark Speech of the Sprit: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Doubleday, 1968): 80–85.

[16] For *hoptasia* see 2 Cor 12:1; Acts 26:19. For *horasis* see Rev 4:3; 9:17; Acts 2:17. Greek and Latin word frequencies were taken from the electronic database *Perseus Digital Library* (www.Perseus.tufts.edu). Hebrew words were taken from Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A.

ANCIENT TESTIMONIES TO ASCLEPIUS AND THE ASCLEPIUS CULT

Overview

In their work entitled *Asclepius*, the Edelsteins present over 800 texts which they arrange into seven categories. He draws these texts from over 280 inscriptions and literary authors which refer to Asclepius and the Asclepius cult. Most of the sources are Greek. A good portion of the sources refer to Asclepius sanctuaries. But for a smaller quantity of reference to Asclepius images (e.g. statues), a generally equal number of sources fall across the categories excluding the category sanctuary. The overall distribution is as follows:

Sanctuary (154)
Cult (144)
Medicine (144)
Legend (122)
Descendants (108)
Deification (104)
Image (79)

The earliest Greek testimonies to Asclepius come from Homer in the eighth century BCE. One of the Homeric hymns praises the god Asclepius and his mother, Coronis:

> I begin to sing of Asclepius, son of Apollo and healer of sicknesses. In the Dotian plain fair Coronis, daughter of King Phlegyas, bore him, a great joy to humans, a soother of cruel pangs. And so hail to you, Lord: in my song I make my prayer to you![17]

Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1952); James E. Charlesworth, *Graphic Concordance to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Louisville: Westminster/Jon Knox Press, 1991); Albert-Marie Denis, *Concordance Grecque des Pseudepigraphes d'Ancien Testament* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Universite Catholique de Louvain, 1987).

[17] *Hymni*, XVI, 1–5. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T31, p. 23. Other texts include *Iliad*, II, 729–33; IV, 192–219; IV, 201–02. See also Hesiod

Both sources relate the religio-mythic folklore of the god's place of origin and genealogy. Edelstein has no sources for the seventh century BCE. The earliest testimony to the Asclepius cult *per se* occurs in Pindar (520–442 BCE). He relates the victor of a boxing match in the Asclepius festival at Epidaurus, possibly the location of one of the earliest temples.[18]

> *πύκταν τέ νιν καὶ παγκρατί-*
> *ῳ φθέγξαι ἑλεῖν Ἐπιδαύρῳ διπλόαν*
> *νυκῶντ' ἀρετάν ...*[19]
>
> (… proclaim him [sc., Themistius] as a boxer, and tell that he has won a double victory in the pancratium by his contest at Epidaurus)

The legend of Asclepius dominates the testimonies into the fourth century BCE. Most of these refer to sanctuaries and cult ritual. One Greek inscription from the fourth century BCE reads:

> To Asclepius sacrifice a bull, and a bull to the gods who share his temple, and a cow to the goddesses who share his temple. On the altar of Asclepius sacrifice these things and a cock. Let them dedicate to Asclepius as his portion a medimnus of barley, a half medimnus of wheat, one-twelfth mediumns of wine. Let them set before the god one leg of the first bull. Let the temple magistrates take the other leg. Let them give one leg of the second to the members of the choir, and the other to the guards, as well as the entrails.[20]

The number of overall source testimonies to Asclepius and the Asclepius cult presented by Edelstein average approximately 40 per century from the fourth century through the first century BCE (app. A). That frequency more than doubles to 90 in the first cen-

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(seventh century BCE), *Fr.* 87, 88, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127. Consult index listing, Edelstein, *Asclepius*, p. 460.

[18] Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, p. 208.

[19] Pindar, *Nemeae*, V, 95–97. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T556, p. 312.

[20] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 47. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T562, p. 314.

tury CE. The second century CE represents the strongest attestation to the Asclepius cult, with over 400 testimonies.[21] Drawing upon all available sources, Edelstein lists 52 inscriptions which date from the fourth century BCE to the third century CE. All of these sources receive attention in the work of this investigation.

According to Edelstein, the earliest Christian testimonies include Justin Martyr (100–165 CE), Clement of Alexandria (150–215 CE), (Tertullian (160–230 CE) and Origen (185–255 CE). Other early Christian sources which refer to Asclepius include Eusebius of Caesarea (260–340 CE), Ambrose (337–397 CE) and Augustine (354–430 CE). No direct testimonies to Asclepius are found in the Jewish or Christian scriptures. However, in Genesis there is a reference to Moses' staff transforming into a serpent, and the power to make and heal a leprous hand.[22] These events echo Asclepius's association with staff, serpents, and the flesh. A consideration of the imagery of Jesus the "shepherd" will receive attention below. In the Book of Acts a viper attaches itself to Paul's hand. Paul shakes it loose, and suffers no harm, causing witnesses to say that "he [Paul] was a god."[23]

Dream incubation

According to Edelstein's texts, Aristophanes (446–385 BCE) provides the earliest extant Greek attestation to dream incubation and healing. In *Plutus* he writes: κατακλίνειν αὐτὸν εἰς Ασκληπιοῦ κράτιστόν ἐστι ("let him lie inside the Asclepius temple a whole night long").[24] Edelstein gives a total of 28 dream incubation testimonies (app. B). Most occur from the time of Aristophanes in the fifth century BCE into the fourth century CE, with a specific concentration of testimonies taking place in the second century CE (7

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[21] Aelius Aristides (54 testimonies) and Pausanias (148 testimonies) have the highest number of testimonies in the second century CE. Other sources include Galen (15), Clement of Alexandria (7), Tertullian (13), Artemidorus (10), Origen (9), Philostratus (20) and Lucian (17).

[22] Exod 4:1–9.

[23] Acts 28:1–6.

[24] *Plutus* 400–14; cf. 633–747. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T420, pp. 212–13.

testimonies). There are no testimonies in the first century CE. Most of the incubation sources refer to cures and oracles. Geographic origins of incubation texts include Epidaurus, Athens, Lebena, Pergamum and Rome.

About one third of these incubation sources come from Greek and Cretan inscriptions. A tradition developed in which Asclepius suppliants inscribed details of dreams and healing experiences onto votive tablets. Pausanias makes references to the existence of such tablets (στῆλαι) within the enclosure of the temple (*Descriptio Graeciae*, II.27.3). The chronological arrangement of the inscriptions (fourth century BCE–third century CE) used in this study are shown in the table below. Table columns include, respectively, the inscription's date, title, number listing by Edelstein, the type of dream experience (cure or oracle), and the Asclepius temple location of the inscriptions.

Date	Title	T	Type	Location
c.350 BCE	Inscriptiones Graecae, IV, 1, nos. 121–22	423	cures	Epidaurus
3rd c. BCE	Inscriptiones Graecae, IV, 1, no. 125	431	oracles	Epidaurus
3rd c. BCE	Inscriptiones Creticae, I, xvii, no. 24	442	oracles	Lebena
2nd c. BCE	Inscriptiones Creticae, I, xvii, no. 9	426	cures	Lebena
2nd c. BCE	Inscriptiones Creticae, I, xvii, no. 19	441	oracles	Lebena
1st c. BCE	Inscriptiones Creticae, I, xvii, no. 17	439	oracles	Lebena
1st c. BCE	Inscriptiones Creticae, I, xvii, no. 18	440	oracles	Lebena
160 CE	Inscriptiones Graecae, IV, 1, no. 126	432	oracles	Epidaurus
2nd c. CE	Inscriptiones Graecae, II, no. 4514	428	oracles	Athens
2nd c. CE	Inscriptiones Graecae, XIV, no. 966	438	oracles	Rome
224 CE	Inscriptiones Graecae, IV, 1, no. 127	424	cures	Epidaurus

These inscriptions testify to incubation oracles and cures. The earliest (c.350 BCE) Epidaurus inscription (*Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1,

nos. 121–22) represents over 40 individual incubation testimonies inscribed on two separate stelae.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND TO THE ASCLEPIUS CULT

Location of temples

From the seventh century BCE through the second century BCE sources attest to the existence of Asclepius temples only within the boundaries of Greece. Most sources are from the fourth and third centuries BCE. This high representation may reflect a surge of interest in the savior god during the tumultuous time and aftermath of the conquests of Alexander the Great.[25] Beginning in the second century BCE there is source evidence of the existence of Asclepius temples outside of Greece as far away as Rome.

The strongest source attestation of Asclepius temples clusters around the first century CE through the second century CE. The bulk of these occur in the second century CE in the writings of Pausanias. Specific temple locations having noticeable ancient source attestation include Athens (12), Carthage (6), Cos (6), Epidaurus (12) and Pergamum (12).

There is a sense that the Asclepius temples grow outward geographically from the central area of Athens. The ancient sources attest to Asclepius temple locations within approximately 50 kilometers of Athens. The sites include Euboea, Eleusinus, Aegina, Paros, Delos, Epidaurus, and Ambracia. One fourth century BCE inscription makes reference to temples at the Isle of Thasus in the North Aegean, about 200 kilometers from Athens. N. Yalouris says that the Asclepius temple at Epidauros represents one of the earliest sites, out of which other Asclepius cults and temples spawn:

> In the last quarter of the fifth c, B.C. the cult of Asclepius enjoyed a sudden upsurge in Epidauros, to reach its peak in the fourth c. B.C. The Panhellenic Games and horse races, the

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[25] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Studies*, edited by Richard Stillwell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976): 311.

> Asklepieia, which were traditionally held every four years, were enriched around 400 B.C. by poetry and music contests (Plato, *Ion* 530). At that time the cult spread throughout the Greek world, so that more than 200 new Asklepieia were built, the most notable being in Athens (420 B.C.), in Cos, in Pergamon (fourth c. B.C.), and in Rome (239 B.C.)—all under the patronage of the sanctuary in Epidauros.[26]

With Polybius (201–120 BCE) the first reference to the existence of Asclepius temples outside of Greece occurs. Locations include Pergamum, Spain and Sicily. Varro (116–12 BCE) represents the earliest testimony to an Asclepius temple in Rome. A range of sources refer to a variety of locations up to the time of Pausanias (second century CE), whose 42 of 52 texts collected by Edelstein refer to temples located in the Peloponnese.

A few specific observations regarding temple sites and locations follow. According to ancient topography,[27] builders appear to have set many of the Asclepius temples directly next to a body of water such as a river or the sea. The city of Epidaurus sits off the coast of the Saronic Gulf. Athens had an Asclepius temple at its harbor Piraeus (Aristophanes, *Plutus* 620–21). Ovid recounts the myth of Asclepius' arrival on the Tiber Island at Rome:

> And now the ship had entered Rome, the capital of the world. The serpent raised himself aloft and, resting his head upon the mast's top, moved it from side to side, viewing the places fit for his abode. The river, flowing around, separates at this point into two parts, forming the place called the Island (*Insula nomen habet*); on each side of it stretches our two equal arms with the land between. On this spot the serpent-son of Phoebus disembarked from the Latian ship, and, resuming his heavenly form, put an end to the people's woes and came to them as health-bringer to their city. (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV, 622–744)

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[26] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," 31.

[27] See maps in Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, translated by W. H. S. Jones and R. E. Wycherley, Vol. V. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935, 1961).

Island and coastal temples such as the Asclepius temple at both Corinth and Cos looked out onto the sea. Referring to a location in Spain, Polybius (201–120 BCE) notes a large hill "lies on the east side of the town [i.e., New Carthage] and juts out into the sea, and on it is built a temple of Asclepius."[28] Philostratus speaks of a temple at Crete "which faces toward the Libyan sea close to Phaestus, where the little rock keeps out the mighty sea."[29] Pausanias speaks of the Smyrnaeans who built a sanctuary of Asclepius "between Mount Coryphe and a sea into which no other water flows."[30]

Several of the sources refer to the "fame" certain Asclepius temples gained in the Mediterranean world. Strabo remarks: "In the suburb [of Cos] is the Asclepeieon, a temple exceedingly famous (σφόδρα ἔνδοξον) and full of numerous votive offerings."[31] Pausanias refers to the "most famous (ἐπιφανέστατον) of all the Asclepius sanctuaries at Aros," founded by a certain Sphyrus.[32]

Designers located temples on elevated ground such as the steep acropolis at Carthage:

> Near the middle of the city [of Carthage] was the acropolis, which they called Byrsa; it was a fairly steep height and inhabited on all sides, and at the top of it had a temple of Asclepius, which at the time of the capture of the city [146 BCE], the wife of Hasdrubal burnt along with herself" (Strabo, *Geographica* XVII 3, 14).[33]

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[28] *Historiae*, X, 10, 8. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T838, pp. 428–29.

[29] *Vita Apollonii* IV, 34. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T792, p. 400.

[30] VII, 5, 9. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T813, pp. 417–18.

[31] *Geographica*, XIV, 2, 19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T794, p. 401. Elsewhere he refers to the earliest and most famous Asclepius temple at Tricca (*Geographica*, XI, 5, 17).

[32] *Descriptio Graeciae* II, 23, 4. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T663, p. 304; cf. T188. Elsewhere he refers to the Asclepius temple at Pessinus, made famous when the Romans sent there for the god Asclepius (*Geographica*, CII, 5, 3.)

[33] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T834, p. 426.

The Asclepius temple at Corinth rested on a plateau overlooking the Gulf of Corinth at Pergamum. Temples at Cos and Pergamum were founded on high ground outside of the main towns.

Pausanias refers to a "cave sacred to Asclepius" in the Peloponnese not far from the coast of Zarax.[34] He also makes reference to the existence of a sanctuary in Arcadia at Megalopolis of the child of Asclepius. It existed under the hill upon which the main Asclepius sanctuary rested.[35] Other locations of sanctuaries include valleys[36] and (inner) cities.[37]

Builders often located Asclepius temples away from the center of a city in a place having an undeveloped, natural environment.[38] The Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius (first century BCE) writes:

> [F]or all temples there shall be chosen the most healthy sites with suitable springs in those places in which shrines are to be set up … *and especially for Aesculapius* and Saius [my italics]; and generally for those gods by whose medical power persons are manifestly healed. For when such persons are moved from a pestilent to a healthy place and the water supply is from wholesome fountains, they will more quickly recover. So will it happen that the divinity (from the nature of the site) will gain a greater and higher reputation and authority. (*De Architectura* I.2.7)

Temple designs

Corinth

The (extant) Asclepius temple at Corinth was set away from the city, located just inside the city wall. Built into the side of an earthen ledge, the temple had a steady flow of fresh water from a natural

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[34] *Descriptio Graeciae* III, 24, 2.

[35] *Descriptio Graeciae* III, 32, 4–5.

[36] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graecae*, II.27.1–7.

[37] Tertillianus, *De Idolatra*, 20.

[38] See Guettel Cole, *The Uses of Water in Greek Sanctuaries*, In *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stoccolma, 1988): 161–65.

spring. Builders tunneled back into the porous clay of the spring to increase the volume of its flow into deep (extant) cisterns.[39] The location of temple at the edge of the Corinthian plateau exposed the temple to the winds blowing from the Gulf of Corinth, and its elevation afforded users a view of the rocky promontory of Perachora across the Gulf, and the mountains Kithaeron, Helikon, and Parnassos in the background.[40]

Cos

Builders at Cos established an Asclepius temple about 10 km from the ancient city of Cos. Constructed after the death of Hippocrates, it dates to the fourth century BCE.[41] As with the sanctuary at Corinth, the temple structure (three ascending tiers) cuts into a large hillside. From the top level of the temple complex a patron looked out to a view of distant mountains and the Aegean Sea. Cold and thermal earthen springs fed elaborate baths and fountains along the lower tier of the Asclepius temple complex. The earliest Asclepius temple (third century BCE), in the Ionic order, stood on the second tier. Just behind it was the *abaton*, a square building where worshippers slept to dream and experience a healing encounter with the god Asclepius. A sacred spring existed behind this building. A church called the "Panayia Tarsou" occupied the *pronaos* (front porch) of this temple in the early Christian period. The temple complex sits in the midst of a cypress grove.

Walking along the elegant porticoes of the Asclepius temple complex one would have heard the soft brushing of the grove trees in the Mediterranean breeze. Valerius Maximus (first century CE) writes that Turullius, the prefect of Antony (42 BCE), once desecrated this grove, and the god Asclepius subsequently struck him

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[39] Carl Roebuck, *Corinth*, 1.

[40] Carl Roebuck, *Corinth*, 1. The Asklepieion of Roman Corinth also evidences dining rooms, and a large court area surrounded by a colonnade where patients could walk or relax in the sun or shade.

[41] Picozzi, M.G. "Cos," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Studies*, edited by Richard Stillwell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976): 466.

down.[42] The Asclepius temple at Cos is famous for the influence of Hippocrates who lived and worked on Cos. As Pliny tells us:

> At that time [i.e. during the Peloponnesian war] Hippocrates called it [sc. medicine] back to light; he was born on the island of Cos which was particularly famous and powerful and dedicated to Asclepius, as it had been the custom for those freed from disease to put down in the temple of that god what had helped them, so that thereafter a similar case might have the benefit of it,—he is said to have copied these (inscriptions), and, [sc. Hippocrates] made use of them in instituting that medicine which is called "bedside" medicine.[43]

Pergamum

The large Asclepius temple complex at Pergamum, in northwest Turkey about 20 km inland from the Northeast Aegean Sea, sits below and at a distance from the acropolis of Pergamum. It dates to the fourth century BCE. The sanctuary faces south. Built on a span of level ground along the north edge of the Caicus River, its broad, elegant esplanade draws patrons into its center area where Greek and Roman temples, baths, porticoes and a theater facilitate the largest healing complex in the Greco-Roman world by the second century CE. The building expansion of the sanctuary by Hadrian (117–138 CE) contributed to its fame. A spring, which still flows today, fed a fountain house located just east of the τεμένος (sacred area). The earliest *abaton* sits on the south end of the τεμένος. The sanctuary had and advanced system of running water. Archaeologist J. Shafer writes:

> The water supply was assured by a system which brought water from an area up to 40 km distant. In addition to aqueducts in places several stories high, two Hellenistic high-pressure sys-

[42] Valerius Maximus, *Fact et Dicta Memorabilia*, I, 1, 19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T797, p. 403. Maximus writes that Asclepius killed Turullius at the hands of Caesar's military for cutting down his sacred grove, in order to build ships.

[43] Plinius, *Natural History*, XXIX, 1 (2), 4. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T795, pp. 401–2.

tems have been identified. One of these systems ran from the north to the summit of the acropolis with a pressure of 20 kg/cm^2.[44]

Epidaurus

Builders constructed the Epidaurus Asclepius temple ca. 10 km SW of the city, in the middle of the Argolid peninsula. Its material remains date to the sixth century BCE.[45] Of a simple design, the temple (380–375 BCE) measured 23.06 x 11.76 m (6 x 11 columns). It lacked an interior colonnade. It represents one of the smallest Doric peripteral[46] temples in Greece.[47] Inlays of precious materials including ebony, ivory and gold decorated the interior. The floor consisted of black and white marble slabs. A nearby circular building (θόλος), built in the sixth century BCE, had a close relation with the Asclepius cult. The building has an underground labyrinth (ca. 13.36 m. dia.), composed of three concentric walls with crosswise partitions and doors. The purpose of the building remains unknown.[48]

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[44] J. Shafer, "Pergamon," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Studies*, edited by Richard Stillwell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976): 691.

[45] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Studies*, edited by Richard Stillwell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976): 311. See also Alison Burford, *The Greek Temple Builders at Epidauros: A Social and Economic Study of Building* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969); Fritz Graf, "Heiligtum und Ritual Das Beispiel der Griechisch-Romischen Asklepieia," in *Le Sanctuaire Grec* (Geneve: Vamdoeuvres, 1990); Demetrios Papastamos, *Asklipios-Epidauros and Their Museum* (Athens: E. Tzaferis, 1979); Pierre Sineux, "Le Pean d'Isyllos: form et finalites d'un chant religieux dans le culte d'Asklepios a Epidaure," in *Kernos* 12 (1999): 153–166; R. A. Tomlinson, *Epidauros* (New York:, Granada, 1983).

[46] I.e., surrounded by a row of columns.

[47] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," 312.

[48] Ibid.

Setting of temples

Isolated from the stress and disease of daily life in the city, Asclepius temples afforded its patrons a setting in a natural environment, providing exposure to sun, fresh air, spring waters, quietude, rest and exercise, and a natural beauty. Hippocrates (fifth century BCE) relates the importance of the quality of air, water, and location regarding physical health and constitution.[49] As an example, Hippocrates describes the geographical setting in which the inhabitants are sheltered from northerly winds, but exposed to warm winds from the south-east. These conditions create brackish surface-waters causing the inhabitants to have "heads full of phlegm" and "disturbed inner organs."[50] He identifies particular diseases connected to this type of climate and setting:

> The women are sickly and liable to vaginal discharges; many of them are sterile, not by nature but as a result of disease. Miscarriages are common. Children are likely to have convulsions and asthma which are regarded as divine visitations and the disease itself as 'sacred.' The men suffer from diarrhea, dysentery, ague and, in the winter especially, from prolonged fevers. (Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 3)

Emma and Ludwig Edelstein underscore the religious significance for the Greeks of the geographic isolation of Asclepius temples:

[49] "Whoever wishes to pursue properly the science of medicine must proceed thus. First he ought to consider what effects each season of the year can produce; for the seasons are not all alike, but differ widely both in themselves and at their changes. The next point is the hot winds and the cold, especially those that are universal, but also those that are peculiar to each particular region. He must also consider the properties of the waters; for as these differ in taste and in weight, so the property of each is far different from that of any other. He must also consider the properties of the waters; for as these must differ in taste and in weight, so the property of each is far different from that of any other. Therefore, on arrival at a town with which he is unfamiliar, a physician should examine its position with respect to the winds and the risings of the sun." Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places; Epidemics* 1–12, translated by W. H. S. Jones, LCL (1923).

[50] Ibid.

"The solitude of the mountains and valleys, for the Greeks, was awe-inspiring and fraught with divine presence."[51] However, the Edelsteins show an eagerness to downplay what they call the "hygenic" impetus for Asclepius temple locations. They reject the merit of Vitruvius' statement regarding temple location noted above ("for all temples there shall be chosen the most healthy sites"), saying that his "theories are indicative of a skeptical rationalism toward a divine healing power which he supposes to be in need of a favorable climate and good air in order to be effective."[52] By contrast, this particular study is more supportive of Vitruvius' statement. Designers built Asclepius temples in accord with the resources of the natural world to aid the healing of its patrons.

The *abaton*

Separate from the Asclepius inner sanctuary, the *abaton* functions as marked space where patrons sleep to encounter the god Asclepius in dreams. References to the temple *abaton* occur especially in Greek inscriptions of the Epidaurus Asclepius temple. A certain Cleo "came as a suppliant to the god [Asclepius] and slept in the *abaton*."[53] Pandarus, a Thessalian, "saw a vision as he slept," and as he left the *abaton* he made an offering to the temple.[54] Aristocritus, the father of a lost son, slept in the *abaton* and saw a dream revealing the location of the boy.[55] Many of the ancient sources of Asclepius temples do not refer explicitly to the *abaton*, but note suppliants who sleep at the temple and receive healing. One third century BCE source tells how a certain person named Caracalla hurried to Pergamum and "having taken his fill of dreams as extensively as he

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[51] Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 2, p. 223, n. 2.

[52] Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 2, p. 223.

[53] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, 1.1 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 229.

[54] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, 1.6 (second half of the fourth century BCE) From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 231.

[55] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, 1.24 (second half of the fourth century BCE) From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 234.

wished, went to Ilium."[56] An inscription from Crete infers *abaton* use and experience: "After I had seen many more glorious deeds of the god in my sleep the god ordered me to inscribe my visions."[57]

The fourth century BCE *abaton* at Epidauros serves as an example of *abaton* size and design. It consisted of a large porticoed building. It measured 70 x 9.5 m. A row of columns divided the interior area lengthwise. Patrons slept in one of the divided areas, and also on a lower floor are of the west section of the facility.[58] An older *abaton*, dating to the sixth century BCE, measured 24.30 x 20.70 m.[59] The existence of a roof on top of the *abaton* is unclear. One Epidauros inscription suggests the absence of a roof:

> Aeschines, when the suppliants were already asleep, climbed up a tree and tried to see over into the *abaton*. But he fell from the tree on to some fencing and his eyes were injured. In a pitiable state of blindness, he came as a suppliant to the god and slept in the temple and was healed.[60]

As space which facilitates personal, individual interaction between human beings and deity, the *abaton* holds special religious significance. It functions as central facility within the temple complex—the "inmost sanctuary." The *abaton* represents the heart of the Asclepius temple complex. According to one Greek epigram, the deity himself slept in the *abaton*:

> Awake, Paieon Asclepius, commander of peoples
> Gentle-minded offspring of Apollo and noble Coronis,
> Wipe the sleep from your eyes and hear the prayer

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[56] Herodianus, *Ab Excessu Divi Marci*, IV, 8, 3. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T437, p. 250.

[57] *Inscriptiones Creticae*, I, xvii, no. 19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T441, p. 253.

[58] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," 313.

[59] N. Yalouris, "Epidauros," 313.

[60] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, 1.11 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 232. Others sources refer to an Asclepius temple roof. See *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 2, no. 161A, 72–73; Appianus, *Historia Romana*, VIII. 130–31; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, XLVII 2.3.

> Of your worshipers, who often and never in vain
> Try to incline your power favorably, first through Hygueua.
> O gentle-minded Asclepius,
> Awake and hear your hymn; greetings, you bringer of weal![61]

Patrons came to the Asclepius sanctuary to enter into the *abaton* with the hope of finding relief from physical suffering. Galen (129–199 CE) writes of a wealthy man from Thrace enticed by a dream to travel to the Asclepius sanctuary at Pergamum, where he slept and encountered Asclepius in a dream.[62] Herodianus (third century CE) writes how Caracalla (Roman emperor 211–217 CE) hurried to Pergamum "desiring to avail himself of the treatment of Asclepius."[63]

Patrons entered the *abaton* to submit themselves to dream incubation.[64] The suppliant submits herself to the (re-)generative experience of dream encounter with the temple deity:

> The adornment of Epidaurus is the precinct of Asclepius, where those who sleep (*incubantes*) in his temple get remedies for their diseases from the admonitions (*monitis*) which they receive in their dreams (*somniorum*).[65]

The *abaton* held for many a notion of the mystery of the unknown. The nature and specific outcome of the incubation experience remained unpredictable. Attestations of *abaton* experiences by temple patrons inscribed on votive tablets offer personal accounts of the variations of such experiences. Libanius (314–398 CE) refers to "showing the power of the god [Asclepius] by means of inscrip-

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[61] G. Kaibel, Epigrammata Graeca (Berlin, 1878), Epigram No. 1027, p. 433. Quotation and citation taken from C. A. Meier, *Healing Dream and Ritual* (1989): 51.

[62] Galenus, *Subfiguratio Empirica*, X.78. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T436, p. 250.

[63] Herodianus, *Ab Divi Marci*, IV.8.3. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T437, p. 250.

[64] *Incubare*, to lie in or upon.

[65] Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* 7.10. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T738, p. 381.

tions of those who had become healthy [at Aegae]."[66] Pausanias (fl. c.170 CE) writes of the Epidaurus Asclepius temple:

> Tablets (στῆλαι) stood within the enclosure. Of old, there were more of them: in my time six were left. On these tablets are engraved names of men and women who were healed by Asclepius, together with the disease from which each suffered, and how he was cured. The inscriptions are in the Doric dialect. (*Descriptio Graeciae*, II.27.3)[67]

Elsewhere Strabo makes reference to votive tablets of inscribed treatments recorded at Cos and Tricca (Strabo, *Geographica*, VIII.6.15).

An *abaton* may have "couches" upon which suppliants could sleep. Pausanias (c.170 CE) writes of the Asclepius temple near Tithorea: "Within the precincts are dwellings for both suppliants of the god and his servants. In the middle is the temple of the god … a couch (κλίνη) is set on the right of the image …"[68] Pausanias also makes reference to an image (τοῦ ἀγάλματος) of Asclepius in the *abaton*. Such images were often made of marble.[69] Pausanias describes a statue of Asclepius at Epidaurus:

> The image of Asclepius is half the size of the image of Olympian Zeus at Athens: it is made of ivory and gold. An inscription sets forth that the sculptor was Thrasymedes [c.375 BCE], a Parian, son of Arginotus. The god is seated on a throne, grasping a staff while holding the other hand over the head of the serpent; and a dog, lying by his side, is also represented. On the throne are carved in relief the deeds of Argive heroes:

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[66] Libanius, *Epistulae* 695.2. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T388, pp. 196.

[67] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graecae* II.27.3, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T739, p. 382; Cf. Aristides, *Oratio* L.46, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T808, p. 416; Libanius, *Epistulae* 695.2, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T610, p. 338.

[68] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* X.32.12. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T719, p. 374.

[69] Other materials include stone, wood, ivory and gold. See Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* III.14.7; III.26.4; VII.20.9; II.4.5; X.4.4; VII.26.7; II.29.1; Strabo, *Geographica* VIII.3.4; Thocritus, *Epigrammata* VII.

> of Bellerophon against the Chimaera, and Perseus who has cut off Medusa's head. (Pausanias, *Descriptio Graecae*, II.27.2)[70]

Most images portray Asclepius with staff, serpent and dog. According to Festus (third century CE) dogs were used because Asclepius was nourished by the teats of a dog. Serpents, "as the most vigilant beast," guard the temples. The "gnarled" staff signifies the difficulty (*difficultatum*) of the art of healing.[71] Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–c.340 CE) also offers a symbolic interpretation of an Asclepius image. Here, the staff symbolizes relief, and the serpent represents preservation:

> Of the safeguarding power (of the sun) a symbol is Asclepius to whom they attribute a staff, as a sign of support and relief for invalids; the serpent is twined about it, being the sign of the preservation of body and soul … For this animal is most animated and strips off the weakness of the body. It seems to be also the most skillful in medicine. For it discovered the remedy of sharp-sightedness and it is said to know some drug for the return to life.[72]

Ancient sources attest to various postures (seated[73] and upright[74]) and traits (beardless,[75] bearded[76]) of the image of Asclepius. He

[70] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* II.27.1–2, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T739, p. 383.

[71] Festus, *De Verborum Significatu* 110M. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T691, p. 361. Aelianus refers the practical use of dogs to guard an Asclepius temple. Aelianus, *De Natura Animalium* VII.13. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T731, p. 378.

[72] Eusebius, *Preparatio Evangelica* III.11.26. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T706, p. 369.

[73] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* II.27.2, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T680, p. 358.

[74] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* VIII.32.5, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T679, p. 358.

[75] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* II.13.5, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T681, p. 358

[76] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* X.34.6, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T682, p. 358

may or may not appear with his children.[77] Temples often include statues of other deities in addition to that of Asclepius.[78]

According to Aristophanes (446–386 BCE), a temple *abaton* accommodated several persons at one time. Strabo speaks of the Epidaurus temple "full of the sick." Aristophanes refers to "many others, sick with every form of ailment" in the *abaton* at Athens.[79] One can imagine the close, perhaps stifling nature of its environment, filled with the sounds and physical contamination of human suffering.

Ancient sources attest to the existence of temple servants (priests?) who oversee the management of the *abaton* and its functions. The description by Aristophanes of the Asclepius temple at Athens (Piraeus) refers to such an attendant, and also gives some sense of the *abaton* incubation setting:

> O what a happy man,
> The poor old fellow bathed in the cold sea!
> Then to the precincts of the God we went.
> There on the altar honey-cakes and bakemeats
> We offered, food for the Hephaestian flame.
> There laid we Wealth as custom bids; and we
> Each for himself stitched up a pallet near.
> Were no others waiting to be healed?
> Who in his thefts out-shoots the keenest-eyed.
> And many others, sick with every form
> Of ailment. Soon the Temple servitor

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[77] For appearance with his children, see e.g. Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXV.11.137, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T665, p. 355

[78] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* VIII.26.7, in Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T672, p. 356

[79] Strabo, *Geographica* VIII.6.15. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T382, p. 194; Aristophanes, *Plutus* 665. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T421, p. 217. See also Sara B. Aleshire, *Asklepios At Athens: Epigraphic and Prosopographic Essays on the Athenian Healing Cults* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1991).

> Put out the lights, and bade us fall asleep
> Nor stir, nor speak, whatever noise we heard.[80]

According to this passage of Aristophanes, Asclepius patrons had a pallet (παρεκαττύετο) to sleep on—perhaps here in place of a κλίνη? A temple servant (πρόπολος τοῦ θεοῦ) administers instructions to the patients after extinguishing the lights (λύχνους) of the room. Aristophanes (mockingly?) sets forth a somber, strict (κοσμίως) feeling of the *abaton* and its administration. Patients are to sleep and be silent (σιγᾶν). It is unclear what Aristophanes means by "noise"(ψόφου) He may refer to the noises of human sickness and suffering, or to the sounds of patients talking (encountering Asclepius) in their sleep.

Life and death

As much as the Asclepius temple is a place of new life and healing, it is also a temple of dying. Pausanias makes reference to the sick who come to the Asclepius temple at Epidaurus, find no healing, and die there.[81] Seutonius (c.70–c.140 CE) writes how "certain men were exposing their sick and worn-out slaves on the island of Asclepius because of the trouble of treating them".[82] Sidonius (430–80 CE) writes of Arvandus, the Prefect of Gaul in 469 CE, sentenced to death and taken to the island of the serpent Epidaurus.[83] Appianus notes the suicide of Fimbria in 85 BCE who "returned to Pergamum, entered the temple of Asclepius, and stabbed himself with his sword."[84]

The Asclepius cult revered its god and imposed harsh penalties on those who profaned his temple. Polyaenus (late second cen-

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[80] Aristophanes, *Plutus* 633–747. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T421, p. 217.

[81] Pausanias, *Descrpitio Graecae* II.27.6. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T739, p. 381.

[82] Suetonius, Claudius 25.2. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T858, p. 451.

[83] Sidonius Apollinaris, Epistulae I.7.12. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T859, p. 451.

[84] Appianus, *Historia Romana* XII.60. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T810, p. 417.

tury CE) writes that Dionysius (tyrant of Sicily, fourth century BCE) instituted the death penalty against anyone who took money from the Asclepius temple.[85] Aelianus (c.200 CE) writes that the Athenians executed a man for killing the sacred sparrow of Asclepius, "considering the things pertaining to the god more important than either ignorance or madness."[86]

Asclepius temples also served as places of refuge. Tacitus tells us that the Coans sheltered Roman citizens on the Asclepius temple during Mithridates' persecutions (88 BCE).[87] The Carthaginians have "secret consultations" in an Asclepius temple,[88] and Appianus relates the story of Scipio (d.211 BCE), who burned the Asclepius temple (at Bursa?), killing Hasdrubal, his family and many more persons taking refuge there.[89] Appianus (second century CE) writes that the Pergamenes shot with arrows persons who had fled to an Asclepius temple, and "clinging to his statue, would not leave."[90]

Other temple facilities

Most Asclepius temples had immediate resource to fresh-water springs which were essential to the healing of suppliants.[91] The archaeological remains of the Asclepius temple at Cos include ornate fountains set into the front walls of the second level of the temple precinct. Some remains of thermal baths in the eastern structures exist. The Asclepius temple complex at Pergamum had an ad-

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[85] Polyaenus, *Strategemata* V.2.19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T840, p. 429.

[86] Aeilianus, *Varia Historia* V.17. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T730, p. 378.

[87] Tacitus, *Annales* IV.14.1–2. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T798, p. 403.

[88] Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita* XLII.24.3. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T833, p. 425.

[89] Appianus, *Historia Romana* VIII.13031 From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T835, p. 426.

[90] Appianus, *Historia Romana* XII.23. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T809, p. 417.

[91] Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, I.2.7. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T707, p. 370.

vanced system of bath houses, bathing tanks, running water and fresh water springs. The present-day restoration of the precinct clearly presents these features. The Asclepius temple at Corinth has deep (extant) water cisterns (now dry) going back under the ledge into which the temple is built.

Most Asclepius sanctuaries had stoas built around the perimeter of the complex. Stoas provided a place where patrons could walk, exercise, socialize, and dine. Stoas functioned to define external area setting off the inner sacred space of the temple proper. Other design aspects of the Asclepius temples include ramps, gardens, dining rooms, and altars and temples to other deities, snake pits, and housing for temple staff.

The recreational role of the Asclepiaen conjoined with other kinds of community or city recreation services. At Corinth several city baths existed, including the second century CE Great Bath on the Lechaion Road.[92] A gymnasium stood next to the Aesclepieion.[93] Aristides refers to the "temple of Asclepius in the gymnasium at Smyrna" (*Oratio* XLVII.17). Theaters also accompanied Asclepius temples. Asclepieion at Pergamum included an elaborate theater. Pausanias refers to a theater at the Epidaurian sanctuary "most especially worth seeing" (*Descriptio Graecae*, II.2.5).

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[92] Jane C. Biers, *The Great Bath on the Lechaion Road*: *Corinth, Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 17 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[93] Rome restored the old Greek theater for theatrical performances and spectacles. It held up to 15,000 people. Other recreation facilities include an *odeon* built south of the theater seating 3000, a late third century amphitheater for gladiatorial games, and a late third century amphitheater larger than the size of the Coliseum in Rome. Together these services contributed to the cultural re-creative interest of Roman Corinth itself. Gerd Theissen notes: "Nothing in Corinth was more than a century old, whether the constitution, buildings, families, or cults. In this period many families were socially ascendant, their grandfathers and great-grandfathers quite possibly having been slaves. Such a city is rather receptive to new endeavors." G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, Essays on Corinth*. Edited and trans. by J. H. Schutz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982): 99.

The socio-cultural background of Asclepius temple users

People from the city came to Asclepius temples in search of healing. They came for escape from the hard existence in the ancient world. Juvenal (60–140 CE) writes about everyday life in the ancient city where noise, crime, overcrowding and disease break down human life:

> sick people die from lack of sleep. Noise deprives them of sleep, and they develop indigestion and burning ulcers which in turn produce illness. But what rented rooms ever allow sleep? In this city, sleep only comes to the wealthy. This is the source of disease: carts creaking through the narrow and winding streets and the curses of drivers caught in traffic jams will rob even a deaf man of sleep.[94]

The Roman satirist Martial (40–104 CE) complains that he lives in a "little cell, with one window which doesn't fit properly." He protests the noise of the coppersmith hammers which "jar the nerves, moneychangers jangling coins, the incessant chanting of frenzied priests, and the ceaseless begging of the one-legged sailor who survived a shipwreck."[95] Many patrons of the Asclepius temple would have come from economically poor backgrounds and living conditions. Most likely these persons could not afford to own a house. They lived in cramped and failing rooms or apartments which they owned or rented. Juvenal complains about the condition of his own apartment building in Rome: "We live in a city which is, to a great extent, propped up by flimsy boards."[96] The rich inhabitants

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[94] Juvenal, *Satires* 3.232–248, translated by G. G. Ramsay, LCL (1918).

[95] Martial, *Epigrams* 12.1–14, 18–21, 24–28, translated by Shackleton Bailey, LCL (1993).

[96] *Satires* 3.193. See also G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 2.174–75; Valerie M. Hope and Eireann Marshall, eds., *Death and Disease in the Ancient City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); John H. Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Vivian Nutton, "Medical Thoughts on Urban Pollution," in *Death and Disease in the Ancient*

would have had means to take care of themselves and/or seek the services of a physician. Through the contributions of wealthier clients, the Asklepieion provided inexpensive and charitable services to the medical needs of the poor.[97] Nevertheless, the ancient sources examined in this study attest to a range of socio-economic backgrounds of patrons who made use of the Asclepius temple services and facilities.

The existence of temple and cult is founded upon intimate human contact with the god Asclepius. Some evidence exists that the use of the Asclepius temple and *abaton* required testimony of a dream-reference from the god himself. One second century CE Greek inscription relates a certain Marcus Julius Apellas, an Idrian from Mylasa suffering from dyspepsia and sent for by Asclepius.[98] Galen refers to a wealthy man suffering from a disease who went to the Asclepius temple at Pergamum because a dream had driven him (ὀνείρατος προτρέψαντος).[99] The requirement of a dream-referral occurs in other religious followings and practices. According to Pausanias, only those persons whom the goddess Isis has beckoned in their dreams may enter the Isis shrine at Tithorea. The shrine is located only about 40 *stades* away from an Asclepius temple. He writes: "The same rule is observed in the cities above the Maeander by the gods of the lower world; for to all whom they wish to enter their shrines they send visions seen in dreams (ὀνειράτων ὄψεις).[100] Tacitus speaks of sick persons from Alexan-

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City, ed. by Valerie M. Hope and Eireann Marshall (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Jo-Ann Shelton, "The Structure of Roman Society," in *As the Romans Did: a Sourcebook in Roman Social History* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[97] Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 178.

[98] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, no. 126 [ca. 160 CE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T432, p. 247.

[99] Galen, *Subfuguratio Empirica* X.78. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T436, p. 250.

[100] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* X.32.13, translated by W. H. S. Jones, LCL (1964).

dria being directed by the god Serapis to the emperor Vespasian for healing.[101]

Nonetheless, most of the ancient source testimony to Asclepius worship and healing makes no reference to dream-referral by the deity. Ancient testimonies give the impression that people of the ancient world knew of the Asclepius temple services and used the facilities according to personal need and geographical proximity. The evidence noted above falls short of substantiating such practice. It may be more accurate to suggest that at its earliest stage of development *abaton* incubation entry involved being called by the deity.[102]

The cult grows as Asclepius temples are built throughout the Roman empire. Strabo writes of the city of Epidaurus which distinguished itself because of the ἐπιφάνεια (appearances) of Asclepius there.[103] According to Strabo, Asclepius "is believed to cure diseases of every kind and always has his temple full of the sick."[104] Eusebius of Caesarea writes that thousands of patrons showed excitement over Asclepius "as if over a saviour and physician (σωτῆρι καὶ ἰατρῷ), who revealed himself (ἐπιφαινομένῳ) to those sleeping in the temple at Aegae and again healed the diseases of those ailing in body."[105] Ruffus (first century CE) and Galen (second century CE), both physicians who work out of the Hippocratic tradition, seem to accept Asclepius and the powers of his healing. Rufus recounts that the god's appearance to Tercer, the Cyzicenean, subse-

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[101] Tacitus, *Historiae* IV.81, translated by C. H. Moore and John Jackson, LCL (1931).

[102] See C.A. Meir, *Healing Dream and Ritual* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Verlag, 1989): 52.

[103] Strabo, *Geographica* VIII.6.15. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T382, p. 194. The Epidaurus Asclepius cult fostered branch sanctuaries at Pergamum (where Aristides stayed for two years) and Corinth. See Thomas L. Robinson, "Cult of Asclepius," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 1: 302–307.

[104] *Geographica* VIII, 6, 15.

[105] *De Vita Constantini*, III, 56. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T818, pp. 419–20.

quently healed him of epilepsy.[106] Galen writes how "the whole body of Nicomachus of Smyrna swelled excessively and it was impossible for him to move himself. But Asclepius healed this man."[107] The Athenian statesman, Aelius Aristides (117–171 CE), praises the god's immediate place in antiquity:

> O Lord Asclepius, whom we have invoked for many things and on many occasions both at night and during the day, in private and in public, it was you who to our satisfaction and in fulfillment of our excessive desire granted us the opportunity of reaching a calm haven, as it were, from the vast sea and utter dejection … Now ourselves he has likewise distinguished in this way, stopping catarrhs and colds by baths in rivers and in the sea, healing us through long walks when we were helplessly bedridden, administering terrible cleansing on top of continuous abstinence from food … (Aristides, *Oratio* XLII, 1–15)[108]

Incubation and Asclepius appearances

With Asclepius the ancient world establishes a "saviour and physician" (σωτῆρ καὶ ἰατῳρ).[109] Worshippers would enter the sanctuary, go to the Asclepius temple to make a sacrifice[110] at a snake-brimmed altar, and purify themselves in temple baths.[111] They then enter the *abaton* to incline either on the floor, or on a κλίνη (couch)

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[106] See Oribasius, *Collections Medicae* XLV. 30.10–14. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T425, pp. 238–39.

[107] Galen, *De Morborum Differentiis*, Cp. 9. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T459, pp. 263–64.

[108] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T317, p. 159.

[109] Eusebius of Caesarea, *De Vita Constantini* III.56. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T390, p. 197.

[110] See Artemidorus, *Onirocritica* V.66. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T454, p. 261.

[111] See Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Corinth: a Guide to the Asklepieion*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens (Princeton, 1977).

to sleep and dream.[112] Asclepius may appear in the sleeper's dream to heal or offer instruction for healing the illness.[113] He makes personal contact and converses (φανεὶς εἰς λόγους) with the dreamer.[114] An Epidaurian inscription (fourth century BCE) notes how Asclepius appears in a man's dream and "springs upon his hand" (ἐφαλέσθαι ἐπὶ τὰν χῆρα) to stretch out his fingers which he (Asclepius) heals.[115] Cures usually happen without delay. Asclepius' two enormous serpents (δύο δράκοντ' ... ὑπερφυεῖς τὸ μέγεθος) lick the eyelids of Plutus, immediately curing his blindness.[116] Ithmonice of Pellene encounters the god in her sleep and conceives a daughter. Ambrosia of Athens encounters the god in a dream and receives her sight.[117] Asclepius appears in the dream of Pandarus from Thessaly, who wakes healed from facial scarring.[118]

The symbols of healing activated in the sleeper's dream include Asclepius' appearance which might resemble that of his temple statue—a bearded man, "gentle and calm."[119] He might hold a

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[112] Meier notes that the right dream brings immediate cure to the dreamer. This may error on the side of generalization. C. A. Meier, *Healing*, 53.

[113] Does the ritual of Asclepius temple incubation afford a mood of quiet and inner space, conducive of "quiet," that is, a minimum of irrational dream expression? See David Foulkes, *The Psychology of Sleep* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962): 119. C. A. Meier notes that the right dream brings immediate cure to the dreamer. Meier, *Healing*, 53.

[114] Oribasisus, *Collectiones Medicae* XLV.30.10–14. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T425, pp. 238–239. Most texts relating to Asclepius and Asclepius temples in this study are taken from Emma J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*.

[115] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 3 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–237.

[116] Aristophanes, *Plutus* 734–737. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T421, p. 216.

[117] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 2 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–222.

[118] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 2, 4, 5 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–237.

[119] Hippocrates, *Epistulae* 15. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T448, p. 258.

rustic staff in his hand.[120] He might appear alongside the god Serapis, "both of wondrous beauty and size."[121] He might speak in a "very harmonious voice." He may laugh (τὸν δὲ θεὸν γελάσαντα).[122] He may show anger (ἀγανατῶν).[123] Sometimes Asclepius heals by touching ἅ'ψασθαί his hand to the body of the patient in a dream.[124] He will "stretch out his healing hand to a patient."[125] In the Epidaurian Asclepius temple the god kisses a patient (ἐδόκει οἱ ὁ θεὸς ... φιλῆσαί νιν).[126]

Inscriptions attest to dreamers who wake from their dream experience healed and "walk out healthy" (ἁμέρας δὲ γενομένας ὑγιὴς ἐξῆλθε).[127] It is uncertain whether the dreamer, once awake, consults a dream "interpreter," such as an Asclepius temple servant or priest. Aelianus refers to οἱ ζάκοροι, "temple servants," and ὅ

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[120] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XV.622–744. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T850, pp. 438–441.

[121] Aristides, *Oratio* XLIX.46. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T325, p. 165–66.

[122] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verses 8, 35 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 231.

[123] Inscriptiones Graecae IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 35 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 236.

[124] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 31 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 235.

[125] Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Theopompos*. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T456, pp. 262–263.

[126] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 41 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 237. C.f. a similar report from the Asclepius temple at Athens: Marinus, *Vita Procli*, Cp. 31. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T446, pp. 256–257.

[127] *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 3; c.f. verses 3, 4, 8, 12, etc. (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–237.

ὑποδρῶντες τῷ θεῷ, "under-servants to the god."[128] Aristides tells his dreams to τὸν ἰατρὸν (physician).[129]

The gradual emergence of the Asclepius cult is intriguing. The cult seems to develop after the way of dreams themselves. Builders set temples in liminal locations at the edge of urban centers. In such settings patrons may be attentive to the resources of their inner and outer worlds. The cult develops around the *abaton*—the dreaming chamber—and the experiences of dreaming which are at the core of the cult's practices and existence. The Asclepius cult centers its existence upon on-going religious experiences of its patrons, and the prosperity of the cult into the second century CE develops from the "publication" of these experiences on the temple stele, by word-of-mouth of cult dreamers, and by patrons such as Aristides who glories the cult with his *Sacred Tales*.

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[128] Aelianus, *De Natura Animalium* IX.33. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T422, p. 220.

[129] *Orationes* XLVIII.31–35; XLVII.57. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T417, T418, pp. 210–211. C.A. Meier, however, rejects the possibility of dream interpreters within Asclepius temples: "Dream interpreters did not practice in the sanctuaries. As we have seen, they were not necessary. Therefore it is unlikely that the priests interpreted dreams. Similarly, there were no doctors in the sacred precincts, and medicine was not practiced there. The numerous priests were more probably therapeutae, in the sense of Galens' use of the term." C.A. Meier, *Healing Dream and Ritual*, 55–56.

CHAPTER 2: PHARMACOLOGY AND ALCHEMY IN ANTIQUITY

> [B]ut he taught his companions what herbs must be applied to running wounds, and what to inflamed and dry wounds, and in what doses to administer liquid drugs, by which dropsical patients are drained, and bleeding is checked … discovering salves which heal the bites of venomous creatures and in particular of using the virus itself as a cure of many diseases. (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* III, 44)[1]

A reading of ancient dreams and healing requires an examination of the nature and practice of (Hippocratic) medicine intricately connected with the Asclepius cult rituals and worship. An understanding of the types of herb and medical applications surrounding their use by the cult will aid understanding of the inner world and symbolism of Asclepius dreams. In this chapter, Homer, Theophrastus, and Pliny the Elder receive attention as key sources which provide detailed identification and descriptions of plants minerals and their cultivation for therapeutic application. Careful consideration is also given to the first century CE alchemical text entitled "Isis to Horus," and the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (second century BCE–fifth century CE). "Isis to Horus" provides an account about what is perceived to be the "elixir of life," procured through the revealed formula of various plants and minerals. The text is one of several ancient alchemical texts which make up the collection referred to as the *Codex Marcianus*.[2] The *PGM* is a collection of Greek, Demotic[3]

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[1] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T366, pp. 188–9.

[2] M. Berthelot and Ch.-Em. Ruelle, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, "Isis to Horus," I, xiii, pp. 28–35.

and Coptic[4] texts ranging from the second century BCE to fifth century CE.[5] Hans Dieter Betz's collection entitled *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, based on K. Preisendanz' *Papyri Graecae Magicae*,[6] consists of over 800 entries of Greek texts. This papyri collection represents a core corpus of extant ritual texts made by ritual specialists.[7] The texts consist of spells, amulets, phylacteries, prescriptions, recipes, horoscopes, and charms. These sources provide valuable information and orientation about the use and perception of *materia* formulae to yield life or death, elixir or poison. The formulae are representative of a larger pharmacological lore and practice within the Mediterranean world, and they relate how people lived in intimate connection with the earth and cosmos. The Asclepius cult and early Christian cults exist inseparably as part of the

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[3] Demotic refers to an Egyptian script (rather than language), traditionally used by the royal administration and temples under the earlier Ptolemies. By the first century BCE Egyptians increasingly preferred to use Greek. See Roger Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993): 236.

[4] An Egyptian language having a high proportion of Greek vocabulary, invented in the third century CE to translate the Bible for the general populace. See Bagnall, op. cit. 238ff.

[5] Hanz Dieter Betz notes, "In accordance with their geographical place of origin, the materials in the Papyri Graecae Magicae continue the older Egyptian magic. Perhaps brought in by Greek settlers in Egypt, Greek magic began to exert its influence perhaps as early as the period of classical Greece and certainly as part of the Hellenistic religious syncretism." Dieter Betz, "Magic and Mystery in the Greek Magical Papyri," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, edited by Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 244.

[6] K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1928–41); K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2nd ed.: (Stuttgart: Verlag Teubner, 1973–74); H.D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986–).

[7] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, 21.

world of plant and minerals, and the folklore which sustains and informs that world.

NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

Plants

Homer (eighth century BCE): potency of drugs to change and take life

Recipes used by the Asclepius cult consisted mostly of mineral and plant derivatives. In the second century CE Marcianus Aristides speaks of Asclepius as a god—a physician who devises remedies and compounds of salves (κατασκευάζοντα φάρμακα καὶ σύνθεσιν ἐμπλάστρων) to earn his livelihood.[8] A Greek inscription from Crete (second century–first century BCE) tells of a woman receiving a recipe from Asclepius to heal a malignant sore on her little finger:

> Asclepius ordered her to apply the shell of an oyster, burnt and ground down by her with rose ointment, and to anoint her finger with mallow, mixed with olive oil. And thus he cured her.[9]

Suppliants might offer a prayer with the administration of an Asclepius potion:

> Since, then, it was time for her to drink the potion (τὸ φάρμακον), filling the cup, I addressed a prayer (προσηυχόμην) to it [i.e., the potion]: "O child of earth, remedy, O gift of Asclepius, let your promises come true … and save my dear one for me …"[10]

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[8] Marcianus Aristides, *Apologia* 10.5–6. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T104, p. 52.

[9] *Inscriptiones Creticae* I, xvii, no. 19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T441, pp. 253–54.

[10] From the third century CE. Achilles Tatius, *De Clitophontis et Leucippes Amoribus* [Erotici Graeci, I, p. 126, 14–18]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T327, p. 167.

The Asclepius use of φάρμακον is representative of a larger medical folklore having roots in the writings of Homer. The drug used by Circe to turn Odysseus' men to swine has various deleterious effects. Odysseus calls it a φάρμακον οὐλόμενον (hateful drug, *Od.* 10.394). One of the suitors at the house of Odysseus talks of "Telemachus planning our murder … he means to go to Ephyre, that rich land, to bring from there deadly drugs (θυμοφθόρα φάρμακα), that he may cast them in the wine bowel and destroy us all" (*Od.* 2.325–29). Elsewhere, Odysseus searches for a deadly drug (φάρμακον ἀνδροφόνον) to smear upon his bronze-tipped arrows (*Od.* 1.261).

Prayers may accompany the use of drugs in Homer. In the *Iliad* Agamemnon prays to the "Son of Asclepius," as he looks at the bleeding Menelaus, who then receives soothing ointments (ἤπια φάρμακα) on his arrow wound.[11] Within the Homeric tradition drugs have the power to change life and take it.

Theophrastus (370–287 BCE): plant types, cultivation, and medicinal uses

Theophrastus, successor of Aristotle and the Lyceum, sets out a systematic cataloguing and discussion of ancient plants and their medicinal use. In his *Inquiry Into Plants* he examines "all kinds of drugs" (πάντων φαρμακωδῶν), which include the medicinal use of fruit, extracted juice, leaves, roots, and herb (IX.8). He records how druggists (φαρμακοπῶλαι) and herb-diggers (ῥιζοτόμοι)[12] harvest plants, some of which have toxic properties:

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[11] Homer, *Iliad* IV.189–219, translated by A.T. Murray, LCL (1925); cf. *Il.* V.401–2, 889–90; XI.828–47; Homer, *Odyssey* XIX.457, translated by A.T. Murray, and revised by George E. Dimock, LCL (1995, 1926).

[12] Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* IX.8.5. Translated by A. F. Hort, LCL (1926). John Scarborough notes: "Theophrastus' main source of information for such plants [i.e. medicinal] are the *rizotomoi*, a professional group of herbalists who collected medicinal roots and herbs, selling them at country fairs, hawking their virtues for pains and ailments of many kinds; added to the *riszotomoi* as sources of data on herbs are the *farmakopwlai* (drug vendors), who also touted their products in the venerated manner of folk medicine to country and city dwellers alike." See "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," in *Magika Hiera: An-*

> [I]n the cutting of some roots one should stand to windward,—for instance, in cutting θάψια among others, and that one should first anoint oneself with oil, for that one's body will swell up if one stands the other way. Also that the fruit of the wild rose must be gathered standing to windward, since otherwise there is danger to the eyes.[13]

Theophrastus describes ritual superstitions of Mediterranean folklore which accompany instructions for harvesting medicinal plants. One should draw three circles around the poisonous plant mandrake, (μανδραγόραν) and face towards the west before cutting it (IX.8.8). When cutting the (iris) plant gladwyn (ξίριν) one should leave cakes of spring-grown wheat as a replacement. For cumin (κύμινον) one should utter curses while harvesting.[14] Theophrastus makes it a point to reject such rituals for their over-superstitious nature. He also complains about the specific rituals of harvest offerings to Asclepius:

> That one should be bidden to pray while cutting is not perhaps unreasonable, but the additions made to this injunction are absurd; for instance, as to cutting the kind of all-heal (τὸ πάνακες)[15] which is called that of Asclepius; for then it is said that one should put in the ground in its place an offering of all kinds of fruits and a cake.[16]

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cient Greek Magic and Religion, edited by Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 149.

[13] Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* IX.8.5.

[14] Theophrastus, *Plants* IX.8.7–8, for mandrake, gladwyn and cumin.

[15] Elsewhere Theophrastus describes this panacea attributed to Asclepius as having "a white and very stout root about a span long and a thick bark which is crusted in salt." According to tradition, one should scrape and drink it for reptile bites, and take it with honey for disorders of the spleen, and for headaches" (IX.11.2).

[16] Theophrastus dismisses amulets and charms (περιάπτων καὶ τῶν ἀλεξιφαρμάκων) as "foolish and incredible" (IX.19.2). He complains about those who anoint themselves with snapdragon (τὸ ἀντίρρινον), believing that it will bring personal conquest and fame (ibid.). Elsewhere Theophrastus writes: "Superstition, it is scarcely necessary to say, seems to

Inquiry indicates the medicinal uses of various parts of Mediterranean plants. The mandrake leaf used with meal heals wounds (IX.9.1). The root of the erysipelas (ἐρυσίπελας) plant, scraped and steeped in vinegar, is good for gout, insomnia, and love potions (IX.9.1). The root of cyclamen (κυκλάμινος), a bulb plant with a fragrant flower, mixed with honey is used with the dressing of wounds (IX.9.3). The extracted juice of cucumber makes the drug called "driver" (ἐλατήριον) (IX.9.4).

Various ancient locations became known for certain plants. Tyrrhenia and Latium ("where they say Circe lived") have a reputation for growing potent herbs (IX.15.1). From Ethiopia comes the deadly root with which they smear their arrows (Somali arrow-poison). In Scythia there is the herb which has the power to "make the blood disperse as if it were put to flight" (IX.15.2). A type of root in Trace stops the flow of blood with the mere prick of a vein (IX.15.3). The plant called "dittany" (δίκταμνον) grows in Crete and is used especially for women in child-birth (IX.16.1).

Plants for Theophrastus have definitive properties applicable for the treatment of human illness and suffering. Many of these properties have the biological potency to sustain and/or take away life. The pharmacological uses of roots, fruits and leaf include folkloric traditions and rituals—most of which Theophrastus downplays. What he does emphasize, however, is the extensive knowledge, harvesting and application of medicinal plants in the ancient world.

Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE): plant types, cultivation, and medicinal uses

Three centuries after Theophrastus, Pliny the Elder assembled and detailed an extensive catalogue of medicinal plants of the ancient

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be a kind of cowardice in relation to the divine. The superstitious person is one who will not set out for the day before he has washed his hands and sprinkled himself at three springs, and put in his mouth a little bayleaf gathered near a temple … He seems to be one of these who are forever going to the seashore to cleanse themselves; and if he ever catches sight of one of those figures of Hecate at the crossroads wreathed with garlic, home he goes to wash his head and summon priestesses …" (*Characters*, XVI).

Mediterranean world. He established a scientific, methodical analysis of medicinal plants, and his treatment includes instructions about how to harvest restorative and healing properties of plants. Of the cucumber, for example, he writes:

> We have said that there is a wild cucumber much smaller than the cultivated kind. From it is made the drug called *elaterium* by pressing the juice out of the seed. Unless, to prepare it, the cucumber can be cut open before it is ripe, the seed spurts out, even endangering the eyes. After being gathered, the cucumber is kept for one night and then cut open the next day with a reed. (*Natural History* 20.2)[17]

According to Pliny, the seed, preserved in ash to contain its juice, is pressed out, thickened in the sun, and made into lozenges. These treat problems of the eye and sores of the eyelids. Pliny also talks about the plant squill (*scillarum*). Strips of it chewed by themselves are good for the gums and teeth. Taken in vinegar and honey squill clears tapeworm and other intestinal parasites (20.39). Strips of squill boiled in vinegar treat snake bites. Cooked in water, the center parts of the plant are good for dropsy (ibid.). Pliny's catalogue includes bees and honey, spices and perfumes of plants.[18]

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[17] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, translated by H. Rackham, LCL (1947).

[18] Squill also had ritualistic value, in which it is used to cleanse oneself of spiritual impurity. Cf. Theophrastus, *Characters* XVI.14. To the ancient mind squill had meaning on different levels. As John Scarborough notes, "Squill is a particularly apt example of the mixture in the Greek mind of practical botany, magico-religious rituals of great antiquity, and precise knowledge of pharmacological and medical utility." Squill is a pungent plant: "Neither a rose nor a hyacinth grows on a squill" (Theogn. 537). The poems of Hipponaz (fl. 540–537 BC) show a close link between the use of squill and the religious practice of expelling a scapegoat (φάρμακος) to cleanse a community of perceived impurities of pollution: "Pelting him in the meadow and beating / With twigs of squills like unto a scapegoat" (Hiponax frag. 48)." John Scarborough, "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," 146.

Homer, Theophrastus and Pliny provide a glimpse into the ancient world of plants and drugs. Collectively, they relate a world immersed in the knowledge and use of varieties of plants used for internal and external medicines. These traditions probably have roots in ancient Near East civilizations such as Assyria and Babylonian.[19] Theophrastus and Pliny provide little indication that only a selection of the population had access to these resources. On the contrary, most populations of the Greco-Roman world lived off the land, and it is likely that the knowledge of plant remedies passed from one generation to the next. John Scarborough remarks:

> Greek and Roman perceptions of the basic causes of pharmaceutical properties—in particular those of plants—continually fused religious and empirical data … This pattern combined the conviction of divine powers of drugs—whether beneficial or deleterious—with deeply rooted observations gathered by farmers over hundreds of generations; and the properties (δυνάμεις) attributed to varying φάρμακα quite frequently were amalgams of venerated rituals fused with carefully deduced pharmaceutical effects, for instance, the association of squill with the purification ceremonies and its treatment in the *Materia Medica* of Dioscorides.[20]

Nonetheless, specialists such as rootcutters and druggists made it their business to cultivate medicines and make them available for general consumption. They would have had a more specialized, exclusive hold on the material.[21] The same might be said of the Asclepius cult, which involved itself in the acquisition and application of medicines.

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[19] John Scarborough, "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," 162.

[20] Ibid.

[21] John Scarborough, "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," 138–174.

Minerals

The majority of the healing recipes of the Asclepius cult consist of plant properties. A smaller proportion consists of mineral and or a mixture of mineral and plant properties. Asclepius cult testimonies indicate the cult's cultivation and use of mineral medicines. The ingredients of a fourth century CE Asclepius unguent include common salts, rock salts, Cappadocian salts roasted, pumice-stone, laurel berries, powdered astringent earth, and plant products such as pepper, frankincense, and parched barley.[22] One Greek inscription from the second century CE refers to a certain Lucius who suffered from pleurisy. The god appeared, instructing him to mix altar ashes thoroughly with wine and lay them on his side. The treatment saved him, and "he publicly offered thanks to the god, the people rejoicing with him."[23]

Both Aristotle and Pliny show an extensive knowledge of minerals for medicinal purposes. Pliny's *Natural History* sets out a descriptive cataloguing of the properties of metals and stones (Bks. 33–37). He includes in his treatment the identification and usage of various drugs derived from these materials. For example, when admixed with ground pumice stone, gold relieves ulcers, and "when boiled down in honey it acts a gentle laxative" (33.85). When heated with elements such as salt, gold draws poison out [from the skin?][24] Aristotle (384–322 BCE) considers the larger movements

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[22] Oribasius, *Synopsis ad Eustathium* III, 162. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T373, pp. 191–2.

[23] *Inscriptiones Graecae* XIV, no. 966. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T438, pp. 250–1.

[24] Besides its use in surgery, iron rust dries wounds. It relieves gout when used as a liniment (33.153). Gold may be used as an amulet for people who are wounded, or for infants to disarm poisonous charms (33.84). Lead applied medicinally removes scars and/or control sexual passions (34.166). Magnets make helpful eye-salves and watering of the eyes (36.130). The kindling of the black, wood-like stone called jet (*gagates lapis*) "drives off snakes and relieves suffocation of the uterus" (36.142). Combined with wine it heals a toothache. Magi placed jet on an ax and drew predictions from the way it burned (ibid.). Gladiators after fighting

and chemistry of materiality, rather than the cataloguing of the properties of metals and stones. In Book I, he talks about the four bodies of fire, air, water and earth. These move either away or toward the center:

> We have previously laid down that there is one element from which the natural bodies in circular motion are made up, and four other physical bodies produced by the primary qualities, the motion of these bodies being twofold, either away from or towards the centre. These four bodies are fire, air, water and earth: of them fire rises to the top, earth always sinks to the bottom, while the other two bear to each other a mutual relation similar to that of fire and earth—for air is the nearest of all to fire, water to earth. (*Meteorologica* I, 339a, 11–19)[25]

According to Aristotle, the "primary qualities" of hot, cold, dry and moist combine to form the four elements, or "bodies." He provides a perception of the created world in which *materia* (the material world) issues from and consists of interacting energies (fire, air, water and earth). The ancient world understood that the potencies of these processes, when properly cultivated and used, yield therapeutic results.

PHARMACOLOGICAL CULTIVATION, AND THE RITUAL USE OF *MATERIA*: AN EXAMINATION OF *CODEX MARCIANUS* AND *PAPYRI GRAECAE MAGICAE*

The preceding discussion explored natural resources and the cultivation of these resources for making drugs. The Asclepius cult exists as part of a larger milieu of pharmacological cultivation, and the ritual use of these products. Ancient sources such as the *Greek Magical Papyri*, and the *Codex Marcianus* evidence this practice, providing specific ritual texts which include plant and mineral recipes, amu-

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used fire products such as the lye made from ashes to treat abdominal cramps or bruises (36.203).

[25] Aristotle, *Meteorologia*, translated by H. D. P. Lee, LCL (1952).

letic drugs and botanical lore.[26] An examination of the content of this material contributes to an understanding of the pharmacological and alchemical background of the Asclepius cult. This will inform an understanding of dreams, healing methods and sources used within the cult itself. Ultimately the use of such resources by early Christian cults, with regard to dreams and healing, will receive attention.

Codex Marcianus and material re-generation

Codex Marcianus consists of Greek narrative accounts which relate the transformation of materiality (and the subsequent transformative experience of the practitioner). Of particular interest is the tract entitled "Isis to Horus," probably dating to the first century CE.[27] In the interest of gaining a deeper sense of the ancient use of materiality outside of the Asclepius cult, an extended consideration of the Isis text will be discussed here. Various patterns of dream experience in "Isis to Horus" occur also in other dream-texts examined in this investigation, as will be seen.

In the account the goddess Isis[28] offers instruction to her son, Horus, for what she calls the φαρμάκου τῆ χήρας ("drug of the

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[26] Included also are pharmacological astrology, incantational formulae, imprecations and spells, and animal products used as medicines.

[27] M. Berthelot and Ch.-Em. Ruelle, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, "Isis to Horus," I, xiii, pp. 28–35. The "Isis to Horus" text is one of several ancient alchemical texts which make up the collection of this important work.

[28] Isis became known in antiquity as a god of the created world. One Isis areatology from Cyme in Asia Minor reads:

I am the Queen of the rivers and winds and sea.
No one is held in honor without my knowing it.
I am the Queen of war.
I am the Queen of the thunderbolt.
I stir up the sea and I calm it.
I am the rays of the sun.
I inspect the courses of the sun.
Whatever I please, this too shall come to an end.

widow") (16). This is the "great secret," at the heart of which resides φύσις, "nature." She relates what is told to her by the angel Amnael, whose sexual advances she resists in order to obtain the drug. Amnael says to her:

> [A]nd know that a human is only able to produce a human, and a lion a lion, and a dog a dog, and any of these things stands against nature (τι τῶν παρὰ φύσιν συμβαίνει), to become as a wonder/miracle (τέρας), it will have no standing. For nature enjoys nature and nature conquers nature (ἡ γὰρ φύσις τὴν φύσιν τέρπεται, καὶ ἡ φύσις τὴν φύσιν νικᾷ) (7).

According to Amnael, nature has the inborn power to regenerate itself. Substance begets substance—a concept elsewhere translated

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"Isis Aretalogy From Cyme," 40–47. Translated by Frederick C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions: The Age of Syncretism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Liberal Arts Press, 1953): 131–33. Citation and text taken from Marvin W. Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook of Sacred Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987): 172–74. Isis is the wife and sister of the Osiris, the prototype of the pharaoh and mythic King of Egypt. His powers generated the flow of the Nile and fertility of the land. Plutarch (46–120 CE) remarks: "… they simply give the name of Osiris to the whole source and faculty creative of moisture, believing this to be the cause of generation and the substance of life-producing seed." Plutarch, *Moralia* 5.33, translated by Frank Cole Babbitt, LCL (1936). His brother Typhon (Set), schemes Osiris' removal from the Egyptian throne. He casts him into the Nile River in a beautiful chest. Later, he dismembers Osiris. Hearing of this, Isis searches for and gathers all but her husband's member. Plutarch writes: "As they relate, Isis proceeded to her son Horus, who was being reared in Buto, and bestowed the chest in a place well out of the way; but Typhon, who was hunting by night in the light of the moon, happened upon it. Recognizing the body he divided it into fourteen parts and scattered them, each in a different place. Isis learned of this and sought them again, sailing through the swamps in a boat of papyrus. This is the reason why people sailing in such boats are not harmed by the crocodiles, since these creatures in their own way show either their fear or their reverence for the goddess" (*Moralia*, 5.18). Counseled by Isis, Horus vanquishes Set. Isis uses powerful magic to mummify Osiris, thus restoring him from death to life.

as: "the impregnation of nature by nature."[29] Although the text contains almost all mineral elements, [30] the narrative provides a clear sense of the intentional manipulation of matter to engender what is perceived to be a potent, life-giving property (elixir). The specific ingredients of the process are given by the angel:

> Take quicksilver (λαβὼν ὑδράργυρον), make it into a glob/body of earth (βῶλος) or a body (σώματος) of magnesia or sulfur. Retain it (ἔχε). This is the warm fixation (χλιαροπαγές). Mix that which is seen (εἰδῶν, the image, species). Take one part of lead and of the preparation fixed through warmth, and two parts of the white stone, and from the same stone one part, and one part of yellow Realgar [red sulfur of arsenic] and one part of the green stone. Mix the whole with lead, and when it has disintegrated reduce it three times to a liquid … Now realize the mystery, my son, the drug, the elixir of the widow (9, 16).

The overarching theme of transformation occurs throughout the text, where one substance joins with other substances to become something different. Parts, μέρος, (of lead, white stone, yellow realgar, green stone) become whole through the processing of these materials into various states: warm fixation, mixture, disintegration, liquefaction. These changing processes[31] make possible a realization of the elixir.

Preparation as ritual sacrifice

The word κατασκευήν, "preparation," occurs often in the Isis' pericope. It carries a sense of cultic, ritual initiation in which the suppliant (Isis) anticipates face-to-face encounter with divine revelation. By controlling/sacrificing the angel's demand, Isis yields the divine drug. The progressive nature of narrative events—successive battles with two angels, repetitions of oaths and warnings, declara-

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[29] See Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology* (Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, 1980, 1959): 47.

[30] Plant derivatives include lemon juice, and olive oil.

[31] Cf. Aristotle's perception of the formation of energies and bodies, *Meteorologica* I.339a, 11–19 (noted above).

tions (incantations?) of alchemical formulae—relate an implicit progression of cultic preparation. One advances into the experience of the great mystery. Knowledge of the elixir comes sacrificially. It is not simply meted out.

A comparative consideration of the initiation rites of the Isis cult,[32] as told by Apuleius (second century CE), draws out further this ritual transformation. In his *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius gives an account of the temple rite of the Isis cult, which offers a sense of ritual progression and realization of divine mystery. Encountering the goddess in a dream, he receives instructions which begin his entry into the initiation of the cult (XI.3). The goddess speaks to him:

> Now by my providence your day of salvation is dawning … You must await this rite with an attitude both calm and reverent. At my command, my priest, as part of his equipment for the procession, will carry in his right hand a garland of roses attached to the sistrum. So do not hesitate, but eagerly push through the crowd and join the procession … and do not shrink from any of my instructions because it seems difficult … you will clearly remember and keep forever sealed deep in your heart the fact that the rest of your life's course is pledged to me until the limit of your very last breath. (*Metamorphoses* XI.6)[33]

Apuleius provides to his readers the details of an animated procession, during which he encounters the priest, and gains admission into the ritual.[34] Like Isis and the angel, and similar to the ritual

[32] See Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, "The Isiac ceremonial (c. CE 50–75)," in *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 2.12.4e. The Isis cult had a strong Greek and Roman following by the second century CE.

[33] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, translated by J. Arthur Hanson, LCL (1989).

[34] Apuleius says, "everything seemed to be filled with happiness … everyone beautifully attired … people filling the streets, with crowds of those initiated in the divine mysteries pouring in" (*Metamorphoses* XI.7–9, 13).

movements of Asclepius temple (below), he enters into what is to be the divine revelation.[35] He advances eventually into the temple inner room, where he encounters the goddess who appears to him.[36]

In the account of Isis to Horus there occurs a subtle shift in which one becomes more open to divine encounter. This openness occurs on two levels. On the one hand, Isis' state of reception deepens the more she resists the demand for/of lust. She does not "turn" herself to the desiring angel and repeated advances.[37] (The

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[35] He also speaks of having taken the "customary bath," during which the priest adjures the god's favor, and cleanses Apuleius with purificatory sprinkling (*Metamorphoses* XI.23).

[36] Sworn to secrecy, Apuleius will not disclose to his readers the content of the experience of his initiation into the Isis cult. However, he speaks of the "marginality" of the experience, in which he went to the "boundary of death" (*Metamorphoses* XI.24). In the dark of the night he encounters gods of "below and above," and in the morning he emerges reborn, wearing 12 elaborately embroidered robes (*Metamorphoses* XI.24).: "When we arrived at the temple itself, the chief priest and those who carried the divine images and those who had already been initiated into the awesome inner sanctuary were admitted into the goddess's private chamber, where they arranged the lifelike effigies in their prescribed places. Then one of this group, whom everyone called the scribe, stationed himself before the door and summoned the company of the *pastophori*—the name of a consecrated college—as if calling them to an assembly. Then from a lofty platform he read aloud from a book verbatim, first pronouncing prayers …" (*Metamorphoses* XI.17).

[37] "After the passing of the time and the necessary movements of the heavenly sphere, it happened that one of the angels who dwelt in the first firmament saw me from above and came towards me desiring to unite with me sexually. He wanted to out-strip me, but I did not turn to him, desiring to obtain the gold and silver preparation … The next day, when the sun was making the middle of its course, Amnael, the one greater than him [the first angel] came down was gripped by the same desire for me and was in a great hurry. But I only wanted to ask my question. When he stayed with me, I did not give myself to him. I resisted him and overcame his desire till he showed me the sign on his head" ("Isis to Horus," 1,4).

text does not state whether she eventually does yield to the angel's advances.) On the other hand, the openness of both of the angels to sharing the divine power (δυνάμεως θείας μετεσχηκότες) (8) grows as the struggle and narrative progresses.[38]

This is similar to the Asclepius suppliant who moves from the altar to the inner chamber of the *abaton* and epiphany. Here too one is readied into a state of psyche-soma reception, until the flames are extinguished, and one is left to encounter the god.[39]

The process of κατασκευήν yields the secrets of re-generation. This entails a bringing to consciousness the deeper regions and images within the initiate (and the one engaged in the text). These become themselves the material of metamorphoses and/or healing.

Becoming aware—obtaining knowledge—appears to have a positive value in the Isis to Horus story. Elixirs may have the potential to heal or poison. Dreams may heal and/or madden. Taking knowledge from the more sublime aspects of the human being may or may not exact penalty.[40] Commenting on the Isis to Horus text, von Franz notes:

> Knowledge is either poisonous or healing, it is one or the other, and that is why some myths say that knowledge brings about the corruption of the world and others that knowledge is healing, and we have the biblical idea which says that it is first corruption, but later turns, thank God, into healing … our text comes from pagan sources without any Judaeo-Christian influ-

[38] The first angel moves from immediate demand for sexual union (rape), to what appears to be negotiation with the prophetesses' demands, which he defers to the greater angel. In the second struggle the angel moves from the intent to rape to Isis, to a state of reception of Isis' demands in which he offers full disclosure—the experience of the Great Mystery.

[39] Aristophanes, *Plutus* 633–747. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T421, p. 217.

[40] Cf. Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods, gave it to humans, to whom he taught many useful arts and sciences. As punishment, Zeus chains Prometheus to a mountain peak in the Caucasus.

> ence, but Egyptian and Greek influence, and there is an entirely positive evaluation.[41]

According to Greek mythology, Asclepius gains the knowledge of medicine from the wise centaur Chron. On earth Asclepius (who is not yet a deity) becomes so adept with this knowledge that he is able to bring back to life a human who has died. Zeus sees this act of Asclepius as a misuse of power, and subsequently strikes Asclepius dead. Apollo then persuades Zeus to resurrect Asclepius and make him the god of healing. Ovid writes:

> But having dared this once in scorn of the gods, from power to give life a second time you shall be stayed by your grandsire's lightening. So, from a god shall you become but a lifeless corpse (*corpus fies exsangue*); but from this corpse you shall become a god (*deusque qui modo corpus eras*) and twice renew your fates. (*Metamorphoses* II.645)[42]

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[41] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 55.

[42] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T2, p. 7. Isis herself embodies dualism. In "Isis to Horus" she represents a goddess of healing and the healing arts. The ancient world also saw her as slayer of the Egyptian sun god Ra. She kills him with the strike of a viper. In Greco-Roman times Isis is represented as a human-headed snake. Isis is both goddess and mother. She has the powers to give life and to kill it. In this way she parallels Euripides' Medea. As healer Isis cures Re. She also gathers and recreates her dismembered husband, Osiris. In this way she unifies the hostile elements into one. Didorus (first century BCE) says that she possesses the elixir of life (τὸ τῆς ἀθανασίας φάρμακον) (*Bibliotheke Historike* I.25). She attracts therefore the notion of "saviour," a concept officially connected with the Ptolemies as kings of Egypt (ibid., I.27). Didorus also identifies her as a pupil of Hermes, at least raising the question of the salvific motif in the (later) Hermetic writings. See Adolf Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934): 31; C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coiunctionis: an Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, translated by R. E. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963): 22; cf. the angel as ἀσώματον, C. J. Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967): 75; Georg Luck, "The Doctrine of Salvation in the Hermetic Writings," in *Ancient Pathways and*

Stars and planets

The Isis text points to another aspect of material processes and their use. The ritual sacrifice of preparation takes place at precisely the correct location and moment in time. The secret knowledge of primal regeneration happens in accord with the movements of the cosmos:

> I went to Hermopolis, the town of Hermes, the (town of) the holy technique of Egypt, and spent sufficient time here (ἐνταῦθα ἱκανὸν χρόνον διέτριβον). According to the passing of the time (καιρῶν) and the necessary movements of the heavenly sphere, it happened that one of the angels who dwelt in the first firmament saw me from above and came towards me … The next day, when the sun was making its middle course (μέσον δρόμον), Amnael, the one greater than him [the first angel] came down … (1,3)

The struggle between Isis and the angel occurs at Hermopolis, an ancient religious center mythologically connected with the deity Hermes.[43] The event of Isis and the angels occurs "in accordance

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Hidden Pursuits: Religion, Morals, and Magic in the Ancient World (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[43] Located in Middle Egypt, the city was known by the ancient world for its temples. The name of one of its villages, El-Ashmûnein, means the four couples personifying the pre-Creation elements of the Universe. According to legend, Hermes, god of Hermopolis, conquered the four elements. The city existed as an important religious center during the Ptolemic period, and during the third century CE with the advent of Neoplatonism in Alexandria when Toth or Hermas was Trismagistus (thrice great). According the Christian tradition, the holy family ended its journey into Egypt at Hermopolis. Hermopolis is the site of archaeological remains of two fifth-century churches. See Peter Grossman and Donald M. Bailey, "The South Church at Hermopolos Magna (Ashmunein): a Preliminary Account," in *Churches Built in Ancient Times: Recent Studies in Early Christian Archaeology* (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London and the Accordia Research Centre, University of London, 1994.). See S. Shenouda, "Hermopolis Magna (Ashmûnein)," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia*

with the seasons (τῶν καίρων) and the necessary movement of the heavenly sphere" (1). Only after "sufficient time" (ἱκανὸν χρόνον) and the planetary movements, does Isis' initial phase of the encounter begin. With the second phase the greater angel appears when the sun is making the middle of its course (3).

The author of the text understands events to happen in alignment with the cosmos. Location, timing, conflict and revelation happen within the movements of the solar universe. This admixing, and the κατασκευήν [preparation] of its process, bears out a poignancy which is rife with a coming into being (cf. Gen 1:6ff). The account infers subsequently a yielding (of Isis) to the (fate of the) cosmos, in which the angel attacks, the struggle issues, and the mystery is won. Compare this with the natural progression of incubation dreaming, something left to happen in its own time, according to the night movements of the unconscious processes.

In the Isis to Horus work, and the Asclepius testimonies one gives in to and becomes part of forces and energies—be they angels, gods or the watery currents of the human unconscious. Asclepius himself is counted among the "constellation which is in the Scorpion," locating the Asclepius cult within cosmic movements.[44]

Papyri Graecae Magicae: reflections on materiality and sacrifice

As representative of ancient Greco-Roman psyche-soma healing practices, an examination of the practices and themes in the Greek magic papyri will inform an understanding of the orientations and practices of the Asclepius cult and its texts. Of the many texts listed, this study has selected those texts (192 total) that are pertinent to the study of the Asclepius cult. The content of these selections include dreams, lists of herb, plant harvesting rituals, and the treatment of physical illness (app. C).

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of Classical Studies, edited by Richard Stillwell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976): 389–91.

[44] Ps. Eratosthenes, Catasterisimi I.6. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T121, p. 59. Cf. Hyginus, *Astronomica* II.14; *Scholia in Caesaris Germanici Aratea* 71; Iannes Lydus, *De Mensibus* IV.142. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T380, pp. 193–194.

The papyri selections consist of formulae which contain mostly plant and mineral mixtures to treat various kinds of human illnesses. For a dog bite "you should pound garlic with gum, put it on the wound of the dog bite, and speak to it daily until it is well" (*PDM* xiv.554–62).[45] A prescription to induce sleep consists of a mixture of one ounce of mandrake root, water, honey, henbane and ivy ground together with a measure of wine (*PDM* xiv.716–24). The papyri selections also include lists of herbs and minerals.[46]

The *PGM* plant and mineral recipes, in their listing and combining of ingredients, resemble those attested in the Asclepius cult. Plants and minerals become the mediums of healing experience, by which the practitioner manipulates natural forces in line with cosmic movements[47] to obtain some immediate benefit. *Materia* is given in behalf of the suppliant as sacrifice to what is perceived to be the higher powers.

In the Greek magical papyri there is a sense that "text" itself is perceived to be(come) *materia*, which when ritually prepared yields life-giving properties. One spell for a scorpion sting instructs the victim to write characters on a clean piece of papyrus, wrap the papyrus around the bite, and "the sting will lose its pain immediately."[48] Another text for the cure of a headache reads: "Write these things on scarlet parchment: 'ABRASAX-.' Place it, having made it into a plaster, on the side of the head."[49] One amulet instructs the

[45] The abbreviation *PDM* stands for *Demotic Magical Payri.*

[46] *PDM* xiv.886–96; xiv.897–910; 920–29; 933–34; 966–69.

[47] For astrological papyri: *PGM* VII 284–99, "Orbit of the moon: in Virgo: anything is rendered obtainable. In Libra: necromancy. In Scorpio: anything inflicting evil. In Sagittarius: an invocation or incantations / to the sun and moon. In Capricorn: say whatever you wish for best results. In Aquarius for a love charm. Pisces: for foreknowledge. / In Aries: fire divination or love charm. In Taurus: incantation to a lamp. Gemini: spell for winning favor. In Cancer: phylacteries. Leo: rings or binding spells." See also *PGM* VII. 272–83 (an Egyptian calendar of months and days unsuitable for magic operations); *PGM* LXII. 52–75 (horoscope); *PGM* CX. 1–12 (minerals and horoscope).

[48] *PGM* VII. 193–96.

[49] *PGM* VII. 201–2.

victim to write unidentified names on a piece of tin and bind the tin with deerskin to the feet.[50] For communication with the dead texts are written onto papyrus and inserted into the mouth of a corpse: "Ink from red ochre, burnt myrrh, juice of fresh wormwood, evergreen, and flax. Write [on a leaf] and put it in the mouth [of the corpse].[51]

Rituals often have instructions for specific materials for ink. These might include myrrh, animal blood and soot. The subject usually writes words, letters and/or pictorial symbols on fresh papyri, the sides of the leaf of a designated plant (laurel, grape), or tin.[52]

Animal products receive less attention in the corpus. Jonathan Z. Smith argues that the minimal reference to animal *materia* in *PGM* is indicative of a phasing out of animal sacrifice from the ancient temple system:

> [T]emple and sacrifice, especially that requiring animal victims, declined. As sacrifice was the rason d'etre of the archaic temple, the chief currency of both its divine and human economies, this meant that temples must either be revalorized or abandoned. A temple, an altar, without sacrifice is a mere monument. (See, already, the admittedly polemic account in Joshua 22.10–34.) This meant, as well, that sacrifice would have either to be dis-placed or re-placed.[53]

The continuous reference to plants (and some minerals) in the *PGM* spells and formulae suggest a shift in which vegetable sacrifice has "dis-placed or re-placed" animal sacrifice. Similarly, a focus on vegetable sacrifice occurs in the Asclepius cult, where suppliants enter into the temple and dedicate honey-cakes, for example, before and/or after the incubation experience:

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[50] *PDM* xiv. 1003–14.

[51] *PGM* IV. 2140–44; *PDM* Supp. 117–30; *PDM* Supp. 101–16.

[52] E.g. *PGM* XII.96–152.

[53] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," 22.

> There on the altar honey-cakes and bakemeats
> Were offered, food for the Hephaestian flame
> (Aristophanes, *Plutus* 660–61)[54]

Smith also discusses what he sees reflected in *PGM* to be a shifting notion of sacrifice from temple to domestic settings.[55] In the Greek papyri ritual sacrifice prescribed in spells, charms, and prescriptions often occur in non-temple, domestic settings: house rooftops, a bedroom, an upper-room. A similar domestication of worship and ritual occurs also with the ancient Jewish synagogue, and with Christian cults which locate worship in "church homes."

However, almost all of the Asclepius testimonies given by Edelstein connect the ritual of incubation with the Asclepius system. Incubation occurs as part of a process which includes altar offerings and purification baths. Suppliants submit to the directives of temple priests and temple (architectural) constriction. As seen above, the sanctuary complex has as its focus the *abaton*, a specifically marked temple location out of which healing experience occurs. In the Asclepius cult dream experience and materiality (water, earth, plant and mineral prescriptions) are inseparably connected with the temple. It appears that the domestication of temple-ritual practices which Smith speaks of does not include the Asclepius cult.

It appears that none of the *healing* papyri on the PGM corpus involves dreams (app. C). However, many references to dreams in the larger collection of spells include the writing of text on plant and mineral material. For example, to send a dream:

> [Y]ou should write this [A line of symbols of secret signs] on a reed leaf and put [it] under your head while you sleep. It makes dreams and sends dreams. If you will do it to send dreams, you should put it on the mouth of a mummy. (*PDM* xiv. 1070–77)

The recipe calls for the writing of symbols on a plant leaf (reed). The suppliant sleeps with the inscription under his head. The text

[54] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T514, p. 292. Cf. T515, T421, T490. See also Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Corinth*.

[55] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," 23

and plant have direct, physical contact with the head, the perceived location of dreams. Another text (fragment) for sending a dream reads:

> … reed leaf and you write an image of … the ear … drowned, and you should recite these writings … four times … [wreath] to it and say the thing [in the ear] … (*PDM Supp.* 19–27)[56]

As a worker of spells and charms, the practitioner of "magic"[57] provided the means by which persons could tap into the forces of

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[56] To send a dream: *PDM* Supp. 1–6, 7–18, 19–27, etc.; for dream (oracle) request: *PGM* XII. 144–52; XXIIb. 27–13, 32–35; VII. 703–26, 740–55, etc.

[57] The discussion of magic has a complex history, in which the term has come to be used more as a political label of degeneration. The discussion falls across various disciplines. Theologically, nineteenth century Protestantism established a distinct separation between magic as a lower, mechanistic expression, compared to the "high-piety" of (Protestant) Christianity. Encapsulated in the work of W. J. Goode, the practitioner of magic invokes "spells," rather than prayer, which demand immediate and limited response. W.J. Goode, "Magic and Religion: A Continuum," *Ethos* 14 (1949): 172–82. See also David E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," *ANRW*, 2.23.2: 1512–16. For sociologists Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Marcel Mauss magic represents anti-social, illegal behavior. Jonathan Z. Smith and Morton Smith focus on "illegality" as the one, universal element of magic. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978): 192; Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973): 220–37. David E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," 1515. David Aune argues the universality of magic as anti-social behavior. Ibid., 1515. Anthropologist James Frazer (1854–1941) sets out the broad notion of sympathetic magic, where like makes like (homeopathic magic), and items in contact form permanent bonds, i.e. relics (contagious magic): "If we analyze the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the later the Law of Contact of Contagion." Sir

nature and the underworld, and thus instill a sense of control of one's well-being, if not destiny. The magician, in tune with cosmic movements, practiced rituals said to manipulate the forces of nature for the benefit (and also detriment) of human beings. He had recipes for everything—"From migraine to runny nose to bedbugs to horse races, and, of course, all the troubles of love and money."[58]

James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: MacMillan, 1922): 12. Unlike Frazer, Evans Pritchard relates a cultural-specific analysis (the Zande of the Sudan), making the distinction between what he calls "sorcery," and "witchcraft." E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Aszande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937): 8–12. In the field of psychology Freud adopts the evolutionary perspective of Frazer, espousing a three-stage development of human beings: animism, religion and science. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, translated and edited by James Strachey (New York/London, W.W. Norton, 1913): 97. The first of these stages entail homeopathic and contagious magic. Ibid., 97–107. Carl Jung's interest in the experience of the numinous draws attention away from distinctions between magic and religion, where the biological substratum of the unconscious finds expression in consciousness or dreams. With the exception of Jung, a fundamental presupposition underpins these theories: magic represents a pejorative label for practices and beliefs which are not in accord with (Protestant) "religion." Calling something "magic" sets up an us-them construct motivated by political interests. Robert K. Ritner notes: "Magic here is simply the religious practices of one group viewed with disdain by another … magic serves to distinguish "us" from "them," but it has no universal content. Your religion is my magic, and thus in English, Africa has no priests but "witch-doctors." Any understanding of the Western concept of magic must acknowledge this inherent negative connotation and trace it to its roots: The Greek terms *mageia* (practitioner: *magos*) and *goeteia* (practitioner: *goes*)." Robert K. Ritner, "The Religious, Social, and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Boston and Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001): 44–45.

[58] *The Greek Magical Papyri*, xlvii.

In the "Isis to Horus" tract, the Preisendanz-Betz papyri collection, and the Asclepius cult testimonies, an experience involving the acquisition of something life-giving takes place through the medium of temple mixture. Deity, *materia* and text[59] inter-mingle, and into this the suppliant offers his whole being—including his body, and at some level, (un)consciousness.[60] From this issues the epiphany of a god, the realization of a potion, and a fuller awareness of the potency of natural resources. The texts examined here point to a relationship in which nature, θύσις, supports and enables human existence. The Asclepius cult establishes itself within this understanding. Sanctuaries cut into the earth, often set in non-urban environs, gather, embrace and enhance the natural world and its resources. With many sanctuaries, including those at Cos, Corinth and Pergamon, this relationship was accentuated by Rome with aqueducts flowing with water, ornate bath houses, and grandiose stoas.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DREAMS AND BODY

Ritual sacrifice of preparation and the revelation of divine mystery happen in connection with σῶμα (body). In the Isis account an angel twice desires and accosts the body of Isis, who turns away from the angel, in order to obtain the mystery. The material formulae revealed by the angel entail formulating quicksilver into a "glob or body," and to the "body" of magnesia and sulfur. In the Greek papyri many of the spells, phylacteries, and amulets require direct contact with the body. Users of the spells ingest, absorb, touch, smell, behold *materia*—plant, text and mineral.

In the Asclepius testimonies dreams occur in relation to bodily experience of, for example, fingers, womb, eyes, face, touch, and kiss. Extant terra-cotta votive offerings in the shape of various body parts at the Corinthian Asclepius temple concretize this relationship.[61] Directed by Asclepius (and the priests of the temple),

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[59] Cf. votive tablets inscribed with dream and healing experiences (above).

[60] Cf. the process of dream incubation.

[61] See Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Corinth.*

patrons subjected themselves to material treatments administered externally (bathing, emollient applications, exercise) and internally (ingestion of specified potions and remedies). Edward Whitmont and Sylvia Perera note how the body functions as the "vehicle or locus of incarnation" in relation to dreaming and the unconscious:

> In the view of the unconscious psyche the body is experienced as the vehicle or locus of incarnation. (Incarnation, as an archetypal process, implies the existential expression of the personality living here and now). This vehicle has its own biological dynamic and rhythms, which reciprocally resonate with psychic dynamics, and which are, for the most part, not subject to direct ego control. Hence body dynamics represent forces of organic living, functions expressive of, and akin to, animal life in affect impulsivity and to the vegetational life in growth and decay. These dynamics have to be related to as an *a priori* given; they cannot be deliberately changed.[62]

David Foulkes notes how dreams function as means by which one experiences bodily changes with "much finer awareness."[63] A dream relates, in some way, a personal connection between the unconscious dream-world and materiality. Along these lines, von Franz notes:

> Dr. Jung is inclined to think—though he has never formulated the thought, or only hypothetically, because we cannot do more, we can only speculate or make a hypothesis—that probably the unconscious has a material aspect, which is why it

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[62] Edward C. Whitmond and Sylvia Brinton Perera, "Body Imagery" in *Dreams, a Portal to the Source* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991): 137.

[63] Foulkes writes: "We can assume that we have a much finer awareness of certain bodily changes that we have in our waking life, and that this awareness is translated into the image of a dream and this can serve to diagnose illness and predict certain somatic occurrences." David Foulkes, *The Psychology of Sleep* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962): 114. At the same time, C. G. Jung notes that the organic sensations felt during sleep are not the cause of the dream. C. G. Jung, *Dreams*, translated by R. E. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974): 3.

> knows about matter, because it is matter which knows itself, as it were. If this were so, then there would be a dim or vague phenomenon of consciousness even in inorganic matter.[64]

Such connection suggests the significance of matter in dreams,[65] and the inexplicable relation between the physical world and the unconscious as medium(s) of healing come in relation to dreams.[66]

In its focus on both body and dream, the Asclepius cult appears to know this inter-relationship, and its significance for human wellbeing. As seen in "Isis to Horus" and the Greek papyri, there is a sense in which matter becomes the means of human salvation, that is, immortality. For Asclepius worshipers this may go back to the practice of incubation in fifteenth century BCE Egypt. Ancient Egypt applied its alchemical recipes and knowledge of the body toward this end through the practice of mummification. Von Franz writes:

> [W]e know now … that alchemy did originate from the Egyptian death cult, that the chemistry of mummification played an enormous role, that actually the Egyptians mummified their dead in order to obtain immortality and make the dead person

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[64] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy: an Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology* (Toronto, Canada:, Inner City Books, 1980, 1959): 37.

[65] Further consideration of matter in relation to the Asclepius practices might include C. G. Jung's discussion of *prima materia*, in *Psychology and Alchemy*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953): 317–344. Among the Greeks, Anaximes (c.588–c.524 BCE) conceives air as a primary source from which comes wind, fire, stone and fire. Empedocles of Acragas (c.491–c.460 BCE) argues that particles of fire, water and earth constitute a universe in motion. Permenides of Elea (fifth century BCE) speaks of unchanging primal substances, and Leucippus of Miletus (fifth century BCE) espouses atomic theory.

[66] Von Franz is clear to note the "preserving and healing aspect" of the unconscious as the source of dreams. Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 97.

> divine, and that alchemy tried to do the same thing, namely produce the immortal man, produce immortality.[67]

It seems reasonable to anticipate the influence of this merger on the Asclepius temple practices and its interest in what Jung calls *prima materia.* More directly, it ties in with the Asclepius temple and the Hippocratic focus on the body. Hippocrates's concerns himself specifically with the study and treatment of the human body, thus separating medicine from philosophical speculation about the natural world such as atomic theory in the thought of Epicurus (371–270 BCE). Apparently, Hippocrates had direct association with the Asclepius temple at Cos, and according to A. J. Brock, he revitalized the Asclepius temple system of his time.[68] He brings medicine down to earth.

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[67] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 113. See also E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) 110. On mummification, see also Bronislaw Malinowski, "Death and the Reintegration of the Group," in *Magic, Science and Religion* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992): 47–53. One might compare ancient Egyptian attention to immortality through matter with the concomitant Greek interest in the un-dividable, non-perishable "atom" noted in the work of Epicurus, Asclepiades and his pupil Themison of Laodicea as an ultimate drive toward immortality. The Hellenistic world experienced a merging of Greek scientific thought with the practice of Ptolemaic Egyptian religion and recipes. See Von Franz calls recognizes this as "the birth of alchemy." See Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 80. See also Etienne Drioton and Jacques Vandier, *Les Peuples de L'Orient Mediterraneen L'Egypte* (Paris: Universitaires de France, 1962); Siegried Morenz, *Gott und Mensch im alten Agypten* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1965).

[68] Brock writes: "Hippocrates, the "Father of Medicine" … was associated with the Asclepieum of Cos, and island off the south-west coast of Asia Minor, near Rhodes. He apparently revitalized the work of the health-temples, which before his time had been showing a certain decline in vigor, coupled with a corresponding excessive tendency towards sophistry and priestcraft … Hippocrates confined the medical man to medicine. He did with medical thought what Socrates did with thought in general he 'brought it down from heaven to earth.' His catchword was 'Back to nature.'" See A. J. Brock, his introduction to Galen, *On the Natural Fac-*

Many Asclepius texts and inscriptions relate the Hippocratic "back to nature" methods. One first century CE Greek inscription relates how the god Asclepius sends Marcus Julius Apellas, an Idrian from Mylasa, to the Asclepius temple at Epidaurus to be healed of dyspepsia. He bathes in therapeutic waters of the temple, takes a diet of cheese, bread, lettuce and celery, practices running, takes walks in the upper portico of the temple complex, sprinkles himself with sand, walks barefoot, and pours wine over himself, and applies salts and moistened mustard to his body.[69] In a third century BCE inscription, Hermodicus of Lampsacus tells how Asclepius ordered him to lift up a rock and live without sickness (*τόνδε ἄνοσον διάγειν*).[70] At the Asclepius sanctuary in Rome the god instructs a certain Lucius suffering from pleurisy and "being despaired of by all persons," to take ashes from the threefold altar, mix them with wine, and apply them to his side. The inscription continues: *καὶ ἐσώθη καὶ δημοσίᾳ ηὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ὁ δῆμος συνεχάρη αὐτῷ* ("And he was saved and publicly offered thanks to the god, and the people rejoiced with him.").[71] In the same temple, a man named Julian ingests pinecone seeds with honey for three days which cures him from spitting up blood. Elsewhere, a blind man named Gaius places his five fingers on the base of the holy statue of Asclepius, then places his fingers on his eyes. His sight returns.[72] At Lebena, the Asclepius puts a "cupping instrument" on a patient's stomach to induce fertility.[73]

Other ancient medical specialists follow Hippocrates and his school. Herophilus and Erasitratus advance knowledge and practice

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ulties, translated by A. J. Brock, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916): x.

[69] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, no. 126 [c.160 CE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T432, pp. 247–48.

[70] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, no. 125 [third century BCE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T431, pp. 246–47.

[71] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XIV, 966, no. 125 [second century CE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T438, pp. 251.

[72] Ibid.

[73] *Inscriptiones Creticae*, I, xvii, no. 9 [second century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T425, pp. 238–39.

of anatomy in the Alexandrian anatomical school of the third century BCE. Galen (129–199 CE) develops the Hippocratic school in areas including anatomy, physiology and logic.[74]

The texts and inscriptions attesting to the experience of Asclepius's healing powers represent a larger collection of similar testimony to the function of ancient Asclepius temples as places of body healing, where patrons exercise, soak, expose, manipulate, regulate, rest, and alter the human body somehow broken or devolved.[75]

I am drawn to what appears to be the ancient recognition the potency of natural resources for healing. Our Post-Enlightenment Western society, rooted in a rational, empirical way of looking at the world, resists the notion of "folklore, gods and healing." It seems more appropriate to conclude that the ancients—as seen with the Asclepius cult—were ultimately projecting onto nature their own desires and animism. Yet, they lived intimately attuned to natural resources (including dreaming) and movements of the cosmos, and were therefore in a position to benefit from the restorative properties of these sources. Their interest in the "inner-world" and the "earth-world" as potent sources of healing perhaps constituted the significance of the Asclepius temples as therapeutic healing centers for the sick for hundreds of years. These qualities make the cult and its practices an important model for the development of "holistic" healing currently occurring in Western culture.

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[74] See the introduction to Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, translated by A. J. Brock, LCL (1916).

[75] This focus on the body and natural elements in Asclepius cults may reflect, in Hellenistic times, a general preoccupation with the human body and its well-being. See G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

CHAPTER 3: THE DREAM OF AELIUS ARISTIDES

BACKGROUND

Aelius Aristides (117–171 CE), an Athenian statesman, over the course of 25 years wrote 130 of his own dreams which he placed into a larger work he entitled the *Sacred Tales*.[1] During his lifetime he searched for healing from illness which plagued much of his life from the age of twelve[2] and frustrated his career ambitions to become an orator. At one point ill-health cut short his stay in Rome, where he was to declaim before the royal court. After having a revelation from Asclepius, he entered into the Asclepius temple at Pergamum. He spent two years there, recording his dreams and taking prescribed medical treatments.

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[1] Bruno Keil, *Aelii Aristidis Smyrnaei quae supersunt omnia*, vol. II (Berlin 1898, reprint Berlin 2000); See also Aristides, *Orations*, translated by W. Dindorf (Leipzig, 1829; reprint 1964); C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968). C. A. Behr (correctly) notes the value of these dreams as a means to understand the dreamworld of antiquity and the nature, function and significance of the Asclepius cult, temple and incubation phenomenon. Emma and Ludwig Edelstein advance a similar view. Secondary works and references consulted in this particular study (surprisingly) show few scholars who dismiss the dreams as useful material. Campbell Bonner calls Aristides "a brainsick noodle," but he goes on to note favorable aspects of Aristides' writings. E. R. Dodds (too) conveniently divides this material into what he calls "anxiety dreams, megalomaniac dreams, and divine dreams." E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, 39–45. Aristides says that the god approved of his speeches, "calling them the *Sacred Tales*" (II.10).

[2] Aristides, *Oratio* 52.1. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T400, p. 202.

Aristides represents an important source for the understanding of the Asclepius cult in the second century CE. Edelstein collects over fifty references to Asclepius by Aristides. About twenty of the testimonies refer to some aspect of the cult itself: attendants, sacrifice, festivals, purification rites, sacrifice, etc. (app. D). About fifteen other testimonies make reference to medicine and healing. Other testimonies refer to sanctuary rites and the deification of Asclepius. This range of testimonies provides a helpful cross-sectioning of Asclepius cult practices. However, the following discussion also draws from the dream memoir of Aristides entitled *Sacred Tales*, since Edelstein's presentation of Aristides is not exhaustive, and is limited to only 8 dream accounts.

Aristides enthusiastically embraces the Asclepius cult, which for him is salvific, as "the god has no leisure to do anything except save."[3] His testimonies of Asclepius are enthusiastic for the god and the cult,[4] perhaps, in part, to compensate for persistent longing to have full health and good standing amidst his aristocratic peers. As an aspiring orator, he craves public recognition and the fervor of the narrative of the *Sacred Tales* reflects this zeal. At the same time, there occurs an overall demonstration of reasoned thought and a narrative eloquence which suggests his hold on his own faculties. His writings take readers inside the Asclepius cult with its drugs and dream "paradox," rumors of healings and votive offerings telling of cures which include both a miraculous "well" which takes the place of drugs,[5] and resurrection of the dead:

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[3] Aristides, *Oratio* 39.11. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T804, p. 411.

[4] Aristides's oration on the well in the temple of Asclepius in Mysia (*Oratio* 39), Greece, is a good example of his enthusiasm for the cult and his veneration of its practices and sanctuaries. The well in the sanctuary is "holy," and "no single speech could express the quality of this well, its beauty and taste …" (*Oratio* 39.1). He says Asclepius himself chose the sanctuary location—"the fairest spot on earth" (*Oratio* 39.3). He says that Asclepius is "the gentlest and of all the gods he is the most loving of human beings" (*Oratio* 39.5).

[5] Aristides, *Oratio* 39.14–15. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T409, pp. 206–7.

> Some sing about and will forever sing about one thing, others about another, but I wish to record in this way that which concerns myself. There are some who claim that they have risen after lying dead, stating something, to be sure, on which all agree and which has been one of the old-established practices of the god. Now, not once alone, but it would not be easy to say how many times we have experienced this benefit. Years and decades has he granted through his oracles.[6]

Aristides himself says that he has "lived not twice but many varied lives through the power of the god."[7] He probably here refers to some kind of healing experiences which saved him more than once from death. In his testimonies one encounters the centrality of the temple and its rites of white-clad worshipers, attendants and priest, cultic purification, candles and doorways.

An examination of the Asclepius dreams of Aelius Aristides enables a detailed glimpse into the ancient *abaton* experience of the Asclepius cult. One specific text will receive attention, and observations from it will include references to other testimonies of the author, and other literature of the Greco-Roman world, including some early Christian material as a prelude to Part II of this study. The following translation of and reflection on Aristides' dream is my own, and relates a reading informed by my own sense of the nuances of his language in relation to the Greco-Roman milieu

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[6] Aristides, *Oratio* 42.6–7. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T317, p. 157. See also Sextus Empericus (end of second century CE), *Adversus Mathematicis* I.260–62, Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T69, pp. 38–39; Meander (343–292 BCE) writes: "Believe me, men (ἄνδρες), I had been dead during all the years of life that I was alive … But now that I have come here [unidentified Asclepius sanctuary] 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 theater" *Papyrus Didtianna*, b, 1–15, from Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T419, pp. 211–12.

[7] Aristides, *Oratio* 23.15–18. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T402, pp. 202–3.

from which it issues. This is also true for the other texts examined in chapters 4–7.

In one of his dreams while at the Pergamum, Aristides records how he stood in the *propylaea* (front porch) of the Asclepius Temple. This is probably a temple initiation ritual.[8] In the dream Aristides sees clearly the remedy ἀψίνθιον (wormwood) to treat his illness. The dream continues:

> I thought that I stood within the entrance of the temple and that many others had assembled, just as when a purification takes place, and that they were clad in white and otherwise too in suitable fashion. It [sc., the remedy] was revealed in the clearest way possible, just as countless other things also made the presence of the god manifest. For I seemed almost to touch him and to perceive that he himself was coming, and to be half way between sleep and waking and to want to get the power of vision and to be anxious lest he depart beforehand, and to have turned my ears to listen, sometimes as in a dream, sometimes as in a waking vision, and my hair was standing on end and tears of joy came forth, and the weight of knowledge was no burden—what person could even set these things forth in words? But if he is one of the initiates, then he knows and has understanding. After these things had been seen, when it was dawn, I summoned the doctor Theodotus. And when he came, I recounted my dreams to him. He marveled at how divine they were, and was at a loss as to what he should do, since he feared the excessive weakness of my body in winter time. For I lay indoors during many successive months. Therefore we thought that it was no worse to send also for the temple warden Asclepiacus. (Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII, 31–35)[9]

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[8] Cf. above Apueleius, *Metamorphoses* IX.

[9] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T486, p. 278; T417, pp. 210–11.

THE SLEEPER'S DREAM: EPIPHANY, BODY, AND INNER EXPERIENCE

Aristides' account sets forth what is possibly an *incubation* dream[10] in which he has been readied for and contained ("formed") within the dream chamber of the Pergamon Asclepius temple—the place where the god Asclepius himself sleeps and makes himself known (as seen above). As location for dreams and the processes of dreaming, the *abaton* of the Asclepius temple materially and symbolically serves as a "vessel" or "womb" for dream experience.[11] Dreamers submit themselves to its inner chamber specifically designed to facilitate unconscious life. It is this process and its results to which Aristides refers and which has resonance only for those persons (τῶν τετελεσμένων "initiates")[12] who intimately know such Asclepius temple processes through personal experience. Even then, such knowledge will have its own unique characteristics from one experience to another. In the end, Aristides is ultimately alone in his encounter with the "god" in his dream, and one hears Aristides' attempt to share as much as he can about his experience with the waking world.

Aristides' incubation dream may be seen to move from general to specific, and the ability of Aristides to describe the experience becomes more difficult the closer he comes to its core. Overall the account relays some of the ideas examined in the Greco-Roman sources above—"Isis to Horus," the Greek magical papyri, and Asclepius cult testimonies—which include temple ritual prepa-

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[10] His reference to the temple attendant at the end of the dream suggests a temple-*abaton* orientation experience.

[11] Cf. the spell to establish a relationship with Helios which refers to the "womb of all knowledge" and is pregnant through the father's begetting *PGM* 3.602ff. Cf. Rom 9:22; Hermas, *Sim.* 9.5.4; *Vis.* 2.4.2. In symbolic and material terms, Jung refers to the "natural vessel" of *coniunctio*. C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coinunctionis*, 460. Von Franz likens the vessel to the "belly of the 'closed house,'" or the coffin of the Egyptian mummy undergoing the process of resurrection. Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 159.

[12] Aristides, *Oratio* 38.33. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T417, p. 211.

ration, sacrifice, materiality, and the uses of plant and mineral derivatives.

Epiphany experiences

Aristides speaks of some kind of dream "experience" in which something has happened to him, and has been revealed to him (ἐδηλώθη). His description of the experience, which yields the remedy (wormwood), has two main emphases. First, the experience has a *personal* connotation, in which a divine secret is given and brought to conscious awareness within the receiver/initiate. Aristides claims that he has had many of these "revelations" where "wondrous visions (θαυμαστὰ φαντάσματα) came repeatedly"[13] over the course of his life, and that somehow his own struggle with health (and career) has procured the "many varied lives through the power of the god:"

> I myself am one of those who have lived not twice but many varied lives through the power of the god, and consequently one of those who think that sickness for this reason is advantageous and who moreover have acquired precious gems in return for which I would not accept all that which is considered happiness among men. (*Oratio* 23.17)

It was seen above that a similar kind of "inner experience" occurs with Isis, who interacts with the great angel, and by this yields to consciousness the formulaic mixture. Similar usage of the word δήλω occurs in other ancient literature. In the Greek papyri, the "Sacred Book of Moses" refers to the initiation of rites by an angel and the request for the "revelation" of the initiate's fate:

> An angel will come in, and you say to the angel, "Greetings, lord. Both initiate me by these rites I am performing / and present me [to the god], and let the fate determined by my birth 'be revealed' to me." And if he says anything bad, say, "Wash off from me the evils of fate. Do not hold back, but 'reveal' / to me everything, by night and day and in every hour of the month, to me, NN, son of NN. Let your auspicious

[13] Aristides, *Oratio* 52.1. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T400, p. 202.

> form 'be revealed' to me, for under your [order] I serve [your] angel, ANAG BIATHI." (Repeat the formula). (*PGM* XIII. 614)

Elsewhere, Luke 20:37 talks about the raising of the dead, as "made clear" by Moses, and Clement (c.90 CE) speaks of a "revealing" of the resurrection in the created world of night and day, and the seasons of harvest.[14] All of these examples point toward some extraordinary event breaking into the mortal, human world—an experience which has singular significance for the subject of the epiphany.

Secondly, Aristides says that the experience of the remedy happened in "*the clearest way possible*." The use of the word ἐναργέστατα ("clear perception") connotes the impressionable quality of his dream experience, and his words suggest the immediacy of the revelation which is still quite present with him.[15] Much of Aristides' writings as a whole are a testimony to the (collective) lingering impression of his Asclepius dream experiences in which he relates the images, interactions, instructions and prescriptions of the god. These kinds of dream experiences have a poignant quality about them, and point to what Masud Khan calls a "good dream."[16] Homer uses ἐνάργη in the same way when Penelope has full dream experience in which a phantom (ἀμαυρός) appears to her

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[14] "Day and night show us a resurrection. The night sleeps, the day arises: the day departs, night comes on. Let us take the crops: how and in what way does the sowing take place? 'The sower went forth' and cast each of the seeds into the ground, and they fall on to the ground, parched and bare, and suffer decay; then from their decay the greatness of the providence of the Master raises them up, and from one grain more grow and bring forth fruit" (1Cl. 24.3–5). *Apostolic Fathers*, translated by Kirsopp Lake, LCL (1914). See also the Shepherd Hermas who speaks of the having the building of the tower revealed to him by the Lord (H.v. 3.12.3). Ibid.

[15] Of another dream he remarks: "I marveled at the precision of the dream" Behr, V.50.

[16] M. Masud R. Khan, "Beyond the Dreaming Experience," in *Hidden Selves: Between Theory and Practice in Psychoanalysis* (New York: International University Press, 1974): 42.

while she sleeps, and in the morning she knows something significant has happened to her.[17] The dream has shaken Aristides, and one has the sense of its disorienting force which is quite alive even as he puts it to words.

Liminality

Aristides notes that not only was the remedy made manifest to him, but also the presence (παρουσία) of the god was made manifest by countless other things (μυρία ἕτερα). The use of the word παρουσίαν points to something numinous—a "divine" presence alive in the midst of Aristides' need and disquietude.[18] This presence has the "shadowy" sense which escapes full comprehension in the human world as seen in Homer, Plato and Aristotle.[19]

Aristides' use of the word δοκεῖν ("to seem") details further his own sense of the numinous and his subsequent uncertainty with regard to just what it is that happened to him, and what it was that revealed itself to him in the dream.[20] His use elicits the notion of a *liminal condition*, where one's relation to the literal world has become disoriented by some redefining encounter not fully understood but quite real for him.[21] In this way Aristides implicitly acknowledges

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[17] She wakes, "and her heart was warmed with comfort, so clear a vision (ἐναργὲς ὄνειρον) had sped to her in the darkness of night" (*Od.* 4.840). The author of Hebrews speaks of the "active" (ἐναργὴς) and living word of God (Heb 4:12). The "clear perception" of revelation may include an element of shock and horror, as with appearance of the monster of the river to Deianiara (Sophocles, *Tr.* 11).

[18] See Iamb. *Myst.* 2.8; 3.11; Josephus talks about the *parousia* of the Lord in the midst of natural forces (*Ant.* 3.80, 203; cf. 9.55).

[19] Cf. the "distortion" of images relayed by Aristides in one dream where buildings "appear twice as large" *Oratio* 53.1–5, and in another dream the Asclepius "temple both was larger and occupied all the leveled portion of the Stoa," *Oratio* 47.17.

[20] See also in Behr, I.19, 35, 76, II.40, IV.54, 64, V.12, 22.

[21] Although not speaking directly about ancient dreams, Ann Ulanov writes: "Dreams meet us at the frontier of the seen and the unseen. Even in crazy dreams, the psyche reaches to us, bidding us see life from another point of view, while retaining our own. Right on that frontier we can feel

the limitation of his own resources to grasp the exact nature of the encounter,[22] as he exists in a state "between sleep and waking (μέσως ἔχειν ὕπνον καὶ ἐγρηγόρσεως) … sometimes as in a dream (ὡς ὄναρ), sometimes as in a waking vision (ὡς ὕπαρ)." The dream experience "(dis)locates" him into a place of "otherness" found between two realms, and he has no real sense of connection with either. He seems to look out to both the sleeping world and the waking world. In his description there is a "chaotic" sense, where one realm crosses over to the other, which is precisely what Aristides hopes for, according to a description of another dream: "I seemed in my dream to make this beginning of the discourse, seeing the dream before me as though it were a waking reality (ὡς ἡ πρόρρησις). May the dream then become waking reality …" (*Oratio* 38.1). Compare *Oratio* 47.44, where he describes how "afterwards it "seemed" to me as if I were in Pergamum and I sent to the god a wreath …" The precariousness of Aristides' placement suggests a crossing over of consciousness and unconsciousness, something which Marie Louise von Franz talks about in her consideration of the what she terms the "Self" ("soul-center") as it urges its own quest of identification and realization deeper into the innermost being. Speaking of dreams she writes:

> Our basis is ego-consciousness, is a field of light centered upon the focal point of the ego. From that point we look upon an enigmatic world of obscurity and do not know how far its shadowy forms are caused by our consciousness and how far

all of life is a dream, and we are asked to make something substantial from it. Every night dreams offer us this space. Every morning we can live the spirit into our lives." Ann B. Ulanov, "Dreams: Passages to a New Spirituality," *Spiritual Aspects of Clinical Work* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon, 2004): 20.

[22] This same kind of caution, or "reverence" for the unknown, occurs also in Paul, who says "I think (δοκῶ) I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 7:40), and in the post-resurrection account of the Gospel of Luke, when the disciples "were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit (ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν), Luke 24:37; cf. 8:18; Herm., M11.12; Acts 27:13. Cf. Homer, *Od.* 5.342; 10.415; *Il.* 6.338; 12.338.

> they possess a reality of their own. "The tendency of the dream," writes Jung, "is to effect a reversal of the relationship between ego-consciousness and the unconsciousness, and to represent the unconscious as the generator of the empirical personality. This reversal suggests that in the opinion of the 'Other Side,' our unconscious existence is the real one and our conscious world a kind of illusion, an apparent realty constructed for a specific purpose …"[23]

This notion of liminality received attention above in Chapter 2 as a fundamental element of healing experience in the Asclepius cult and its focus on incubation. It was seen that the cult often built its sanctuaries at the edge of population centers in order to remove patrons to a peripheral space. Temple rituals prepare worshipers to enter the *abaton* chamber and experience the dreams which bridge this space and interconnect the two worlds.[24] For Aristides this dream experience, clear and singular in its impression, sets him into a state of inner suspension between the worlds of waking and sleeping, and it is through this experience of detachment that he will encounter the "divine secret." Similar themes of liminality occur in the Isis tract.[25]

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[23] Marie Louise von Franz, *Dreams: A Study of the Dreams of Jung, Descartes, Socrates, and Other Historical Figures* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1998, 1985): 19; cf. p.12.

[24] Cf. the Canopic jars symbolize the womb of Osiris' rebirth, a theme represented on the reliefs of the Graeco-Roman type of jar. Marie-Louise von Franz, *On Dreams & Death: a Jungian Interpretation*, translated by E. X. Kennedy and V. Brooks (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1987): 17–18.

[25] Although not specifically noted, it was seen how attention to the cosmic movements and appearances of the two angels kept Isis in a state of liminality, and only then did she "progress" into the core of the epiphany to obtain the divine secret. A similar sense of being "betwixt and between" occurs in Apuleius' Isis cult initiation experience, in which he is held in a state of preparation before entering into the inner temple to encounter the goddess. Liminality, however, does not appear as a theme in the medical spells of the Greek Magical papyri examined above, which focus more on (a perception of) immediate healing through the ritual ap-

Aristides' account is couched in paradox, where, on the one hand, he has a visceral awareness that something has clearly been revealed to him, and, on the other hand, "liminality" qualifies much of his dream experience, in that he is uncertain where he is or what has happened to him. It would seem that the Asclepius temple incubation ritual has as its aim just this kind of disorientation, by which the healing powers of the unconscious are progressively drawn forth and given conscious validation. A similar phenomenon can be seen in the worship practices of Mystery cults, quite popular in Aristides' time.[26] This notion of "paradox" receives attention below, and for now it is important to note the location of healing experience occurring between these opposites of clear inner experience and liminal dislocation.

Physical sensations and psyche-soma phenomena

> "For I seemed almost to touch him and to perceive that he himself was coming … and my hair was standing on end and tears of joy came forth …"[27]

As is consistent with other Asclepius dream texts, Aristides's dreams occur in inextricable relation with the body.[28] This relation-

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plication of plant and mineral concoctions. The larger *PGM* and *PDM* corpus however includes the idea of liminality in astrological spells, for example, in which preparations are held until the designated cosmic moment and cycle. See, e.g. astrological accounts: *PGM* LXII. 52–75; VII.272–83; VII 284–9; cf. *PGM* XII.14–95.

[26] See, e.g., W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); M. W. Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook of Sacred Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1987); J. Pettis, "Mysteries" in Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion (forthcoming).

[27] Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII.1.

[28] Patricia Cox Miller notes Aristides' preoccupation with body health and its proper function with the vigor and practice of oratory. However, Miller over-presents Aristides' body as "text" (her words), where the body exists in relation to oratory as "a site of knowledge and a medium of thought." Miller's reading results in a trivializing of Aristides' dream and healing experience. Although Aristides conjoins his Asclepius

ship was explored with some detail in Chapter 2, and Aristides' dream further exemplifies some of the observations made about psyche-soma phenomena. In his description of his dream he seems to touch (ἅπτεσθαι) the god, suggesting bodily form and shape of both deity and dreamer. The word ἅπτω has the meaning of an intimate encounter which is brought to conscious recognition. This nuance occurs also in Homer, e.g., where the old woman, Odysseus' nursemaid, feels the scar on his leg, and with joy and tears "touched the chin of Odysseus (ἁψαμένη γενείου), and said 'Surely you are Odysseus, dear child'" (*Od.* 19.473).[29] The physicality of the dream experience becomes more apparent, as Aristides' hair in the dream becomes aroused and lifts straight up (τρίχες ὀρθαὶ) from his body, telling of the sensual, responsive nature of the event.[30] He also has tears of joy (δάκρυα σὺν χαρᾷ) in the dream. Sensation of touch, sight, feeling, wetness (tears) and arousal constitute the content of the dream, which is itself an experience of the body.

This *physical aspect* of Aristides' dream occurs elsewhere in his writings. In his dream-recordings he writes: "I was in the warm bath, and bending forward I saw that my lower intestinal tract was in a rather strange state" (I.8). [31] "I dreamed that some Parthians had got me in their power, and one of them approached me and made as if to brand me. Next he inserted a finger in my throat and poured in something …" (I.9) … "There was a dream that a bone was annoying me and there was need to expel it, and a notion of drawing blood from the ankles" (I.28) … "When the God appeared, I grasped his head with my two hands in turn, and having grasped him, I entreated him …" (I.71) … "First he commanded

patronage with his career as an orator, the later does not take precedence, nor negate the significance of the dream experience in reading Aristides. See Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 185.

[29] The bodily reference of ἅπτω may also refer to the ingestion of food and drink. See Circe who inquires of Odysseus why he does not "touch" his food or drink (*Od.* 10.379); cf. Thucid. 2.50; Col 2:21. For healing by the "touch of the hand:" Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15; Matt 8:3; 17:7, etc.

[30] Cf. the "rearing" (ὀρθαὶ) of the horse in Hrdt. 5.171; 9.2.

[31] Texts are from C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides*, 205–292.

that I have blood drawn from my elbow" (II.47) … "he commanded me to use the mud by the sacred well and to bathe there" (II.74) … "the doctor Asclepius visited me and upon examining me, made a poultice of a drug … and came and removed the poultice" (III.25) … "Then the God commanded … to sprinkle some white earth on myself, in the manner of the wrestling ground … and also to bathe in cold water, that is, to bathe in snow" (IV.11).

For Aristides there is no separation between body and dreaming. One happens through the other, and it is because of the body—here its breakdown and the threat to the integrity of its existence—that he immerses himself in the Asclepius temple system to dream. As noted in Chapter 2, the body functions as a *vehicle*, or *locus* of incarnation. In the experience his dream-making unconscious interacts with *soma*, and in a way takes on properties of the psyche (and vise-versa). The cross-over between dream and reality, between unconscious and conscious, suggests a transference where body is no longer body "but has become *psyche* as well."[32] Somewhere within this mixture healing experience occurs, an experience which, as seen below, cannot quite be explained.

For Aristides and the Asclepius cult "spirit is down,"[33] where healing is found in the primal stuff of earth and materiality. The Asclepius cult recognizes the rich resources of the psyche to compensate for physiological (and emotional) imbalances of human being, and the cult makes full use of the fruits of the psyche, and the potency of *materia*—the elements and derivations of the natural world (including drugs, potions, ablutions, salves, etc.) for restorative purposes.[34] The cult is in touch with what Ann Ulanov refers to as the "animal root-impulse"—the instinctive within human being.[35] Its rituals of sacrifice, ablution and *abaton* incubation are de-

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[32] Marie-Louise von Franz, *On Dreams*, 121.

[33] Ann B. Ulanov, "Dreams," 2.

[34] Cf. Aristides' reference to those who "daub themselves with mud in honor of the god" on day of the vernal equinox, Behr, II.74.

[35] Ibid.

pendent upon and breed within this visceral, inner world which is somehow connected with the human "unconscious."[36]

Representative of the Asclepius cult as a whole, Aristides' dream suggests the embrace of a *psyche-soma* practice of healing in which the relationship between *materia* and dream is both valued and nurtured. The cult brings together into working relationship the powers of ritual preparation and resources of the natural world (including human imagination) to bring about regeneration. The cult itself is a "divine mixture" which when realized has regenerative potency.[37]

Inner experiences

Movement toward the core: desire and submission

> For I seemed almost to touch him and to perceive that he himself was coming … to want to get the power of vision and to be anxious lest he depart beforehand, and to have turned my ears to listen, sometimes as in a dream, sometimes as in a waking vision … and the weight of knowledge was no burden—what person could even set these things forth in words? But if

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[36] Such notion counters the idea seen in Plato, e.g. (above), where dreams are concentrated within the "soul" in relation to the outside forces of daemons, and the body in its dysfunction is perceived to hinder and distort these dreams in a way not seen in Aristides. Here "spirit is up," transcending the instinctual, the flesh, and constellating more into a concern for things of the intellect. Ann B. Ulanov, "Dreams," 2. In a general way, such a separation between psyche and body occurs also in Aristotle, and to some extent Homer (noted above), as the psyche/soul receives privileged attention with regard to dreams and the origins of dreams.

[37] See also the first century CE Graeco-Egyptian text "Komarios to Cleopatra," which reflects the ancient idea of the regenerative relationship between body and soul, when ritually united fulfills the divine mystery: "An the soul united with the body, since the body had become divine through its relation to the soul, and it dwelt in the soul. For the body clothed itself in the light of divinity, and the darkness departed from it, and all were united in love, body, soul and spirit, and all became one; in this the mystery is hidden." M. Berthelot, *Collection*, Vol II, p. 296.

> he is one of the initiates, then he knows and has understanding.[38]

Aristides says that he "distinctly perceives" something about the epiphany experience. The choice of a word διαισθάεσθαι relates a sensitive awareness of what is perceived to be the movement of the god (ὅτι αὐτὸς ἥκοι).[39] His statement includes (an implicit) reference to the "struggle" between himself and the deity, as seen in "Isis to Horus," in which Aristides desires to obtain the divine secret in the dream encounter before the god disappears and the dream moment is "released" (προαπαλλαγείη).[40] Aristides elsewhere speaks of the requirement for "struggle" to obtain healing: "… and at the same time he [sc., Sedatus] described to me the marvelous work of the god—how he instructed a certain sick man thus to struggle hard (διαγωνίσασθαι), and when perspiration resulted from the struggle, he broke up the entire sickness."[41] His reference to ἀγωνία suggests his sense of the ultimate dependence upon the deity's beneficence to cure him.[42] Asclepius represents

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[38] Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII.1–3.

[39] Plato uses διαισθάνομαι in reference to the archetypal images of beauty which are clearly perceived by only a few (*Phaedr.* 250B).

[40] Cf. the use of this idea with reference to exorcism—i.e. the releasing of the disease and/or unclean spirit: Luke 9:40; *PGM* 13.245; Plat., *Rep.* 491D. For the idea of passing from this world into the non-material sphere, see 1 Col 5:7.

[41] *Oratio* 50.17; cf. *Oratio* 23.17. See also the dream description in Behr, I.71: "When the god appeared, I grasped his head with my two hands in turn, and having grasped him, I entreated him to save Zosimus [Aristides' foster father] for me. The god refused. Again having grasped him in the same way, I entreated him to assent. Again, he refused. For the third time I grasped him and tried to persuade him to assent. He neither refused nor assented, but held his head steady, and told me certain phrases, which it is proper to say in such circumstances since they are efficacious."

[42] Cf. 2 Macc 3:14,16 where ἀγωνία has a visceral sense of "anguish" among the Jewish leaders in response the threat of defilement of the temple. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 11.32b; Luke 22:44, Jesus' "agony" before the crucifixion.

Aristides' only hope for relief from suffering, and so the deity must be "brought low" into Aristides' plight in order to heal him. There is a certain desperation about Aristides' contest with the epiphany. In the movement toward the core dream experience Aristides *desires* (βούλεσθαι) to get the power of vision (ἐκβπλέπειν) and to have the "secret remedy." This βουλεῖν constitutes an animal "aggression" to survive in the waking world—an impulse which finds its way into Aristides' dream, as he fights to hold onto the god, his source of hope and survival and well-being. In another dream he is quite clear about what he wants: "I would wish to live many years, if I should be engaged in rhetoric."[43] It was seen how this theme of desire also occurs in the Preisendanz-Betz papyri collection, the Isis text, and the Asclepius cult testimonies, where there occurs a similar "desiring" by humans for a life-giving medium of regenerative potency.

Along with the struggle to hold on to the god, there also occurs an act of *submission* by Aristides who gives into the force of the heightening dream event. By turning his ears/hearing (ὦτα παραβεβληκέναι καὶ ἀκούειν) to the saviour-god Aristides submits his complete attention in order to receive the full benefit of the dream experience.[44] At the same time, the word παραβαλλεῖν has also the connotation of Aristides' "intent" to obtain the mystery (also seen with Isis), as he "casts himself beside" the deity. In the midst of this liminal state of the dream, Aristides takes charge to get as close as he can to the deity who appears to him. He seeks the best advantage within the dream to obtain the dream's implicit and real potency. It is as if he knows he is dreaming while he dreams. That is, he has and exercises "consciousness" toward healing within the dream itself. I wonder here to what extent the Asclepius cult and its temple focus on healing epiphany permeates one's dreams, so that the desires and workings of the waking world make it into

[43] C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides*, V.53.

[44] The *Sacred Tales* relates a continuing show of Aristides' submission, as he travels from town-to-town *as per* the directives of the god revealed to Aristides in oracles. See e.g. Behr, ibid., V.30f.

the night world. The dream "is almost conscious," and dream imagery "describes the structure of reality"?[45]

The core experience: "knowing"

> "… and the weight of knowledge was no burden—what person could even set these things forth in words? But if he is one of the initiates, then he knows and has understanding."[46]

In the dream Aristides speaks of an inner experience which entails coming to some kind of realization, as if the "opposites" of the waking and sleeping world have suddenly come together. He refers to a certain type of *knowing* (γνώμης ὄγκος, "weighty, fleshy[47] knowing")—one which is personal and has made its mark on him. The word γνώμη connotes an inner "organ" of knowledge. Sophocles uses the word to refer to an inner disposition "which is no easy matter to discern" (*Ant.* 176), and Plato uses γνώμη to connote an unshakable knowledge which "is certain."[48]

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[45] Charlotte Beradt, *The Third Reich of Dreams*, translated by Adriane Gottwald (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966): 9, 15. Beradt's treatment has quite a different subject—the reach of the Third Reich into the dreams of those under its power, but the concept of the dictates and ideologies of day-life having control within one's dreams applies here.

[46] Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII.3.

[47] See Plato, *Leg.* 959C; cf. 757C; *Repub.* 516E; Homer, *Il.* 4.151, 214; Hebrews 12.1: "weight, burden, impediment." Henry George Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 354; William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000): 163.

[48] Reference here is made to "certain knowing" of the Athenian as he addresses Clinias (*Leg.* 672B). In early Christian writings Paul equates it to the mind (1 Cor 1:10). Ignatius of Antioch speaks to the godly γνώμη which is attuned to command, as a harp (Ig. Philip. 1.2). He warns of its being vulnerable, for the "Prince of this world wishes to tear me in pieces, and to corrupt μου γνώμην" (Ig. Ro. 7.1). One wonders to what extent this understanding, or coming together of something, follows after what Jung refers to as *mysterium coniunctionis*. Jung's reference here to ancient and

The "weight" of this "absolute knowing"[49] to which Aristides refers however, does not exhaust his strength, and the passage as a whole suggests some kind of dream revelation which happens, even given Aristides' ἀγωνία noted above, of its own accord and in its own way. He is the receiver of something given to him. This seems to come close to what he means when he says the weighty knowledge "had no burden"—here again, making use of a rarely-used word (ἀνεπαχθής).[50] His dream "experience" has an aliveness all its own, as if some convergence of inner resources has been put into action through the psyche-soma, incubation experience, where "life-begets-life" (as seen in "Isis to Horus" above).[51]

Aristides refers to the "inexpressible" nature of this "knowing", and he goes only so far in trying to give the dream experience a full, detailed account. "What persons," he says, "could show this

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medieval alchemical inner-processes of matter and symbol resonates with the Asclepius cult engagement of matter and dream. For Jung, factors conceived as opposites come together and yield self-knowledge: "humidum (moist)/ sicum (dry), frigidum (cold) / calidum (warm), superiora (upper, higher) / inferiora (lower), spiritus-anima (spirit-soul) / corpus (body), coleum (heaven) / tera (earth) …" C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis: an Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, translated by R. E. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963): 3; 460–61; 465–66. Von Franz says that such union can happen in the deepest states, out of which something becomes new: "The *coniunctio* happens in the underworld, it happens in the dark when there is no light shining any more. When you are completely out and consciousness is gone, then something is born or generated in the deepest depression, in the deepest desolation, the new personality is born … that is the moment when *coniunctia*, the coincidence of opposites, takes place." Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 162. Cf. 89–90; 164; 174–76; 258–60.

[49] "Absolute knowledge" refers to the knowledge of the unconscious which is deeper and cannot be known consciously. See Von Franz, *On Dreams*, xiv.

[50] Only 4 occurrences are in William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature.*

[51] See Ann B. Ulanov, "Dreams," 11–12.

power in word (ἐνδείξασθαι λόγῳ)?"[52] In von Franz's words: the unconscious in us often seems to possess a knowledge of things which were previously inexplicable and which, seen *rationally*, [her italics], we cannot know."[53]

Even as an orator, Aristides does not have the necessary faculty to bring the substance (ταῦτά δυνατός) of his experience to full expression, so that others might understand it. This suggests not only his awareness of the inexplicable depth of the dream experience, but also the limitation of both language and reason in the waking world to capture the whole of the sleeper's dream (cf. Aristotle and dreams, above). Again, M. Masud Khan notes:

> One has to be able to allow for the fact that the dreaming experience exists and influences the behavior of the person, even though it cannot be cognized or brought into anecdotal narrative (pictorially or verbally); the dreaming experience is not symbolic in the way we know the various structures to be … My argument is that a person in his dreaming experience can actualize the aspect of the self that perhaps never becomes overtly available to his introspection or his dreams. And yet it enriches his life, and its lack can impoverish his experiences of others, himself and his sleep.[54]

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[52] For the sense of "clear declaration"—of putting one's best foot forward to "manifest" oneself in the best possible way, see Agamemnon's "declaration" before his comrades, *Il.* 19.83; the Athenian "presentation" of its (Athens') cause before the Spartans, Hdt. 8.141; Alcestis' sacrificing her life to "show" her love to her lord, Eurip., *Alc.* 154; the admonition to "show" the whole, good truth in Tit 2:10; cf. Heb 6:11; 1 Cl 21:7; 2 Cor 8:24; 2 Macc 13:9; Test. Zeb. 3.8.

[53] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 9.

[54] M. Masud Khan, "Beyond the Dreaming Experience," in *Hidden Selves: Between Theory and Practice in Psychoanalysis* (New York: International University Press, 1974): 49–50. Elsewhere Khan notes: "The dreaming subject is the entire subject. The dreaming experience is an entirety that actualizes the self in an unknowable way … Dreaming itself is beyond interpretation … What is entailed, however, is a certain type of psychic experience that never becomes available for ordinary mental articulation. I

Aristides says that only those who themselves "have been completed" (τῶν τετελεσμένων) will be aware (σύνοιδέν τε καὶ γνωρίζει) of this self-knowledge.[55] He refers to the ritual experience of the temple *abaton* which yields the "divine secret," and is known only to its "initiates." His reference to an "insider" cult understanding of what he experiences suggests the "private" aspect of the Asclepius cult, referencing an inner circle of membership of those who have undergone the initiative rites.[56] The perfect participial form of τελέω underscores the ongoing "process"[57] of their ritual "preparation," and Aristides' own "readiness" which is the result of temple rituals brought to proper mixture and conclusion. Aristides has undergone rites of purification, made sacrifice at the altar, and followed the directives of the cult which move one toward the "reception" of the movements of the unconscious. The same idea was seen in the Greek magical papyri, as well as "Isis to Horus" (above).[58] Aristides was not unfamiliar with the Isis cult or its rites, as evidenced in

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advisedly use the word 'ordinary' because it seems that poets, painters and writers have access to it through their imaginative functions. Hence William Blake's claim: 'the imagination is not a state: it is the Human Existence itself'" op. cit. 46–47; 49–51.

[55] Cf. Ig., *Sm.* 11.1: by the will of God I have been thought worthy, not that I am "conscious" (συνειδότος) of deserts …"; cf. 1 Cor 4:4; Plut. *Mor.* 85C, 556A; Acts 5:2; Jos. *Ant.* 13.424.

[56] This does not appear to mark the cult as a "secret society" however, given its openness to receive into its facilities and rituals the larger Greco-Roman public, and also its having status as an "official" Roman cult (see below).

[57] See Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994): 126ff.

[58] In the Greek magical papyri plant and mineral formulae are mixed with precise proportions, in time with astrological movements, to yield a unique potency for specific purposes. A consideration of the "Isis to Horus" tract showed a similar phenomenon of τελεῖν, in which the divine "knowing" is yielded by the angel and ultimately received by Isis (and eventually Horus) according the seasons and the specified *materia* mixtures.

Oratio 59.46–48, his description of a night dream in which he makes specific reference to Isis, Sarapis and Asclepius.[59]

This theme of "ritual initiation" which leads to the core "knowing" experience occurs in much of Aristides' writings. In *Oratio* 23.15–18 he refers to himself as a "fellow pilgrim to the temple of Asclepius [at Pergamum] and being initiated into the forest of the holy rites by the fairest and most perfect torchbearer and leader of the mysteries, to whom every rule of necessity yields." In *Oratio* 48.31 he speaks of an Asclepius purification rite, where many are assembled, clad in white—a description similarly found in the third century BCE *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, no. 128[60] and the *Inscriptio Pergamena*, II, no. 264.[61]

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[59] The account consists of two visions. The first includes "secret manifestations which are conductive to salvation," and how Serapis performs surgery to remove the defilement (λῦμα) which restores Arisitides "to his proper state." He writes: "Light came forth from Isis, and other secret manifestations conductive to salvation. Sarapis, too, appeared that same night, he and Asclepius together, both of wondrous beauty and size, and in a manner resembling each other. When misfortune overtook me in the matter of Zosimus—for I pass over the warning and advice which the god gave when the misfortune was impending—, at any rate, when it occurred and I was grievously suffering with pain, Sarapis in seated form, bearing in his had a kind of knife, seemed to me to make an incision around my face near the hairline, as if removing and destroying the defilement and restoring me to my proper state" (*Oratio*, 49.46–47). Aristides also mentions here Zosimus, the central figure of a first century CE alchemical text which appears in the Codex Marcianus collection along with the "Isis to Horus" tract. In the second vision gods of the underworld appear to Aristides and lead him to "cease to be so sorely grieved over the dead," showing to him ladders which mark the boundary between the upper and the nether world and the power of the god in either region." Here too, Aristides stops short in his description of the divine secret, in that "other events which caused extraordinary consternation and probably are not told to everyone, so that I was gratified to have the tokens disclosed to me" (*Oratio* 49.48–49). Cf. C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides*, III.45–50. Evidently Aristides stayed in Egypt for a time (Behr, ibid. IV.105).

[60] Edelstein, *Asclepius* T296, p. 145.

[61] From Edelstein, *Asclepius* T512, p. 291.

Remedy: curative/poison and "acting out"

At the very beginning of his dream account Aristides makes reference to the "remedy" which is ἀψίνθιον (wormwood). He offers no details as to the constitution of the drug, but later talks of actually drinking it, as instructed in the dream, and confirmed by the dream of the other temple warden, Philadelphus. Aristides may have diluted the drug with vinegar "so he would not be nauseated" (II.30).

The remedy "wormwood" identified by Aristides is a well-known Mediterranean biennial or perennial herb. It has a pungent odor and a strong bitter taste. Theophrastus speaks of its bitter stalk and leaf which are beneficial if ingested (7.9.5). By contrast, ancient Jewish writings connect a negative connotation to wormwood (*la'anah*, also meaning "hemlock"), and often used it figuratively to mean "bitter things."[62] In modern times it has been used to make absinthe. Theophrastus' discussion of wormwood and other herbaceous plants notes how the leaves and stalks can be both beneficial or dangerous to health (7.9.5).[63] In another passage Aristides speaks to this idea of "either-or"—what he refers to as a "paradox," in which healing comes through "opposites":

> From many pains and sufferings and distresses, by day and by night, he has delivered many people; no one could tell how many… And indeed it is the *paradoxical* [my italics] which is paramount in the cures of the god, for example, one drinks chalk, another hemlock, another one is stripped of his clothes and takes cold ablutions when one would think him in need of warmth. Now ourselves he has likewise distinguished in this way, stopping catarrhs and colds by baths in rivers and in the sea, healing us through long walks when we were helplessly bedridden, administering terrible cleanings on top of continuous abstinence from food.[64]

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[62] Amos 5:7; 6:2; Deut 29:17.

[63] The French and Swiss use wormwood to make absinthe, a potent spirit which is said to create pleasant sensations and inspire a sense of grandiosity. See also Harold N. Moldenke and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (New York: Dover, 1952): 48–49.

[64] Aristides, *Oratio* 42.7–8. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T317, p. 157.

Here Aristides makes reference to a healing potency which comes from medicinal treatments which have the potential to cause illness: ingestion of chalk and hemlock, cold ablutions, river and sea bathes, long walks and colonic purging. One may detect irony in his language: if the treatment doesn't kill you, it will heal you. It seems that healing happens somewhere between these "opposites"—a notion I already touched upon with regard to dream experience of epiphany "clarity" and "liminality." He does not always mention, however, the details of how such prescriptions are to be carried out, such as duration of patient exposure to these treatments.

The drug wormwood has a notable visceral significance, in that it is a known vermifuge used to expel worms and other parasites from the intestinal tract. Possibly Aristides suffered from some kind of intestinal disorder, something he often complains about.[65] It appears that he consumed the drug for its medicinal properties, rather than its hallucinatory effect. However, it is not unreasonable to speculate the use of some types of φάρμακον to help sick patrons fall to sleep to dream in a temple *abaton*. It is uncertain to what extent, if any, hallucinatory drugs were used.

It is helpful to see that elsewhere he refers both to mixed and common drugs used by the Asclepius cult to address specific physiological conditions.

> There is, I think, a compound (κρᾶσις) [another drug] of Philo's. This I was not even able to smell previously, but when the god gave me a sign to us it and also signified a time at which it was necessary to do this, not only did I drink it easily, but, even as I drank it, I was at once happier and better (ἡδίων καὶ ῥᾴων).[66] Moreover, it would be possible to relate ten thousand other things concerning drugs—some of which he himself mixed together (συντιθείς), others belonging to the common ordinary varieties which he prescribed as cure (θεραπείαν) of the body, as it was appropriate in each particular case. (*Oratio* 49.29–30)

[65] For example, C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides* I.5, 9, 27, 45, etc.

[66] Or, "sweet and easy."

In this statement Aristides refers to the mixing of drugs to make compounds, and makes reference to the development and use of φάρμακον within the Asclepius temple system.[67] This is consistent with overall observations of the ancient cultivation and use of drugs considered in Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder (above).[68]

As noted, following his wormwood dream Aristides pursues this remedy, actually ingests the wormwood potion, and in this way "acts out" his dream. There appears to exist a willingness on the part of Aristides to "hear unquestionably the message" of the dream, and to be attentive to its revelation:

> Now we used the curative, and I drank as much as no one before, and again on the next day as the god gave the same signs. Why should one describe the ease in drinking it, or how much it helped?[69]

Aristides makes concrete in the waking world the experience of his dream, and this way reflects the Asclepius cult emphasis placed upon "doing" what the dream is interpreted to say. Suppliants enter the *abaton* in order to obtain literal, applicable "treatment," that is, to embrace some healing action. They come to Asclepius sanctuar-

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[67] Cf. *Oratio* 49.48: "Again, he gave me instructions to eat of this same drug together with wheat-bread, and I ate it near the holy tripod, this making a beginning of my well-being." See also Behr, I.24; II.10, 19; III.21, 24, 25, 27.

[68] Aristides also refers to the well at Pergamum as a healing drug. His description of the water of the well relates the cult's perception of *materia* as having restorative properties. The god himself sets the well in the "fairest space on earth" and is the "healthiest and purist of all places." The well flows from the Asclepius temple, from the "shrine and the feet of the Saviour." The water has unique qualities. It is "very thin, almost like air," and it is very sweet and fresh, and its flow does not stop. Aristides calls the water the "distillation of health or nectar." It remains pure and does not become polluted, and has a cool temperature in summertime and a mild temperature during the wintertime. According to Aristides, Asclepius uses the well as a kind of "co-worker," to assist him in curing blindness, chest ailments, feet disorders and muteness (*Oratio* 39.1–18).

[69] C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides*, II.36.

ies to undergo an act of "salvation" through dreams and the application of drugs and therapies.[70] There appears to be no sense of merely relating with dreams as "symbols," as might occur in modern dream interpretation and therapy.

This "literal" use of dreaming is part of the ancient mindset which perceives the supernatural tangibly and immediately active in a "universe steeped in sacredness."[71] The deity Asclepius dwells in the *abaton*, presents himself in the sleeper's dream, and brings about physical healing through physical, *materia* connection. For the ancients, Asclepius is tangible, real and present in human life.[72]

The dream of Aristides thus has several facets. First, it entails an *epiphany experience*, where some dream event which is very clear to Aristides makes an unshakable impression upon him. He talks of how the dream, rooted in a temple setting, acts upon him with an indeterminable, numinous experience of what he perceives to be the "god," and (dis)locates him within a *liminal* place. In the second facet of the dream Aristides details what happens *physically* in the dream. He explains how he experiences various bodily sensations (touch, tears, arousal, etc.). These relate the psyche-soma nature of the dream experience, and represent the inseparable relationship between psyche and body, where the dreaming experience occurs rooted within the body. The third facet of Aristides' dream reflects a number of dimensions about the core of the dream, in which Aristides encounters some kind of "*knowing*." Cultivated from Aristides' ritual preparation, this knowing is burden-free and ultimately inexpressible. The ritual "mixture" of body and dream yields what for Aristides is the "remedy," which has both beneficial and harm-

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[70] This emphasis on "doing" according to the instructions of Asclepius occurs throughout the dreams in Aristides' *Sacred Tales*. See for example, Behr II. 19, 48f., 80, III.21, 24, 25, 27, 31, 36, etc.

[71] Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible: the Origins and Structures of Alchemy*, translated by Stephen Corrin (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1956): 143.

[72] This includes speaking to Aristides through the dreams and visions of other persons, such as Philadelphus (see above, Behr, II.29–36). See also III.14f.; IV.23, 42.

ful potencies, and which Aristides pursues and actually ingests, thus acting out his dream.

Aristides tells his dream to the waking world the first thing in the morning after having the dream. The act of bringing the dream to conscious expression inevitably entails its subsequent alteration as it is conformed to the delimitation of language of the conscious world. At the same time, there occurs an evocative relationship between language/text and dreams. This entails the subsequent probing of dreams and healing occurring as a function of language, as much as a function of temple practices in the time of Aristides. Versed in the art of oratory, Aristides the Asclepius-"proclaimer" brings the power of language to his dreaming experiences, and in this way he reflects the larger interest in the salvific power of the "word" evident in the Greco-Roman world, as already seen in the Greek magical papyri. For Aristides, dream experience and the encounter with deity drive this "salvation" oratory.

THE WAKING WORLD: BRINGING THE DREAM TO CONSCIOUS EXPRESSION

Alteration

Aristides brings his dream experience to a close by again declaring his having been acted upon by the dream: τούτων ὀφθέντων ("these things were made manifest [to me"]). Speaking now in the most general terms (τούτων), his language renders a sense of concession to the dream's overall force.[73] If some aspects of the dream experience escape verbal expression, that which he does express (and record) will necessarily undergo some degree of *alteration* and/or reduction.[74] Bringing a dream to conscious expression means sub-

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[73] Oedipus perceives (ὁρῶ) the meaning of something through sound, Soph., *Oed.Col.* 138; ibid., *Elect.* 945.

[74] "Censorship" happens on a collective level also. Von Franz notes: "symbolism handed on by tradition is to a certain extent rationalized and purged of the scurrilities of the unconscious, the funny little details which the unconscious takes on, sometimes contradictions and dirt … the Church has rarely published anything without first expurgating what was considered to be personal material. Only what fitted in with tradition was

jecting the dream experience to rational controls of the language and culture of the waking world. The votive tablets from the Asclepius cult, for example, represent the cult's way of preserving patron dream-healing testimonies—usually short biographical narratives inscribed in stone which include the identification of the dreamer, the physical problem which brought the patron to the temple, and the nature of the cure:

> When Demandrus, son of Calabis, of Gortyn, had become subject to sciatica, he [sc., the god] ordered him to come to Lebena so as to cure him, As soon as he arrived there the god operated on him in his sleep and he became well.[75]

> To Lucius who suffered from Pleurisy … the god ordered that he should go and from the threefold altar lift ashes … and he was saved and publicly offered thanks to the god …[76]

> - - - (a certain woman) - - - at the head and - - - gives thanks to Asclepius the Saviour, having suffered from a malignant sore …[77]

As a writer, Aristides goes quite beyond these mini-narratives in the telling of his dreams. He provides both autobiography and dream experience detail, and one senses that he enjoys telling his stories. His oratory skills give his dream accounts an eloquence not found in the terse style of the votive tablets. This may give (modern read-

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chosen. The same thing happens even in free primitive communities. Even North American Indians omit certain details, considering them not interesting to collective conscious ideas." Marie-Louise von Franz, *Alchemy*, 16–17. It follows that the more a society or institution enters into consciousness and the process of codification, the greater the process of reordering and rationalizing of the irrational material of the unconscious world—its dreams, instincts and drives. E. R. Dodds recognizes this also, in which dreams are brought "into closer conformity with the traditional culture-pattern." E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 114.

[75] *Inscriptiones Creticae*, I, xvii, no. 9 [second century BCE], T426.

[76] *Inscriptiones* Graecae, XIV, no. 966 [second century CE], T438.

[77] *Inscriptiones Creticae*, I, xvii, no. 19 [second–first century BCE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T441, p. 254.

ers) cause to suspect texts like the wormwood dream as being mere literary tales meant only to impress his listeners.[78] However, Aristides' repeated reference to inner knowledge and to something being revealed to him, and the sensitive language he employs in relating his dream, suggest more than an ambitious interest in rhetorical "production."[79] I believe these qualities bear out something more, in which the altered form of the sleeper's dream in the "waking language" of Aristides points to an inner dream experience.

Proclamation of text and healing

Nonetheless, Aristides engages in a literary "*proclamation*" of Asclepius and the cult practices. He is the first real "evangelist" for the Asclepius cult, often giving thanks in his writings for the many wonderful things the god has done for him. Aristides brings to public awareness the glories and wonders of Asclepius:

> O Lord Asclepius, whom we have invoked for many things and on many occasions both at night and during the day, in private and in public, it was you who to our satisfaction and in fulfillment of our excessive desire grant us the opportunity of reaching a calm haven as it were, from the vast sea and utter dejection, and allowed us to offer our greetings to the common hearth of humankind, in which there is no one under the sun who has not been initiated; but I venture to assert that no Greek to this day has had more benefit from it than I have. (*Oratio* 42.1)

Aristides speaks of a god who provides safe haven for the many who worship him, and with whom he personally interacts "both at night and during the day, in private and in public." Aristides claims

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[78] He has at his disposal a command of Greek language and Hellenistic culture. His *Sacred Tales* includes several references to Homer,[78] and as already seen, he is familiar with the Isis cult. Aristides' aristocratic education probably included an orientation to Greek mythology, Greek and Roman Mysteries, and perhaps dream literature and science represented in the writings of Aristotle, Galen (129–199 CE) and Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* (c.170 CE).

[79] See Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 46.

that he himself, amidst all the Asclepius initiates, has received the most benefit from the god.

The same level of religious zeal heard in this passage and the *Sacred Tales* as a whole occurs at the conclusion of Aristides's incubation dream after the wormwood remedy is revealed to him. Public proclamation begins at daybreak when he calls the doctor (ἰατρὸν) Theodotus:

> After these things had been seen, when it was dawn, I summoned the doctor Theodotus. And when he came, I recounted my dreams to him. He marveled at how divine they were, and was at a loss as to what he should do, since he feared the excessive weakness of my body in winter time. For I lay indoors during many successive months. Therefore we thought that it was no worse to send also for the temple warden Asclepiacus.[80]

Aristides' proclamation leaves Theodotus both speechless and suspicious: ὁ ἐθαύμαζε ὡς ἔχει δαιμονίως "he marveled as if he [Aristides] had demons." Both of them decide to fetch the sacristan (νεωκόρον) Asclepiacus, in the hope that a third party will help make sense of the dream encounter.[81]

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[80] Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII.4–5.

[81] It appears that Theodotus served as a personal physician to Aristides. He keeps himself close-by to assist Aristides as necessary. Nevertheless, Pliny the Elder makes clear the growing distrust by Romans of medical doctors during the first century CE: "Medicine is the only profession, by Jove, where any man off the street gains our immediate trust if he professes to be a doctor; and surely no lie would be more dangerous. But we don't worry about that; each one of us is lulled by the sweet hope of being healed" (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 29.8.16–18). Aristides recounting of the dream event places the attendants in an unfavorable light, for neither seems to show competence with regard to what to do with what Aristides relays to them. Only Asclepius himself, the official god of healing imported from Greece by Rome because of a plague, and at the advice of the Sibylline books in 293 BCE, acts as the πάρεδρος, i.e. the one who attends to the "patient" in the dream and brings about the healing remedy. Aristides makes reference to no other healing "agency," and in most of

For Aristides, proclamation will entail more than verbal expression, in the sense that he will also set the dream to words—that is, the *Sacred Tales.* In this way he preserves his dream experience. He makes it part of the larger writings of proclaimed "salvation."

Aristides' emphasis on oratory and language as medium of dream experience points to the relationship between *healing* and *language/text*. As public witness to healing experience and the saviour-god, his narrative itself perhaps becomes a medium of healing, in that it bears out the message and narrative of "these things," for others also seeking relief from suffering in the Greco-Roman world. The wormwood dream of Aristides relays one who responds to a sense of personal "salvation" exacted from his god. It is curious that the tone of this dream, and the *Sacred Tales* as a whole, echo that of the apostle Paul, who also sings the praises of deity and of salvific experiences.[82]

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the dream testimonies considered in this investigation only Asclepius intervenes on behalf of the suppliant. Compare this, e.g. with the Greek magical papyri where πάρεδρος may take the form of a deity, angel or demon. For example, the πάρεδρος is referred to as Eros in *PGM* IV.1716–1870 and XII. 14–95; cf. *PGM* I.26; I.164–65; I. 26, etc. For a discussion on πάρεδρος see Leda Jean Ciraolo, "Supernatural Assistants in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Boston and Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001): 279–293. For Rome's acquisition of Asclepius from Epidaurus, see Valerius Maximus, *Fact et Dicta Memorabilia*, I, 1, 19. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T797, p. 403.

[82] When Aristides speaks of the god Asclepius who personally attends to every person come to him, that there are "some who claim that they have risen after lying dead," (Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T317, p. 160) and that the many are there who cry out, μέγας ὁ Ἀσκληπιος, "Great is Asclepius" (Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T602, p. 335) he is not that far sounding from the proclamation of St. Paul, who writes of God of all comfort, who comforts us in all affliction … [and] raises the dead" (2 Cor 1:4–9). As will be seen below, the "word" as efficacious, life-bearing medium had a central role in the early church, one which finds its roots in the mixture of text and healing/dreaming found in PGM, the Codex Marcianus, and perhaps

Aristides also sings the praises of god and salvation, and provides hearers with what Averil Cameron calls the "good story.[83] The Asclepius cult makes for just that, where patrons experience dream surgery and potions, embrace Hippocratic drugs, and drink from miraculous wells. "Word" is perceived to have power all its own, and the ancient world listens and attaches to its potency. In another dream Aristides speaks of a letter "marvelous in length and power," and of the inscription of this letter "on the very body of Philumene [a sick girl] and on her insides, just as on the entrails of sacrificial animals."[84] The cult builds itself upon the declarations of patron dream experience, in the many sizes and shapes which these dreams occur, according to the testimonies spoken, and written on papyrus and in stone.[85]

Even as Aristides' dreams occur tied to the Asclepius temple and its rituals, his emphasis on rhetoric begins to probe the occurrence of dreams in relation to language and language event. The growing preoccupation with "word" as medium of salvation in the ancient world may contribute to the eventual downfall and near extinction of the cult by the fourth century CE. The sacred text (of early Christian cults), to some degree, comes to replace the sacred plant of Asclepius cults. I will talk more about the movement toward text as medium of dream healing in Part II of this study, where the relationship between text, dreams and religio-social power will have a central focus.

At this point it is important to recognize that Aristides' "proclamation" is born out of his dream incubation experiences. His Sacred Tales are the product of that "root" place deep within him where something unexplainable shook him and made a difference in his life in a way that he must talk about it. For Aristides at least,

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even in the evocative mythopoeic language of Homer (which itself would require further discussion).

[83] Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 89–119.

[84] C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides* V.22; cf. I.78.

[85] Marie-Louise von Franz, *Dreams*, 29–30.

dream experience and the encounter with deity drive his "salvation" oratory.

Aristides and Rome

In concluding this study of Aristides, one brief observation about his dream and the socio-cultural setting out of which he dreams and writes as a Roman citizen is in order. Aristides' dream proclamation participates in the ideals and political movements of Augustus' empire—an empire by his time quite taken with the Asclepius cult and its healing sanctuaries (Corinth, Kos and Pergamun). Like Ovid,[86] Virgil,[87] Tacitus,[88] and Pausanias,[89] Aristides' dream oratory contributes to the larger praises of imperial ideals of *pax Romana* and the longevity of the Roman empire. He speaks of receiving a letter from the emperor himself, and elsewhere of making a speech in front of the Emperor.[90] He has a dream in which "the care and honor of the Emperors toward me was marvelous and unsurpassable."[91]

Rome begins to have its own claim in (the development of) Asclepius sanctuaries such as those at Cos, Corinth and Pergamum. The Asclepius sanctuary at Pergamum, for example, had a larger than life-size marble statue of Hadrian (c.130 CE), indicating the symbolic presence of the imperial cult.[92] In his *Sacred Tales* Aristides dreams about this statue: "And the last of my dreams was the Emperor Hadrian in the court of the Temple, honoring me, who had just now become aquatinted with him, and offering great hopes."[93]

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[86] *Fasti*, I.290–94; VI.743–62; *Metamorphoses* II.534–648; XV.531–36, etc.

[87] *Aeneis* II.259–64; VII.765–73.

[88] *Annales* III.63. 2; IV.14.1–2; XII.61, 1–2; XIV.18. *Historiae* IV.84.5

[89] See above.

[90] Behr, IV.75, 92.

[91] Behr, I.46. cf. V.44–46, where, another dream in which he gives a speech before the Emperor.

[92] Jás Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman empire AD 100–450* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 200.

[93] Behr, IV.106.

At the same time, the ancient art historian Jás Elsner notes the existence of many cults in the empire, in addition to the Asclepius cult, drawing attention:

> Just as the centre strove to bind the provinces through a universalizing imperial cult, so during the second and third centuries, the various cults of the provinces—from the established civic religions which had flourished for centuries in specific locales (like worship of Artemis and Ephesus) to the mystic fringe (like the worship of mystery gods from Isis, Dionysus, and Mithras to Jesus Christ)—also took on universalistic claims and pretensions, such as the offer of salvation. It was precisely these claims by different religious groups that led to the atmosphere of conflictive, competitive, and creative religious pluralism in the later empire, with each cult making ever-increasing demands on its adherents and offering ever-deeper levels of spiritual identity.[94]

The "offer of salvation" permeates Aristides' writings and many other Asclepius writers presented by Edelstein. Asclepius temples provided both the hope and means for cures from real human suffering. At the same time, Asclepius temples such as Pergamon, Cos and Corinth to some extent became "health spas" for the Roman elite, and Aristides was one of these who even took up residence to live, dream, bathe, and indulge in not just the temple and its *abaton*, but its exercise routine, theater, and nearby gymnasium.

Aristides' dream provides a good case-study against which can be read early Christian dreams. His dream account relays the inner "movements" of a dream, and this way provides a means by which to explore, discuss, and understand ancient dreams. As psyche-soma phenomenon, Aristides' dream offers for consideration a glimpse into one person's night (and day) world(s). It provides a means toward a better understanding of how the ancients lived in and perceived their world.

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[94] Jás Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, 200.

PART II: DREAMS AND EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTS

CHAPTER 4: DREAMS IN EARLY CHRISTIAN SOURCES

> They say to him [sc., Pilate]: "He is a sorcerer and he casts out 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 the god Asclepius." (*Acts of Pilate*, A, I.1)

So far this investigation has probed into the nature and use of dreams in relation to bodily healing in antiquity, examining literary and archaeological evidence in connection with the Asclepius cult. How then do early Christian groups dream? Specifically, to what extent do early Christian cults continue to embrace the practices and beliefs of medicine, magic and superstition of the Greco-Roman world? What types of methods of healing (e.g. exorcism, dream incubation,[1] prayer) do early Christian sects use? How do the early Christian cults define "healing"? How does such definition and its practice involve the concept of "salvation"?

DREAMS AND ANCIENT JUDAISM

Pre-exilic incubation dream experiences

Early Christian cults developed as ancient Jewish reform movements, and so early "Christian" writings are inextricably connected to and products of the socio-religious history and writings of an-

[1] That is, the ritual of sleeping and dreaming in the Asclepius temple *abaton*, and the psyche-soma process connected with the dreaming experience which may result in some kind of physiological healing experience for the patient.

cient Judaism. An exploration of early Christian dreams therefore requires a consideration of dreams in the writings of ancient Judaism. This might begin with the incubation dream in 1 Samuel.

Samuel's incubation experiences

> Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in this days; visions (*chzon*) were not widespread … and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" … The Lord called again, "Samuel! … The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up … Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening … Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision (*mrah*) to Elie. But Eli called Samuel and said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide from me …" So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him." (1 Samuel 3:1–18)[2]

In 1 Samuel 3:1ff. the dream of the boy Samuel represents an incubation experience, where Samuel sleeps in a temple and encounters a deity in his dreams. A strong interplay between deity and dreamer occurs, as YHWH four times enters into Samuel's sleeping world, eventually leading to his reception of the divine "revelation." As with other dreams considered in Chapters 2–3 of this investigation, the dream account consists of progressions of "preparation" by which the subject is "readied" to receive the "inner knowing" of the dream experience. In this case Eli, the priest of Shilo to whom Samuel was brought to fulfill Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:1–2:11), assists the incubation process, sensing the action of divine epiphany in the boy's dreams, and giving Samuel specific instructions in order to receive the revelation:

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[2] Biblical translations in this study are from *The Holy Bible*, New Revised Standard Version (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

> Then Eli perceived the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore, Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (1 Sam 3:8c–9)

The dream experience relates the "shadowy" nature of the sleeper's dream, where Samuel wakes in a state of confusion, not knowing what is happening to him. The narrator points to Samuel's "disorientation," as he notes that Samuel "did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him" (3:7). Samuel thinks Eli, and not the deity, has been calling him in the night, and he gets up from his place in the temple and goes to Eli and says, "Here I am!" (3:4,6,8). The "revelation" of the "word" occurs in the fourth epiphany, and like Aristides and Isis, Samuel enters into the dream experience with the intention to "hold onto" the deity to procure the "divine secret":

> Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then the Lord said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end …" (1 Sam 3:14f)

The dream accounts refer to *bodily* experiences which include "tingling ears," hearing, standing, speaking, and Samuel's rising and running between the epiphany events. The notion of "secrecy" seen in the Isis to Horus text occurs here also. Samuel does not want to disclose the content of the vision to Eli, who knows of his secrecy, and pointedly directs the boy to bring the dream to conscious expression and not to hide it: "What was it that he [YHWH] told you? Do not hide from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you" (3:17–18).

The "divine secret" which Samuel conceals consists of a "poison" and "curative." On the one hand, YHWH is "about to punish the house of Eli forever … because his sons were blaspheming God, and he [Eli] did not restrain them" (3:13). On the other hand, the divine secret entails an ongoing presence of deity in the life of Samuel in the waking world: "As Samuel grew up, the Lord was

with him and let none of his words fall to the ground … and the word of Samuel came to all of Israel" (3:19; 4:1). The temple incubation dream at Shiloh reveals the efficacious "word" of YHWH, which becomes Samuel's own sustaining and efficacious media which he will extend to the nation of Israel whom he serves as king.

Other incubation dreams in the Old Testament

The Samuel dream is one of four incubation dream experiences in the writings of the Old Testament. In Genesis 28:10–18 Jacob stays the night at the Bethel sanctuary and dreams (*chlm*) that there is a ladder from earth to heaven, and angels ascend and descend on it. In the dream experience Jacob receives the divine revelation: he will have land, fertility and divine guidance in the waking world.[3] Jacob's reaction to the dream upon waking—"Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" (28:16)—relays the "disorienting" force of the dream experience, which the dreamer memorializes by setting up a pillar which he anoints with oil (28:18–19).

In Genesis 46:1–4 Jacob goes to Beer-sheba, the sacred temple[4] located at Israel's geographical border by the time of the Judges,[5] and offers sacrifice to his God. He remains there and has "night visions" (*mrat hlilh*) in which the deity appears and gives specific instructions to be made concrete in the real world:

> Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's own hand shall close your eyes." (Gen 46:3–4)

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[3] "And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord … the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants; and your offspring shall be like dust of the earth … Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land" (Gen 28:13–15a).

[4] Cf. Amos 8:14.

[5] For example, Judges 20:1 reads: "Then all the Israelites came out, from Dan to Beer-sheba …"

A fourth incubation dream account occurs in 1 Kings 3:4–15, where Solomon sacrifices at the temple of Gibeon, and YHWH appears to him in a night dream. He grants him a "wise and discerning mind," and riches and honor for all of his life (1 Kgs 3:10–12). When Solomon awakes from the dream he offers "burnt offerings and offerings of well-being," and gives a feast for all of his servants (3:15).

With each of these accounts the sleeper's dream entails an epiphany "experience" in which a deity appears and makes a revelation to the dreamer who wakes and proceeds (often within a journey motif) to realize the dream in concrete terms in the waking world. The boy Samuel will speak the "Lord's Word" to all of Israel. Jacob vows allegiance to his God (Gen 28:20), continues his journey and takes his family and possession down to Egypt to meet Joseph, bless Pharaoh and settle "in the best part of the land, the land of the Rameses" (Gen 46:5–47:12). Solomon awakes from his dream, makes sacrifices, and immediately exercises his "wisdom" acquired in his dream by discerning the true mother of a child claimed by two mothers (1 Kgs 3:16–28).

Eli specifically instructs the boy Samuel to sleep, and the deity appears in his dream, to say a specific "formula": "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:8–9). In the other incubation accounts no intentional seeking out of the divine revelation takes place. Dream epiphany occurs of its own accord, without conscious initiative and/or "desire" on the part of the dreamer.[6]

As seen with Asclepius incubation, each of these dreams occurs in connection with a temple and/or sacred place. Three of the dreams also involve the ritual act of sacrifice or anointing, where the dreamer makes an offering to the deity. Other movements in the incubation dreams include disorientation, secrecy and preparation—all seen in dreams of chapters 1–3 above. These dreams of

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[6] Cf. the Asclepius cult suppliant who enters the *abaton* specifically to meet the god in a dream. See also Aristides' dream and his intention to restrain Asclepius to obtain the curative in Chapter 3 in this study. It was seen also how Isis takes specific steps to engage the angel and obtain the divine secret.

pre-exilic Israel are not unlike the dreams of the Greeks and Asclepius cult, which has its origins in seventh century BCE Epidaurus.

The incubation dreams above represent a portion of the dream material evident in the Old Testament and non-canonical ancient Jewish sources. The Joseph dreams in Genesis, for example, are an important collection of dreams.

Exilic dreams

Dream accounts are found in the writings around the time of the Babylonian exile, and are mostly cast in a negative light as seductive mediums used by false prophets. Jeremiah writes:

> For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners (*qsm*) who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams (*chlm*) that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord. (Jer 29:8–9)

Jeremiah's denouncement of dreams occurs elsewhere in his book,[7] and similar sentiments occur in the writings of other exilic authors, including Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Job.[8]

None of the exilic dreams considered here have narrative detail relating a sense of a dream "experience." No notion of dream "epiphany" occurs, nor does any notion of struggle, preparation, and reception of divine revelation occur in these dreams associated with the writings. Rather, they are set forth as an inferior, religious phenomenon associated with non-Israelites. For Jeremiah and the other exilic writers, dreams have no permanence or value. They are not of the true religion of Israel, and as such, are to be distrusted.

This polemic points to the syncretistic developments between Israel and Babylon during this period in Israel's history, and suggests "unofficial" religious practices involving the use of dreams

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[7] Jer 23:27–28,32; 27:9.

[8] Deut 13:1–3: "you must not heed the words of those prophets or those who divine by dreams"; Isa 29:7–8: dreams are empty and fade; Zech 10:2: "household gods utter empty promises; diviners see false signs, they produce lies as dreams"; and Job 20:8 "he will fly away like a dream … gone like a vision of the night." Cf. Job 4:12–17; 7:14; 33:15–16.

and visions by sixth century BCE Israel. Deuteronomy 18:10–11 lists various categories: "Let no one be found among you who makes his son or daughter pass through fire, no augur or soothsayer or diviner or sorcerer, on one who casts spells or traffics with ghosts and spirits, and no necromancer." The writer here quite clearly rejects magic practices—some of which (augury, divining, casting spells, trafficking with ghosts and spirits) were examined in the Greek magical papyri in Chapter 2. Prohibition of magic also occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament.[9] The issue of religious syncretism does not only arise around the event of the Babylonian exile. Saul had "banished from the land all who trafficked ghosts and spirits."[10] Yet even he, in his desperation to know how to fight the Philistines, has his servants find for him "a woman who has a familiar spirit," and in secret goes to her at night to draw from her powers to consult the dead. The calling up of the dead, which has echoes of the account of Odysseus' calling forth his father from the underworld, also to obtain counsel for events in the waking world, represents not only an pointed example of Jewish involvement with practices of necromancy, but the inherent religio-political tensions evident in the text which clearly resist such practices as inferior and thus banned mediums for monarchical Israel. The writer allows only the king, who established such a prohibition, and as one whose position is established first in "YHWH who lives," access to necromancy. A desire to establish Israel within the strict boundaries of Law over and against "those" who make use of dreams drives this polemic—an act of separating which is seen also, to some extent, in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom aim to "contain" and control dreaming through the application of "reason."

According to the (pre-exilic) Book of Numbers, however, the prophets have dreams as a means of interacting with divinity. This is not the same as encountering YHWH face to face. Descended on a pillar of cloud, and standing at the entrance to the Tent of

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[9] Deut 18:19–11; Lev 19:26,31; 20:1–6,27; Exod 22:17; 1 Sam 28; Isa 8:19; 57:3; Ezek 22:28; Mal 3:5.

[10] 1 Sam 28:3.

Meeting, YHWH speaks to Aaron and Miriam, who have been finding fault with Moses:

> Listen to my words.
> If he were your prophet and nothing more,
> I would make myself known to him in a vision (*mrah*),
> I would speak with him in a dream (*chlom*).
> But my servant Moses is not such a prophet;
> of all my household he alone is faithful.
> With him I speak face to face,
> openly and not in riddles (*chyidot*).
> He sees the very form of the Lord.
> How dare you speak against my servant Moses? (Num 12:6–8).

Those who have a higher position than a prophet experience YHWH not in a dream, but "face to face, openly and not in riddles." Reference to a direct experience of deity excludes any notion of the "shadowy" quality of dreams. A servant like Moses "sees the very form of the Lord" (12:8b).

The Book of Daniel and dream experiences

The fuller sense of dreams as epiphany "experiences" re-emerges in the second century CE writing of the Book of Daniel, which includes noticeable reference to plants and minerals in relation to dreams and dream interpretation. In Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar tells his vision (*chzv*)[11] to Daniel:

> As I was looking there appeared a very lofty tree at the center of the earth…Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and it yielded food for all … There appeared a watcher, a holy one coming down from heaven. In a mighty voice he cried, "Hew down the tree…but leave the stump with its roots in the ground. So, bound with iron and bronze among the lush grass, let him be drenched with the dew of heaven … (Dan 4:10ff.)

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[11] The author of Daniel tends to use the words "dreams" (*chlom)* and "visions" (*chzh*) interchangeably (cf. 2:3; 4:8,10).

The imagery includes references to vegetation ("a tree … its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant")—something seen earlier in chapter 1 of Daniel and the account of Daniel's preference for a diet of plant food. He does not want to become contaminated by the food and wine at the king's table, and so goes to great pains to acquire access to an alternative daily diet of only vegetables. His ingestion of only plants to eat and water to drink over the course of ten days causes him and the others on the same diet to "look healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who had lived on the food from the king" (Dan 1:15). The account represents a fascinating second century BCE, Jewish-Hellenistic attestation to the ancient understanding and use of plants as a superior, regenerative resource.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream imagery of the minerals iron and bronze[12] continues mineral imagery from the king's first dream, described by Daniel in chapter 2:

> As you watched, there appeared to your majesty a great image. Huge and dazzling, it stood before you, fearsome to behold. The head of the image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet part iron and part clay. While you watched you saw a stone hewn from a mountain by no human hand; it struck the image in its feet of iron and clay and shattered them [the feet]. (2:31–35)

The dream makes reference to gold, silver, bronze, iron, clay and stone, and each has an inherent value which Daniel interprets to the king. The "formula" includes the mixture of iron and clay which yields a "partly strong and partly brittle" compound (42). The dream thus alludes to ancient alchemical practices of the Greco-Roman world—something seen in the discussion of "Isis to Horus." The author's reference to the "blazing furnace" into which are thrown those who do not worship the golden image (3:1ff.) further echoes associations of ancient alchemical practices and the

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[12] "but leave the stump with its roots in the ground. So, bound with iron and bronze among the lush grass …"

transmutation of matter and human life.[13] Specifically, the furnace imagery points toward the practice of human sacrifices for metallurgical purposes.[14]

The dreams of Daniel also relay Nebuchadnezzar's "desire" to obtain the "divine secret"—but in this case the dream has already taken place, and an "interpreter," as opposed to the epiphany experience, plays an important role in the process of the dreamer's "inner knowing." Only through Daniel does the king acquire the divine secret. This is unlike the Asclepius cult and the votive tablets which speak of healing experience coming directly from the god. Asclepius temple attendants may have assisted to some extent with dream interpretation, but none of the extant evidence of the cult points to any official Asclepius "dream interpreter."[15] The other dreams considered above do not entail the conscious quest to obtain divine revelation. Rather, revelation "happens" to Jacob and Solomon, to take two examples. The one exception to this is Samuel's fourth incubation dream experience, which he pursues in order to obtain the Lord's "Word," as instructed by Eli.

The Book of Daniel shows ancient Judaism's immersion in syncretistic movements of the Mediterranean world of the second century BCE, possibly extending back to the Babylonian and Persian periods from the sixth century BCE. As with the magical papyri, "Isis to Horus," and the Asclepius cult, dreams and *materia* become mediums of experiencing and perceiving the "supernatural." The author presents a Judaism which embraces Hellenistic culture: "knowledge, understanding of books, and learning of every kind (1:17), and a "folk Judaism" which thrives on the religious practices of magic, exorcism, astrology, and divining" (2:10, 27; 4:7).

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[13] Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, 11. Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream recognizes gold as the superior material, under which, in terms of respective value, are silver, bronze, iron and clay (Dan 2:36–45). These grades of value become "lived out" in the fall and rise of kingdoms, according to Daniel's interpretation here.

[14] Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, 67.

[15] As seen with Aristides' dream in Chapter 3, the temple attendant showed little ability to interpret Aristides' dream.

Joshua Trachtenberg uses the term "folk Judaism" and speaks also of the "folk psyche" of all the varieties which made up everyday Jewish faith of the "common people which has existed on an intellectual and spiritual plane all its own" over and against the "official" religion of Torah.[16] On the syncretism of ancient Judaism, he writes:

> The Biblical allusions to the practice of magic indicate a widespread acquaintance with its manifold forms at an early time, but this can hardly be called "Jewish" magic. It was merely a reflection of the superstitions of the Canaanites, re-enforced by importations from Babylon and Egypt. Even the Talmudic period, reaching to about 500 CE, did not yet produce a distinctive amalgamation of the various strands of tradition that led into it, duplicating in large measure the eclecticism of Hellenistic-Gnostic magic, which itself influenced. Thus we find ensconced in the Hebrew lore beliefs and practices emanating from the entire Mediterranean world: representatives of ancient Babylon and Egypt nestled against Graeco-Roman specimens, newer Egyptian developments, entering by way of the Hellenistic recension, hobnobbing with the latest Chaldaic doctrine, exemplified in the Babylonian *Gemara*.[17]

The dreams in the Book of Daniel, which focus on the life-giving and life-taking meaning of various minerals, suggest that at least by the second century BCE dreams in Jewish writings show more investment in *materia* as a regenerative force. Unlike the dreams of the Asclepius cult, however, the plant and mineral references in the

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[16] Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: a Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Athenaeum, 1979): viii.

[17] Ibid., 11. See also M. H. Shepherd, Jr., who notes the use of "magic" by the Hebrews. "Magic," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by G. A. Buttrick, vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962, 1976): 224. Louis Ginzberg speaks of the "spontaneous creations of the people"—folklore, fairy tales, legends, and all forms of storytelling of the post-biblical Haggadah. See Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, translated by Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909, 1937): vii–xv.

Book of Daniel lack any connection with pharmacological recipes or spells, and there is no explicit formulaic notion of the regenerative properties of φύσις, where "nature begets nature."[18]

Patterns of "experience," and the Word of YHWH

The presentation of dreams as "experience," and subsequent dream movements such as preparation, reception of revelation, secrecy, "acting out," disorientation and liminality occur in pre-exilic and Hellenistic Jewish writings. In this way, the dreams of ancient Israel are not unlike those of ancient Greece and the Asclepius cult. The exception to this appears to be the dreams which occur around the time of the Babylonian exile (sixth–fifth centuries BCE) in the writings, for example, of Jeremiah, Zechariah, Proto-Isaiah and Job. These have no sense of dream "experience," nor do they have the movements of preparation and revelation. Rather, the dreams around the time of the exile are represented as the practices of the religious "other"—the non-Israelite whose ways are seductive and to be avoided.

The Book of Daniel and other writings such as 1 Enoch and 2 Esdra mentioned above show the re-emergence of dreams as experience in the Hellenistic period. These dreams are full of secrecy, disorientation, revelation, and include references to the significance of plant and mineral *materia* having inherent, if not regenerative value in the waking world. In this way, they echo the dreams, perceptions and uses of *materia* by the Asclepius cult. It is interesting to note that the strongest attestation of Asclepius temples cluster around the first century BCE to the second century CE—a time

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[18] See also dream references to vegetation in other ancient Jewish dreams. The Genesis dreams of Joseph (chs. 33–45) and Pharaoh focus on fertility of the land and the harvesting (or lack of) of its produce, and underscore in this way the essential human dependence upon φύσις to sustain life receives attention. In Judges 7:13–15 a certain man has dreams that a he sees a barley loaf rolling over and over through the Midianite camp. It strikes a tent, which collapses and turns upside down. The dreamer's comrade interprets the account to mean that "God had delivered Midian and the whole army into Gideon's hands."

period which begins not long after the estimated time of writing of the Book of Daniel (165 BCE).[19]

No focus on bodily healing occurs in the Jewish dreams considered above. Rather, the "divine secret" often has to do with receiving the "Word" of God and making concrete his abiding presence and will in the events of the waking world. This (ultimately) results in the subsistence of the dreamer and those associated with him (e.g. Jacob's family, "all of Israel," "kingdom of God"), and often the dissolution of those who are not associated with the dreamer (e.g. other "kingdoms" in the Book of Daniel, "Midian and his whole army," in Judges 7:13–15). Dreams represent mediums by which the deity communicates to the dreamer things which "come true" in the waking world. In this way the dreams of ancient Judaism are *predictive*.

Philo's dreams

By the first century BCE Philo had established three kinds of dreams, following his allegorical discussion on Jacob's dream at the well (Gen 28:10–16). He begins by describing the "third kind of dreams which are sent from God":

> Now this <u>third</u> species of dreams exists, whenever in sleep the mind being set in motion by itself, and agitating itself, is filled with frenzy and inspiration, so as to predict future events by a certain prophetic power. For the <u>first</u> kind of dreams which we mentioned, was that which proceeded from God as the author of its motion and, as some invisible manner prompted us what was indistinct to us, but well known to himself. The <u>second</u> kind was when our own intellect was set in motion simultaneously with the soul of the universe, and became filled with divine madness, by means of which it is allowed to prognosticate events which are about to happen. (*On Dreams* II.1–2)[20]

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[19] Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, "Daniel," in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Ronald Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990): 408.

[20] Philo, *On Dreams*, translated by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993).

According to Philo, the third and second types of dreams are sent by God. The third type of dreams will have the least clarity—"by reason of their having an enigmatic meaning deeply seated and fully colored, require the science of an interpreter of dreams" (II.4). All three categories yield to the dreamer some kind of inner resource: prophetic power, "prompting," and prognostication.

Philo's allegorical treatment, however, focuses on the symbols of dreams, rather than the concrete "acting out" of dreams as seen with other dreams. In Jacob's dream, for example, the well "appears to be an emblem of knowledge" (I.6), and the four wells dug by the servants of Abraham and Isaac symbolize the four elements of the world (earth, water, air and heaven) and of the human being (body, the external senses, speech and mind) (I.14ff). Dreams here become media of divine revelation to be "deciphered" in the waking world of Philo. Like Jacob's well, dreams "are not superficial, but very deep" (I.6b). The dreams of Philo in this regard maintain the "shadowy" nature found in Homer, although through the science of interpretation and the application of reason, they are made clear and accessible to the waking world.

Philo's discussion on the "types" of dreams and his reference to the "science" of dream interpretation echo the use of "reason" to categorize and "contain" dreams, as seen in Plato, and especially Aristotle (Chapter 1). "Oneirology," the science of dreams, is exemplified in the *Interpretation of Dreams* by Artemidorus (second century CE),[21] and appears also in the work of Galen (129–199 CE),[22] Rufus (first century CE),[23] and Hippocrates (460–370 BCE).[24] In

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[21] See discussion above in the Introduction.

[22] In his *Diagnosis from Dreams*, Galen, a physician, shows how the examination of dreams can help determine the humoral imbalance or disturbance in the body (2–6). The appearance of a thunderstorm in a dream signals the presence of phlegm. Snow, ice or hail signal cold phlegm. Smoke is an indicator of black bile. He sets out three kinds of dreams which come from daily activities, thoughts, and the prophetic foreshadowing of the soul, respectively.

[23] In his *Medical Questions* V.28–33, Rufus, a physician, advocates in this brief discussion the examination of a patient's dream patterns and sleeping habits in the evaluation and treatment of bodily health.

his work entitled *Ancient Science and Dreams*, M. Andrew Holowchak provides a helpful consideration of the history and developments of dream science in the Greco-Roman world, although his emphasis upon "science" also occurs at the expense of the magico-religious perceptions and practices of antiquity noted above in Homer and the Greek magical papyri.[25]

DREAMS AND EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTS

Dreams and early Christian subcultures

Early Christian dreams, and the literary and archaeological sources from which they come, represent complex socio-religious cultures

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[24] *On Dreams* (Regimen IV), explores the nature of dreams in relation to the body: "But when the body is at rest, the soul is stirred and roused and becomes its own master, and itself performs all the functions of the body" (86). As with Aristotle, bodily dysfunction disturbs one's dreams (88), and the degree of clarity of a dream epiphany signals the condition of bone's bodily health: When a person appears to receive something pure from a pure deity, it is good for health because it means that the things entering his body are pure. If he seems to see the opposite of this, it is not good because it indicates that some element of disease has entered his body (89). Hippocrates lists particular signs of a healthy body: "to walk safely and to run safely and swiftly without fear, to see the earth smooth and well tilled and trees flourishing, laden with fruit and well-kept; to see rivers flowing normally with water clear and neither in flood no with their flow lessened , and springs and wells similarly. All these things indicate the subject's health, and that the body, its flows, the food ingested and the excreta, are normal" (90).

[25] He writes: "Though early Greco-Roman Oneirology was an undeniable mix of naturalism and supernaturalism, the overall Greco-Roman attitude toward dreams was surprisingly scientific—even by today's standards. First, from at least the firth century BCE, dreams themselves became objects of scientific scrutiny … Next, interpreters of prophetic dreams developed rules and guidelines for distinguishing such dreams from non-prophetic dreams and for interpreting the former …" M. Andrew Holowchak. *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (New York and Oxford: University Press of America, 2002): xx.

and sub-cultures. In his consideration of ancient Judaism, Robert Kraft notes the socio-religious context of Judaism and early Christianity:

> To state the issue more generally, the relation of Jews and Judaism to the Hellenistic environment was similar to that of other identifiable "subcultures" (e.g., in Egypt or Syria) and is treated most satisfactory by accepting Hellenism as the norm against which to judge similarities and differences, rather than positing some "pure" form of (Palestinian) Judaism as the norm. Hellenization, whether in Palestine or in the Diaspora, was a complex and variegated phenomenon that involved the syncretistic use of Greek myth, philosophy, literary forms, historiography, iconography, ideals of kingship, and the like … In a multitude of ways we have come to find a previously unsuspected religious, cultural, and social diversity among the Jewish people of the Greco-Roman period. Judaism during this period was dynamic rather than static, pluralistic rather than homogeneous. It was transitional between what went before in the Persian period and what would follow with the rabbis, and was itself in transition, often in different ways at different times and places. Certainly there were norms and boundaries, but they differed from time to time and place to place and among groups that were contemporaneous and contiguous.[26]

Adding to this diversity would be varieties of early Christian cults emerging from these "subcultures" which develop and take definitive shape especially during the first through to the fifth centuries CE. Kraft sets out a Second Temple Judaism which is immersed in a vibrant, multi-cultural Hellenism. Different religious groups form and vie for attention and yield a mixture of source documents. This study considers a range of sources into late antiquity.[27]

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[26] Robert Kraft, in *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters*, edited by Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg, The Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta:, Scholars Press, 1986): 12, 20.

[27] Sources having a higher frequency of dream references received attention. John Chrysostom has the highest frequency (220 references to dreams)—nearly twice that of St. Augustine (89) and Theodoretus (71).

Dreams in Matthew 1–2

ἐνθυμέομαι*: establishing interiority*

Specific reference to ὄναρ, "dream," occurs six times in the Gospel of Matthew, a work written perhaps in Antioch, Syria about 90 CE for a Greek-speaking, Jewish-Christian community.[28] All but one of the dreams occur in the infancy narrative of Jesus, Matt 1:18–2:23. In Matt 1:20 the "angel of the Lord" appears to Joseph who "considers" (ἐνθυμηθέντος) renouncing his betrothal to Mary, who is with child. According to a dream (κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη), the angel tells Joseph not to fear to take Mary as his wife, and that her pregnancy has resulted from divine conception:

> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came

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Lower frequencies (excluding frequencies under 4) include Clement of Rome (17), John Cassian (16), Athanasius (15), Clement of Alexandria (14), the Christian Scriptures (13), and Dio Chrysostomos (12). The investigation showed a higher frequency of references to dreams from the late fourth into the fifth centuries (Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, and Dio Chrysostomos.

[28] K. Stendahl suggests the existence of the "School of Matthew." See Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew: And Its Use of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968, 1954): x. See also S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome from Elder Cato to Younger Pliny* (London, 1977); M. L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (London, 1971). H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 3rd. ed., trans. by G. Lamb (New York, 1956); H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, "The Rabbinic School System," in *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. by Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); W. W. Tarn, "Literature and Learning," in *Hellenistic Civilization* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books: 1967, 1961). Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (Missoula, MT: Scholars' Press, 1975); P. M. Fraser, "Ptolemaic Patronage: The Mouseion and Library," in *Polemic Alexandria*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972): 306–335; Helmut Koester, "The Johannine Circle," in *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1982).

> together (συνελθεῖν) she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep (ἐγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσὴφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου) he did (ἐποίησεν) as the angel of the Lord command him; he took his wife (παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ), but did not know her until she had born a son; and he called his name Jesus.

As with the other dreams in this study, Joseph is "acted upon," in that an angel "appears" to him (ἐφάνη αὐτῷ). However, the dream lacks any sense of descriptive "experience," as seen with the personal details which Samuel uses to describe his dream. Joseph has no presence or voice in his dream, and Matthew provides no explicit dream details with regard to inner knowing, a state of liminality, inner contest and struggle—all components of the particular dreams seen above. Matthew as narrator introduces and concludes the dream account, while the monologue of the angel, who also receives no descriptive detail,[29] fills out its inner content. The form

[29] Matt 28:2–3 renders the only description of an ἄγγελος κυρίου: "his appearance was like lightening, and his raiment white as snow." Many references to the "angel of the Lord" occur in the OT. In Gen 16:7 the angel of the Lord appears to Hagar by a spring of water in the wilderness (Gen 16:7). An angel of the Lord prevents Abraham from slaying his son at the altar (Gen 22:11). An angel of the Lord appears to Moses in a burning bush (Exod 3:2), in the road before Balaam as his adversary (Num 22:22), to Gideon under the oak at Ophrah (Judg 6:11), to Manoah and to the barren wife of Manoah to foretell the conception of Samson (Judg 13:3–23), to the red, sorrel, and white horses who patrol the earth (Zech 1:11), and before Joshua and Satan (Zech 3:1).

of the dream takes more the shape of a Homeric oracle, in which a divine being appears in the sleeper's dream with specific warnings and instructions to be carried out by the dreamer in the waking world.[30] The other dreams in Matthew 1–2 (2:12,13,19,22) have even less detail, and two consist of simple warnings (2:12; 2:22). These will receive mention below in light of an examination of Matt 1:20–25.

A closer examination shows that Matthew connects the dream in 1:20–25 with the phrase ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ("as he considered these things"), and thus he frames the dream within the context of Joseph's act of self-reflection upon the serious matter of betrothal.[31] The word ἐνθυμέομαι signals the *interior orientation* of the dreamer, and here it means "to consider, reflect on, or to think."[32] Matthew also uses the noun form, ἐνθυμήσις, in 9:4 and 12:25 to relate the notion of "interiority" and "inner thoughts"—in both cases in reference to the Jewish leaders who react to Jesus. Both accounts involve acts of healing. In Matt 9:4–5 Jesus heals a paralytic,[33] and in Matt 12:22ff. Jesus exorcises a blind and dumb

[30] See above: dreams which are of the gate of polished horn bring real things (ἔτυμα) to pass, when any mortal sees them (*Odyssey* XIX 567).

[31] On the matter of betrothal, see Deut 20:7 reads: "Has anyone become engaged to a woman but not yet married her? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another marry her." According to Deut 22:23–24, violation of betrothal by an act of infidelity warrants death by stoning. Joseph would have been familiar with these laws.

[32] William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd edition (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979): 146.

[33] "And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts (ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν), said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'"? (Matt 9:4–5). Although the scribes "speak to themselves" (εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς), Matthew's focus on their thoughts (ἐνθυμεῖσθε)

demoniac who was brought to him. As in Matt 1:20f., inner brooding is penetrated by divine presence (i.e. Jesus, "Son of God"), which is marked by political tension and conflict.[34]

Other renderings and uses of ἐνθυμήσις occur.[35] In each of these cases ἐνθυμήσις represents the inner thoughts of a person or

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underscores the interior (and exclusive) nature of their dialogue denouncing Jesus as one who is blaspheming. "Knowing" entails close interaction between humans and divinity in the midst of which occurs an act of healing. As with 1:20ff., a focus on the divine "word" occurs, and this leads to the cure of the paralytic: θάρσει τέκνον ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι … ἐγερθεὶς ἆρόν σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὕπαγε ("Take heart child; your sins are forgiven … rise, take up your bed and go" (Matt 9:2b,6c). No indication of physical or material connection occurs in the act of healing, which addresses not the man's broken body, but rather the psycho-religious (?) notion of having "sins", which are then forgiven (ἀφίενται σου αἱ ἁρμαρτίαι).

[34] The exorcism heals the man, who is then able to speak and see. As in 9:4f., Jesus' opponents speak among themselves, and Jesus "knowing their thoughts" (ἰδὼν τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις) gives a pointed reply. Similar themes of interiority and human and divine interaction (and conflict) occur here as well, underscored by the word ἐνθυμήσις: "Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Can this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard it they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.' But knowing their thoughts (εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις), he said to them, 'Everything divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand …'" (Matt 12:22ff).

[35] Luke's use of ἐνθυμήσις in Acts 17:29—Paul's Areopagus speech—connotes the human "imagination": "Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and "imagination" of a person (χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου). In Acts 10:19 he uses another form of the word, found only in Christian writings, where Peter "contemplates" (διενθυμουμένου) the vision of heaven opened and descending, like a great sheet. Luke indicates how Peter was "inwardly perplexed as to what the vision he had seen might mean" (Acts 10:17). For a connotation of self-reflection or consideration, see Plato, *Republic* X.595A; cf. Sir 16:20; Bar

persons, and references an interiority which is recognized and engaged by some divine being. Ἐνθυμήσις signals movements in the waking world which are "less conscious," and introduces a deeper location which has to do more with dreaming and the human imagination. More will be said on this observation below.

ἐνθυμέομαι*: "immediacy" of dream and revelation events*

> But as he considered this behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son … (Matt 1:20–21)

Matthew's use of ἐνθυμέομαι in genitive absolute construction (ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος) causes the story to focus on Joseph as the subject of the narrative account.[36] This focus underscores the immediacy of the dream event and Joseph the dreamer. The angel of the Lord becomes directly present (with or without bodily form), and Joseph has a pointed experience of divine intervention.[37] As was seen with Aristides, a dream by its very nature draws attention to the dreamer and the details of her/his inner world. Joseph becomes a central character in a story all his own because of his dreams.

The details of this world include the appearance of a divine being (ἄγγελος κυρίου), verbal communication between this divine

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3:31; 4 Macc 8:27, etc. Ενθύμησις in the Shepherd Hermas connotes "desire" of the heart (Mandate 4.1.2); cf. Hm. 6.2.7: "thought of the angel rising in his heart …"

[36] By comparison, Ulrich Luz argues that emphasis falls on the "message" of the angel. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, translated by Wilhelm C. Linss (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989): 120.

[37] Working from source criticism treatment of Matt 1–2, Robert Gnuse argues that the immediacy of divine revelation occurs in the figure of Jesus, and that the dreams in Matthew establish just the opposite of immediacy, after the way of Elohist dream patterns in Genesis, they "preserve the distance between God and the human realm." Robert Gnuse, "Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives," *Nouvum Testamentum* 32, 2 (1990): 118.

being and Joseph in the mortal world, the recognition of human beings by name and familial lineage ("Joseph son of David," "Mary your wife, "a son … Jesus"), verbal command ("do not fear to take …"), and a revelation: "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son … he will save the people from their sins." Matthew declares that this revelation occurred to fulfill "what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive …" (Isa 7:14). According to Daniel J. Harrington, Matthew sets out some of these details after a pattern of announcement of the birth of a son in the Old Testament writings.[38]

The object of the genitive absolute, "these things" (ταῦτα), signifies the "disturbances" of the waking world brought on by Mary's pregnancy, and further details the nature of Joseph's brooding. Matthew tells his hearers that Joseph, being a righteous man (ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆ δίκαιος ὢν), does not desire to shame her (μὴ θέλων δειγματίσαι αὐτὴν), and is resolved (ἐβουλήθη) to divorce Mary in secrecy (λάθρᾳ). Matthew's use of the word βουλευεῖν underscores the *deliberative* predisposition of Joseph, who considers the implications of his waking world.[39] The passive voice of the word implies Joseph's coming to a conclusion about ταῦτα, and he determines to "release" (ἀπολυεῖν) his wife secretly. This intention of "secrecy" expands the notion of Joseph's "interiority," as his thoughts and plans move at a level underneath the public, waking world. However, the dream revelation shows the error of Joseph's "thinking" about Mary's pregnancy and his plan to separate from her, directing him onto another course of action.

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[38] The pattern includes the exclamation: "Behold!, followed by the child's name, and specification of the child's identity. See Ishmael (Gen 16:11–12), Isaac (Gen 17:19), Solomon (1 Chr 22:9–10), Josiah (1 Kgs 13:2), and the prince born to the young woman at Ahaz's court (Isa 7:14–17). Daniel J. Harrington, ed., *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series, Vol. 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991): 38.

[39] William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 146.

Magi: Matthew's embrace of the East

> [A]nd lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was, When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. (Matt 2:9–12)

By establishing Joseph's "interiority," Matthew seems to relate the "brooding" nature of Joseph as one who is prone to dreaming—something reinforced by the narrative juxtaposition of Joseph's dreaming with the magicians from the East (μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν) (2:1). The presence of the *magia* connects the dream narrative with the magio-religious elements of the "occult," and reflects the Greco-Roman fascination with eastern Mysteries such as Isis and Mithras in the time of the Roman empire.[40] In this way Matthew's

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[40] For example, see chapter 2 above, Apuleius' *Metamorposes*, which reflects enchantment with magic by the Roman social elite. Section XI.15 offers a culminating statement on the purpose of the work. See also Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, "The Mysteries of Mythras." In *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Hans Dieter Betz, "The Mithraic Inscriptions of Santa Prisca and the New Testament" in *Nouvum Testamentum* 10 (1968): 62–80; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, translated by Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); E. R. Dodds, *Greek and the Irrational* (Boston: Beacon, 1955); J. G. Frazer, "Oriental Religions in the West," in *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan, 1951); Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1950); Rene Girard, "Violence and Magic," in *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986); B. M. Metzger, "Methodology in the Study of the Mystery Religions and Early Christianity," in *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagans, Jewish, and Christian* (Leiden, 1964): 1–24; Marvin W. Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries: A*

gospel reflects the religious syncretism of the Hellenistic culture present in the magical papyri[41] and the Book of Daniel. Alan Segal notes the trend during the first century CE to "see magic, philosophy, and wonder-working as essentially similar."[42]

In Matthew, the Magi appear only in the birth narrative, and Matthew makes no reference to their identity or specific homeland, but says only that they come from away from the East—that is, Arabia, Mesopotamia, or regions beyond. No reference to the episode occurs in the Bible, although allusions to it exist. Psalms 68:29 and 72:10 speak of kings bearing gifts, probably relaying an older belief that Magi were kings.[43] Numbers 24:17 says that "a star will come forth out of Jacob, will arise from Israel."[44]

Sourcebook of Sacred Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background* (New York, 1964).

[41] Samson Eitrm notes of the papyri: "Here we find an astonishing wealth of practices for either inducing a dream (ὀνειραιτητά) or causing someone else to have a dream (ὀνειροπομποί). Here Greek and Egyptian practices merge, as might be expected in this syncretistic milieu. We find Apollo and Hermes side by side with Ra, Thoth, Bes, Isis, and every imaginable daemon—laurel and olive branches mixed with native Egyptian plants, and the tripod with magical dolls and magical songs. Christian angels make their first appearance in these texts." Samson Eitrm, "Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual," *Magica Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, edited by C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 176.

[42] Alan Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, edited by Van Den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981): 362.

[43] S. V. McCasland, "Magi," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by G. A. Buttrick, vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962, 1976): 223.

[44] Isaiah 60:1–3 reads: "Arise, shine, Jerusalem, for your light has come;/and over you the glory of the Lord has dawned./Though darkness covers the earth/and dark night the nations, on you the Lord shines/and over you his glory will appear/nations will journey/towards your light/and kings to your radiance." Herodotus (490–425 BCE) speaks of the Magi as a shaman caste of the people of Media (I.101), a territory in west Asia, forcibly annexed to Persia by Cyrus the Great (d.529 BCE).

The performed sacrificial rites (I.132), and were frequently consulted as interpreters of dreams (I.107, 120; VII.19) and they had apparently acquired political power as Zoroastrian priests by the time of Herodotus (III.65, 73, 79). See S. V. McCasland, "Magi", 222. Philo (20 BCE–50 CE) speaks quite favorably of Magi, who practice the "true magical art," being especially attuned to the "books of nature," a the mysteries of which kings must be versed: "Now the true magical art, being the science of discernment, which contemplates and beholds the books of nature with a more acute and distinct perception than usual, and appearing as such to be a dignified and desirable branch of knowledge, is not studied not merely by private individuals, but even by kings, and the very greatest of kings, and especially by the Persian monarchs, to such a degree, that they say that among that people no one can possibly succeed to the kingdom if he has not previously been initiated into the mysteries of the magi" (*The Special Laws* III.100). Philo also distinguishes the Magi from what he calls the "adulterated species of this science … which quacks, and cheats, and buffoons pursue" (ibid., 101). Such ones turn its patrons "who love to unalterable enmity," and has resulted in the ultimate destruction of great numbers "who waist away by degree" (ibid.). Elsewhere Philo speaks of the Magi as ones who investigate the works of nature "for the purpose of becoming aquatinted with the truth [and] initiate others in the divine virtues by very clear explanations" (*Every Good Man Is Free* XII.74). Cicero also speaks well of the Magi in this regard, *On Divination* I.91. References to the Magi in Matthew 1–2 and Acts 8:9–24 and 13:6–11 point to the movement of the caste outside of Persia and the development of its practice as a "profession." Luke speaks of a magician named Simon who had practiced magic in the city of Samaria and "who amazed them with his magic (μαγείαις)." People revere him (ᾧ προσεῖχον), although he comes to believe Philip preaching of the good news, receives baptism and follows Philip, "seeing signs and great miracles performed" (Acts 8:9–13). In Acts 13:6–11 a magician named Elymas confronts Barnabus and Saul at Paphos, and Cyprus is blinded by the "hand of the Lord" by an act (curse?) of Paul. In the account Luke refers to Elymas as a Jewish false prophet (13:6), and has Paul look intently at him and say "You son of the devil you enemy of all righteousness, fill of deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?" (13:9b–10). Both stories show Luke's disfavor of magi, whom he casts in an inferior and derogatory light, and compares to the superiority of the Christian apostles.

Rome was suspicious about any Persian association such as Magia (a religious priesthood) and the Twelve Tablets (451–450 BCE) forbid the use of magic to "enchant crops away" (VIII.8a).[45] According to Segal, however, Rome generally did not prosecute those who practiced "white" or non-aggressive magic—and this would have included astrologists.[46] *Magi* may have been regarded (at least) with suspicion by Rome. Matthew's detailed inclusion of the *Magi* at this level appears to counter such opposition, firmly rooting his story in the religious astrological beliefs of the Near East. (One wonders to what extent, if any, Matthew means to undermine Roman authority by the inclusion of the *Magi* in chapters 1–2.)

Strabo (63 BCE–19 CE) and Plutarch (46–120 CE) reference the presence of Magia in the Mediterranean area. Strabo XV.727, 733; Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 46. Josephus speaks of a Jewish man from Cypriot named Simon, who pretend to be a magician and persuades Drusilla, the beautiful daughter of Agrippa, to leave her present husband to become the wife of Felix, procurator of Judea (52–60 CE). According to Josephus, their son Agrippa died during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE. (*Ant.* 20.7.2); cf. Suet. *Claud.* 28.

[45] Pliny tells of a certain Gaius Furius Chresimus, a liberated slave who "was extremely unpopular because he got much larger returns from a rather small farm than the neighborhood had obtained from very large estates, and he was supposed to be using magical spells (*in invidia ertat magna*) to entice away other people's crops" (*N.H.* 18.41–43). He is brought to court in 157 BCE, and procures his acquittal by displaying his capable farm tools and workers to the court. Segal writes: "Corneilius Hispallus expelled the Chaldaean astrologers from Rome in 139 B.C.—ostensibly on the grounds that they were magicians. In 33 B.C. astrologers and magicians are explicitly mentioned as having been driven from Rome. Twenty years later, Augustus ordered all books on the occult subjects to be burned. In 16 A.D. magicians and astrologers were expelled from Italy, which was reinforced by edicts from other emperors in 69 A.D. and 89 A.D. later, Constantine used a ruling to cover all charges of magic." Alan Segal, *Hellenistic Magic*, 357.

[46] Alan Segal, *Hellenistic Magic*, 358.

Matthew indicates that the Magi go to Jesus and "offer him gifts, gold and frankincense (λίβανον) and myrrh (σμύρναν)" (Matt 2:11). Both these plant derivatives were highly valued in the ancient world as integral elements in religious rituals in funerals, divine worship, rituals of magic, and as a cosmetic.[47] In Genesis Joseph's brothers sell him to Ishmaelites traveling from Gilead to Egypt, "with camels carrying gum tragacanth and balm and myrrh (*lot*) (Gen 37:25), and later the same brothers offer "a little balm and honey, with gum tragacanth, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds" as an offering to Joseph in Egypt (Gen 43:11,26). With regard to the Temple (or Tent of Meeting), frankincense and myrrh are used sacrificially at the altar (Exod 30:23,34; Lev 2:1–2,15–16; 24:7; Isa 43:23, etc.).

Both frankincense and myrrh have *restorative* values. Theophrastus says that frankincense was used as an antidote for poisoning by hemlock (*Inquiry into Plants* 9.20.1), and provides a detailed description of the traits and harvesting of both plants (*Inquiry into Plants* 9.4.1–4). The soldiers/bystanders offer Jesus wine mixed with myrrh as an anodyne (Mark 15:23), and Jesus and his followers probably mixed aromatic substances such as frankincense and myrrh in unguents to cure diseases (Mark 6:13; Jas 5:14; Luke 10:34). The author of the Song of Songs speaks of his hands which "dripped with myrrh; the liquid myrrh from my fingers …" (5:5), and of the "mountains of myrrh … and the hill of frankincense" which are likened the lover's breasts.[48]

Matthew's reference to these plant derivatives, along with "gold" (χρυσόν), recognize the importance given by his community to plant and mineral *materia* as both sacred and restorative mediums, and their sacrificial use as gift-offerings to the savior child. In

[47] Kjeld Nielsen, "Incense," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): vol. 3, pp. 404–409.

[48] While the day is cool/and the shadows are dispersing/I shall take myself to the mountains of myrrh/and to the hill of frankincense/You are beautiful, my dearest/beautiful without a flaw (Song of Songs 4:6–7).

this way it has parallels with the Asclepius cult, and its associations with nature and derivatives of nature.[49]

"Knowing" which makes clear

The *implicit* inner "struggle" about his betrothal to Mary, and the narrative suspension and/or liminality evoked by the element of uncertainty about this betrothal, are part of Joseph's state of "preparation" to receive the angel.[50] In a sense, the dream gives "healing" to Joseph by specifying the "solution" to his inner thoughts about the breakdown of the betrothal: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:20b). As with the dream of Isis, and Aristides, a divine being (ἄγγελος κυρίου) yields to Joseph a certain *knowing* which makes clear the reason and purpose of Mary's pregnancy, and subsequently gives release to Joseph's resolve to divorce Mary. The "divine secret" revealed by the angel is the child to be named Jesus, "for he will save (σώσει) his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). In this case "sins" (ἁμαρτιῶν) represent human malady, and human disease and suffering are collectively cast in religo-social terms.[51]

Divine "revelation" breaks the cycle of Joseph's inner dialogue as to the course of action he should take with Mary. The dream "revelation" entails specific instructions to be followed by the dreamer to procure what is *the* "healer," a savior-child. Joseph is to take his wife (παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα ἀυτοῦ), and call

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[49] Cf. the more central and comparative image of the womb and the gestation of the child Jesus conceived thought the creative forces of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gen 1:1–2). Cf. Ezek 37:9–10, 14; Judg 16:14; Syr Bar 21:4; 23:5; cf. John 3:5–6; 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6.

[50] Cf. the preparation of Isis to receive the angel's secret.

[51] Cf. Ps 130:8: "He alone will set Israel free from all their sins." Donald Hagner says that the Matthean audience would have known the significance of this idea of deliverance from sin and its kerygmatic value. Donald A Hagner, op. cit., 19. Jewish texts refer to a Messiah who removes the sinners (Pss. Sol. 17:22–25), and a Messiah who judges (1 Enoch 62:2); the notion that the Messiah "forgives" sins does not occur however, according to Luz, op. cit., p. 121, n. 45.

(καλέσεις) the boy's name Jesus (Matt 1:21). For some, Jesus represents the "new" Asclepius. Justin, for example, writes:

> And again when they [sc., the gentiles] learned about the prophecies to the effect that he [sc., Christ] would heal every disease and would raise the dead, they brought forward *Asclepius* [my emphasis].[52]

In the day-world Joseph does (ἐποιήσεν) these things, as instructed by the angel, following the (formulaic) steps of the dream. As with Aristides (and Isis), dream experience has definitive consequences in the day-world, as the dreamer "wakes" and "makes concrete" the details of night dreaming.

The Joseph dream cycle in Genesis

The brooding nature of Joseph in Matthew 1–2 echoes the figure of Joseph the dreamer in Genesis 37–45,[53] although the Genesis writer describes Joseph as a feeling man who weeps and struggles

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[52] *Apologia* 54.10. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T332, p. 291. Elsewhere Justin likens the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as "nothing new and different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter … Asclepius, who, though he was a great healer, was struck by a thunderbolt, and ascended to heaven …" Op. cit., T336, p. 177. See also T334–35.

[53] Raymond Brown argues that Matthew re-writes "a pre-Matthean narrative associating the birth of Jesus, son of Joseph, with the patriarchal Joseph and the birth of Moses." *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, 1977): 228–29. See also Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary On His Handbook For a Mixed Church Under Persecution*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994, 1982): 22. Robert Gnuse underscores the focus on dreams and visions in the pentateuchal writings of the Elohist and story-figures including Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Robert Gnuse, "Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives," 118. See also Alan W. Jenks, "Elohist," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 2: 478–482. Donald A Hagner argues against a connection between the Joseph of Genesis and the Joseph of Matthew. See his *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1–13*, vol. 33A (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993): 34.

to contain his feelings (42:24; cf. 43:30, 45:1f.).[54] In Genesis, Joseph's inclination to dream, and also to interpret dreams, has definitive consequences and determines the course of his life. In this case, Joseph has voice and presence in his dreams, which he personally describes and interprets with detail.[55] Unlike Joseph of Matthew 1–2, Joseph in Genesis has a demonstrative awareness of his dream-world with which he dialogues, brings to conscious expression, and interprets. At the same time, the dreams occur as mediums of divine intervention into this world, where YHWH works out his purpose with ruling families, ruling powers, and the fate of φύσις ("nature"), which here entails seven years of bumper (wheat) harvests and seven years of famine (41:29–32). In the story narrative Joseph's dream will ultimately come true, as his family comes to live under the authority of Joseph whose dreams (37:5–8; 9), and his interaction with the dreaming of other story figures (40:9–15, 16–19; 41:16–32), raise him to social and political position as Pharaoh's governor.[56] As seen with other Old Testament dreams, the

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[54] Other figures associated with dream accounts have feelings of hatred (Gen 37:5,8), jealousy (Gen 37:11), discouragement (Gen 40:6), and apathy (Gen 40:23).

[55] "Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, their hatred of him became still greater. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had. We were out in the field binding sheaves, when all at once my sheaf rose and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered round and bowed in homage before my sheaf." His brothers retorted, "Do you think that you will be king over us and rule us?" and they hated him still more because of his dreams and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and in it the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." When he told his father and his brothers, his father took him to task: "What do you mean by this dream of yours?" he asked. "Are we to come and bow down to the ground before you, I and your mother and your brothers?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father did not forget the incident" (Gen 37:5–11).

[56] "I hereby give you authority over the whole land of Egypt." He (Pharaoh) took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's finger; he had him dressed in robes of fine linen, and hung a gold chain round his neck. He mounted him in his viceroy's chariot and people cried "Make way

Genesis writer presents dreams (see also Gen 40:9f.; 41:14f.) as significant, efficacious mediums of human fate lived out in concrete terms in the waking world. Literalization of Joseph's dream occurs in relationship to YHWH who is "with him" (Gen 39:3,23; 41:38–39) and with whom belongs all interpretation (Gen 40:8; 41:16).[57] Joseph's dreaming becomes a medium of what is perceived to be divine providence, which entails the dream revelation of the unfolding story of Joseph, his family, the king's cupbearer (40:9f), chief baker (40:16f), and Pharaoh (41:1–49).

Dream prediction and literal fulfillment in the waking world occurs also in Joseph's dream accounts in Matthew 1–2, where the angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph in a dream, giving specific warnings and instructions in light of the unfolding narrative events of the waking world. Both sets of dreams (i.e. Genesis and Matthew 1–2) occur as media of divine initiative in the human world. This initiative has a salvific significance, in that through night dreaming the subject, and those associated with him, are kept from harm's way and thus sustained to progress in the waking world.

For the Joseph stories in Genesis 37–45, *salvation* involves the material and political prosperity of the dreamer: "Joseph prospered, for the Lord was with him" (Gen 39:2). With both Genesis and Matthew, it involves the preservation of the family of Joseph: in Matthew, Joseph, Mary and Jesus find a haven from Herod's threat and a home in Nazareth; in Genesis Joseph is reunited with his father and brothers, who find relief from the plague and settle to live in Egypt: "God has made me the Lord of all Egypt. Come down to me without delay. You will live in the land of Goshen and

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before him!" Thus Pharaoh made him ruler over all Egypt, and said to him "I am the Pharaoh, yet without your consent no one will lift hand or foot throughout Egypt" (Gen 41:41–45).

[57] A. Leo Oppenheim argues the opposite—i.e., the "symbolic" significance of the Genesis Joseph dream accounts for the ancient hearer. See his "Mantic Dreams," in the Ancient Near East" edited by G. E. Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, in *The Dream and Human Societies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966): 348–50.

be near me, you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that you have" (Gen 45:9b–10).[58]

Temple ritual, media, dream movements and nuance in Matthew 1–2

Dreams in Matthew 1–2 do not address bodily healing and the relief of physical suffering, but occur as part of a larger (story) interest to save the child and family from Herod's destructive forces. This contrasts the dream of Aristides in Chapter 3 above, in which touch and the physical sensations of arousal, tears, and hearing happen, and there occurs a notable sense of physical experience in which body and dream are inextricably related. With Aristides body becomes the "locus" of dreaming experience.

No reference to temple, or incubation occurs in Matthew 1–2. By the time of Matthew's writing, the Jewish temple no longer exists, and so these dreams occur separately from any *literal* connection with a temple system. This is quite different from the Asclepius cult and incubation accounts in the Old Testament, where dreaming occurs as part of temple rituals.

However, the plant and mineral offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh by the Magi (2:11) suggest some continuation of ritual temple offerings as seen with the Asclepius cult, and Matthew may show concern to ground the child's birth and the dreams which surround it in sacrificial terms. The offering of these mineral

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[58] As commentators are quick to point out, Matthew may have drawn from other accounts which are similar to Matt 1–2. This include in Numbers 22–24, Balaak, the wicked king of Moab who wants to destroy Moses, and Balaam, a gentile wizard from the east who frustrates Balaak's efforts, and in an oracle refers to a rising star out of Jacob (Num 24:17). Ps. Philo' *Biblical Antiquities* 9.10 describes the birth of Moses and incorporates motifs of the angel of the Lord and dream epiphany. Jesus' exile in Egypt has parallels with Moses' exile in Egypt in Exodus 2:1ff. (cf. Exod 4:19–22). It's uncertain what precise source Matthew draws from to develop his birth and dream narrative, Matt 1:18–2.23. Most likely his hearers knew quite well these stories, in addition to the stories of Joseph the patriarch. See the discussion in Hagner, op cit., 25–26; Keener, op. cit., 95; Harrington, op. cit., 36–40.

and plant gifts to the child within the house (οἰκίαν) and or "home" of the family picks up on the themes of domestication of temple sacrificing noted above in Chapter 3.[59]

The specific reference to gold, frankincense, and myrrh, used medicinally and alchemically in the larger Hellenistic world evidence Matthew's recognition of mineral and plant *materia* as valuable (θησαυρός, "treasured") media, here used for the specific purposes of worship. Dreams in Matthew thus occur in inextricable relation with these elements, and nature and natural forces are seen to have a significant role in the conception of the "divine healer" and the dreams which participate in that conception in Matt 1–2. Although there is no direct reference to recipes, spells and pharmacological uses, as seen in the magical papyri, Matthew would have been aware of such magico-religious applications and the associations of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Morton Smith notes:

> Lots of magic was practiced in the early churches: Acts 19.19 suggests the extent of it in Ephesus (the magical books of those Christians who could be persuaded to burn them were valued about $320,000). In second and third century works on heresy, when Christians are attacking each other, accusations of magic fly thick as brickbats at Donnybrook Fair. That such accusations were not just malicious inventions, but reflected actual practice, is proved by evidence from Egypt, whence we have many Christian magical papyri and amulets in Greek, and more in Coptic.[60]

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[59] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," 23.

[60] Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978): 94. See Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science: During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era* Vol. I (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1923): 437. Eugen Drewermann offers a consideration of early Christianity's ties with the myths of the ancient world. He documents a conversation he had with a museum guide in the Musée National Archéologique in the city of Beirut. She makes the observation: "Everything that Christianity teaches is thousands of years older than itself. Have you seen the mother goddesses—Inanna, Cybele, Isis? They all have a child die on them, or a mate, or the god they love. And the

In Origen's *Against Celsus*, Celsus refers to Christ and Moses as wizards (V.51), and he considers the Jews and Syrians as a race especially given to superstition. Of the Jews he claims "they worship angels, and are addicted to sorcery, in which Moses was their instructor" (I.26). He refers to the "first generation of lying wizards," referring, according to Origen, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Origen admits that incantations and magical rites occurred using the by the "God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob" (IV.33). Celsus further derides the Jews as "blinded by some crooked sorcery, or dreaming dreams through the influences of shadowy specters (V.6), and that "the Jews were induced by the incantations employed in jugglery and sorcery (in consequence of which certain phantoms appear, in obedience to the spells employed by magicians) to bow down to the angels in heaven, not observing that this was contrary to their law" (V.11). Origen, however, counters Celsus, saying that the Jews "despised all kinds of divination as that which bewitches persons to no purpose," making reference to Leviticus 19:31 and the prohibition against wizards and familiar spirits (V.42). According to Origen, God, not magic, gave Moses power of Pharaoh's magicians (III.46; IV.51). He recognizes the power of incantations and the arts of magic, which include the use of plant and animal properties, to which he contrasts the simplicity of Christian prayers and adjurations (VII.4). Origen regards the Magi in Matthew 1–2 as ordinary magicians "being on familiar terms with evil spirits and invoking them for such purposes as their knowledge and wishes extend to …" He says that the glory of the "Saviour of the human race, raised far above all those angels which minister to persons" dispels the demons and hinders the Magi's spells and charms from working properly (I.60).

The "epiphany" theme seen in other dreams in which a divine being appears and engages the dreamer occurs directly, or by inference, in Matthew. In 2:13 an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph, instructing him, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to

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world holds its breath; they go down into the underworld and awaken the dead one, These are myths, images, dreams …" In *Discovering the God Child Within: the Spiritual Psychology of the Infancy of Jesus*, translated by Peter Heinegg (New York: Crossroad, 1994, 1986): 21.

Egypt …" In Matt 2:19 an angel appears in Joseph's dream and instructs him to "rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel …" No explicit reference to an angel occurs in Matt 2:12 and Matt 2:22. Possibly, Matthew infers divine presence in these two dreams after the manner of the other dreams.[61] Morton Smith discusses how the world common to Jesus and his Jewish Palestinian contemporaries "was wholly mythological," and that through underworld, earth, and heavens was a constant coming and going of supernatural beings who interfered in many ways with human affairs.[62]

A closer reading of Matt 1–2 renders a more nuanced orientation of the dreams by Matthew, signaled by the use of the word ἐνθυμηθέντος in genitive absolute (grammatical) construction. The Matthew 1–2 texts relate dream movements occurring at a level which include the interior orientation of the dreamer Joseph, the immediacy of the dream event and Joseph's inner world "revelation," and the "disturbances" of Joseph's circumstances which prompt his inner brooding. The motif of secrecy occurs, as well as the *intimated* movements of inner struggle, liminality, preparation,

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[61] See e.g. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 27, 32, who argues for such inference.

[62] Examining the thematic parallels between the magical papyri and the gospels in the New Testament, Smith writes: "Above the earth were heavens inhabited by demons, angels, and gods of various sorts (the "many gods" whose existence Paul conceded in 1 Cor 8:5, and among whom he counted "the god of this age," 2 Cor 4:4). In the highest heaven was enthroned the supreme god, Yahweh, "God" *par excellence*, who long ago created the whole structure and was about to remodel, or destroy and replace it. Beneath the earth was an underworld, to which most of the dead descended. There too, were demons. Through underworld, earth, and heavens was a constant coming and going of supernatural beings who interfered in many ways with human affairs. Sickness, especially insanity, plagues, famines, earthquakes, wars, and disasters of all sorts were commonly thought to be the work of demons. With these demons, as with evil men, particularly foreign oppressors, the peasants of Palestine lived in perpetual hostility and sporadic conflict, but the relations were complex." M. Smith, op. cit., 4.

and solution which gives resolution to conflict, and eventually the "sins of the people." In this way, the dreams in Matt 1–2 evidence many of the thematic movements of the dream experiences seen in this investigation.

This "fuller" reading has a more explicit portrayal in the figure of Joseph of Genesis, the prototype of Joseph of Matthew. The Elohist dreamer "experiences" dreams, interacting in the sleeper's dream by night and interpreting dreams by day. Struggle and emotion mark this human Joseph and his "journey" in the material world, one which centers around the human quest to survive the plague, and as in Matthew 1–2, secure sustenance for the family. In both Matt 1–2 and Gen 37–45, dreams occur as media of monotheistic intervention into the waking world, by which the deity works out a salvific purpose for humanity in concrete terms predicted in the dreams. Through such intervention the dreamer, and those associated with him, are sustained in the waking world.[63] This is unlike the Asclepius cult, which does not emphasize an abiding and purposeful presence of the deity in the waking world, but rather focuses upon a singular, *abaton* experience of epiphany healing. The Asclepius cult does not provide its patrons with a "knowledge of the ultimate 'meaning' and 'purpose' of life,"[64] nor does it give relief to earthly suffering through "some kind of moral plan"[65] which "saves the people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). Although the cult may have provided a sense of "social identity"[66] to persons similar to Aristides, who take up residence at the Pergamum Asclepius sanctuary, the Asclepius cult's focus and its dreams are localized in the individual healing of the body.

The nuanced presentation of the dreams by Matthew in chapters 1–2 may infer the author's expectations that his readers were familiar with the Genesis Joseph figure in ancient Jewish tradition.

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[63] See Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, translated by David E. Green (Atlanta:, John Knox Press, 1975): 31.

[64] According to Michael Mann, Christianity distinguishes itself by offering such knowledge, and the religion spreads when people believe it to be true. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1, p. 302.

[65] Ibid., 302.

[66] Ibid., 308.

They would have been able to associate the Joseph of Matthew with the Joseph of Genesis, and clue in quickly to the notion of Joseph's interior disposition and the related dream movements in Matt 1:20–25 noted above. This first dream in Matt 1–2 may have set the stage for hearing the successive string of dreams in Matt 2:12, 13, 19 and 22—none of which has the narrative detail of Matt 1:20–25.

It needs to be noted that one other dream occurs in Matthew 27:19, and involves the wife of Pilate who sends word to Pilate telling him "to have nothing to do with Jesus because she has suffered much over him in a dream." This account also lacks the level of overall detail found in Matt 1:20–25. Beyond Matthew, the rest of the New Testament has few dream or vision accounts.[67]

Overall Matthew exercises a narrative economy with regard to dream presentation and description, and despite the more subtle reading, the author appears to be making a break from the more explicit dream presentations in ancient Jewish writings. The dreams in Matthew are not full dream renderings after the way of Genesis, Daniel and other writings such as Esdra and Enoch; nor are they, however, cast in a negative light like those seen in connection with the Babylonian exile.

Matthew 1:18–2:23

The break from fuller dream presentations in Jewish writings noted above may be, to an extent, because Matthew focuses on dreams as

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[67] See Paul's vision (ὅραμα) of a man of Macedon in Acts 16:9; an angel of God appears to Cornelius in a vision (ὅραμα) and instructs him to acquire Peter, in Acts 10:3–8; Peter has a "trance" (ἔκστασις) on the housetop and "saw the heaven opened," Acts 10:9–16; The Lord speaks to Paul in a vision (ὅραμα) in Acts 18:9–10, and "stood by him" [Paul] in Acts 23:11; 27:23. The experiences of Paul and Ananias in 9:3–17 have dream-like qualities also. Robert Gnuse may be correct to note that commentators generally perceive the New Testament, with its focus on the revelatory significance of Jesus Christ, is critical of dreams, and when dreams do appear, they are "clear auditory message dreams, for God must be understood clearly." Robert Gnuse, "Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives," 117.

part of the larger, narrative movement, in which dreams are inseparable from language experience. As a religion of "the book," early Christian cults relied on the written word—a particular media of communication embraced not only by early Christian cults, but Roman citizens, who were, as Michael Mann says, "obsessed with their language, its grammar, and its style, and with the connections of these to literacy and to historical texts dealing with the growth of Roman power. Hence also their concern with rhetoric, the art of communication and debate."[68] Matthew makes dreams part of the larger media of "proclaimed" (εὐαγγελίζω) salvation, using his dreams as rhetorical devices to establish relationship between the human and divine worlds within story narrative.[69] Dreams then become the location of religious meaning for the Matthean community, which is rooted in the Joseph traditions. In a similar way, Averil Cameron speaks of the narrative use of miracles as rhetorical devices which bring together the human and the divine in early Christian writings:

> Miracle, the suspension of normal laws of nature, is to be seen less as an example of "irrationality" or credulity than as an instance of the symbolic interface of human and divine: it functions as a rhetorical device to express what is otherwise inexpressible. In much the same way, parable … surprises by suspending normal expectation. It operates by telling—not

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[68] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1, p. 314. Mann notes the importance of writing as a means of communication within the infrastructure of the Roman Empire, including the channel made from the mosaic of villages, cites, tribes, and peoples on whom the Romans imposed their rule. Other channels include official, political-communications, the army, and most importantly for Christianity, the trading networks of the empire. Ibid., 310–11.

[69] Cf. Soares Prabhu's reference to dreams as "sophisticated literary genre," in *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew: An Enquiry into the Tradition History of Mt. 1–2* (AnBib 63, Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976): 187.

> through argument, but by revelation, through hidden meanings.[70]

The element of "surprise" in the Matthean dreams, where the story is suddenly broken by a dream epiphany, (and subsequently releases the particular narrative crisis),[71] creates a ("root") place of "interface between human and divine." "Word" becomes the media of narrative experience, as the dream account in Matt 1:20–25 draws hearers into divine-mortal interplay, to wrestle with, for example, the meaning of Joseph's discerning of the consequences of his wife's pregnancy; the meaning of the sudden disappearance of the Magi following the dream in 2:12; the significance of the clarity of the instructions to Joseph of dreams in 2:13 and 2:19; and the significance of the simple statement of warning of Joseph's dream in 2:22, which echoes the warning dream of the Magi in 2:12.

The dreams in Matthew sustain the child's "narrative existence" and therefore the development of the "divine mystery" in the waking (narrative) world. Matthean dreaming enables the duration of the child's existence, and at the conclusion of the final dream, Jesus' public ministry and his baptism are ready to begin (3:1ff). The divine secret in Matthew's dream accounts appear to "transform" as much in the waking world of the narrative text sustained by the series of dreams, as it does within the content of Joseph's dreams themselves. In a way, the narrative text takes on the role of (temple) *abaton*, and inner development occurs through the media of language, as opposed to actual temple *abaton*. Language has become the incubator of the healing entity, "Immanuel." The occurrences of dreams, signaled by the formulaic words, κατ' ὄναρ "according to a dream" (1:20; 2:12,13,19,22), provide the precise, narrative solution to ongoing crisis (Herod's threat), and ensure the life of the Christ Child. Set within narrative movements of birth,

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[70] Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 60.

[71] This may be indicative of a real-life crisis of some sort in the Matthean community. See, e.g., Weston La Barre, "The Dream Charisma, and the Culture-Hero" in the Ancient Near East" edited by G. E. Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, in *The Dream and Human Societies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966): 229–235.

rising, flight and return, the dreams of instruction and warning in Matt 1–2 make possible the survival, and subsequent maturation, of Jesus the "healer."

The text has what David Frankfurter calls "narrating power," something which he connects with the "ritual" of narrative in ancient Egypt as "a kind of instrumental praxis … because Egyptians had a highly nuanced sense of the power of the spoken word."[72] In his discussion on narrative (*historiola*), he refers to a Syriac healing spell based on much of the material in Matt 1:18–2. Although it does not include the dreams in these chapters, it evidences the ritual use of the annunciation and visitation stories for magico-religious purposes of bodily healing.[73]

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[72] David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Boston and Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001): 458. Schweizer says that Matt 1:18–20 represented an oral tradition, and that these verses would have been "repeated over and over again in the community." He notes the importance of the "words" of the dream account, and how "less and less emphasis is placed on the miraculous element in the appearance of an angel." Op. cit., 29, 31. Paul values the words of his gospel more than an angel from heaven (Gal 1:8; cf. 2 Cor 11:14). This emphasis on word and language as efficacious medium received attention in chapters 2 with the Greek magical papyri and Asclepius inscriptions, and Aristides. Trachtenberg notes the use of the words of Torah as charms in ancient Judaism. For example, the use of phylacteries with the text of Deuteronomy 6:9: "You shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates," occurred to protect one's home from evil spirits. During the Talmudic period one was recite certain Scriptures to off-set ominous dreams, and biblical verses were used to heal wounds and diseases, despite rabbinic opposition to such practice. The use of text as magical formulae would develop significantly in the Middle Ages. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 107. Trachtenberg presents a list of text prescriptions found in a fourteenth century manuscript work, *Sefer Gematriaot*: for a newly circumcised infant: Gen 48:20; to cure sterility: Deut 7:12; for consumption: Lev 15:28; to be invisible: Gen 19:11., etc. op. cit., 109–11.

[73] "Sardosht the prophet prophesied saying: A time will come, when they will see a star in the heavens having the likeness of a mother with a

On the one hand, therefore, the dreams in Matt 1–2 occur for the Matthean community as dream experiences, having explicit and implicit dream movements such as epiphany, revelation, liminality, interconnected with (post-)temple practices of sacrifice, and the Jewish-Hellenistic perceptions and uses of φύσις. On the other hand, the experience of dreams happen as part of language event—that is, the "narrating power" of proclaimed "word," so that dreams, and the larger story writing of which these dreams are part of, become a media of divine-human interplay. For the Matthean community, salvation/healing—the continued, sustaining and purposeful presence of deity in the life and movements of the dreamer in the waking world—occurs somewhere between, and as part of, these two foci of temple/φύσις, and word.

The story of Matthew (1–2) has as its underlying emphasis the ongoing presence of the Lord, who is active in (and author of) the socio-political and religious shifts occurring within the Matthean narrative. Dreaming becomes a means of participation in this active presence of "salvation history," as the Lord reveals his purposes

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son in her arms. The time came and they saw the star. Twelve kings set out from Persia to go to Jerusalem. They saw king Herod, who said to them: "From where do you come, and to where are you going?" They answered: "A king has been born in Bethlehem, and we have come to worship him." Then the star fell down in front of them; they went and worshipped the boy who had been born. They opened their treasure chests and brought him offerings: gold and myrrh and frankincense. They asked for a set of swaddling clothes; then they went to Persia, made a great fire, and threw the swaddling clothes of our Lord upon the fire. Before the swaddling clothes of our Lord the fire went out. In this manner may the [disease] go out and leave, and be plucked from the body of N.N. the son of N.N. and all the evil boils, (just) as the fire went out in the presence of the swaddling clothes of our Lord. Amen." Ibid., 461. Citation taken from Richard Gottheil, "References to Zoroaster in Syriac and Arabic Literature," *Classical Studies in Honor of Henry Drisler* (New York and London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 31, in Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, 2 vols. (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1938), 2.122–24 (#S19).

through dreams, and hearers and readers—along with Joseph—encounter that revealed purpose through dream-narrative events.

This kind of focus does not occur in the testimonies of the Asclepius cult. The Asclepius cult does not emphasize an abiding deity who is continuously active and present in the history of a particular people, or in the individual lives of his followers. Rather, Asclepius patrons visit the Asclepius temple to obtain a cure, and then depart to continue their daily (polytheistic) existence. Whereas the Asclepius cult and its temples are concerned with the physical healing of its patrons, the Matthean community has as its focus an interacting deity who enables and sustains a religio-social community. Within this primary focus, there is an interest toward the resources of one's interior life, and a valuation of the natural world and *materia* occur in Matthew. In this way the Asclepius cult and the Matthean community are similar. More will be said about the comparison between the Asclepius cult and early Christian sects in the course of the investigation, and in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5: THE PASSION OF PERPETUA

> Thanks be to God that I am happier here now than I was in the flesh. (*Martyrdom of Perpetua*, 12.7)

BACKGROUND

The four visions of Perpetua are thought to be actual recordings of an early second-century Christian martyr written during her imprisonment in a period of fourteen days prior to her execution.[1] She and one of her two brothers were catechumens of the Montanist African church, and Perpetua indicates that just prior to her imprisonment she received the rite of baptism (3.5):

> For a few days afterwards I gave thanks to the Lord that I was separated from my father, and I was comforted by his absence. During these few days I was baptized, and I was inspired by the Spirit not to ask for any other favor after the water but simply the perseverance of the flesh. A few days later we were lodged in the prison; and I was terrified, as I had never before been in such a dark hole. What a difficult time it was! With the crowed the heat was stifling; then there was the extortion of the solders; and to crown all, I was tortured with worry for my baby there (*Acts of Perpetua* 3.4–6).[2]

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[1] Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua* (Irving, Texas: University of Dallas, 1980): 9.

[2] The English translation used in this chapter is taken from Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1972). His is adapted from the critical edition of C. J. M. J. van Beek, *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Nijmegen, 1936): 1–62. Beek groups the nine MSS in the Latin recension into five families. An important Greek

The narrator (probably Tertullian) says that Perpetua was a newly married woman "of good family and upbringing" (2.1). She was about twenty-two years of age, and at the time had an infant son at the breast (2.2). The child was brought to her several times while she was in prison. No mention of her husband occurs in the tract.

The overall treatise consists of an introductory statement (chs. 1–2), Perpetua's visions (chs. 3–10), the visions of a young catechumen named Saturus, also imprisoned to be executed (chs. 11–13), and a conclusion (chs. 14–21). Perpetua's religious conviction and subsequent condemnation to the arena drew criticism from her father and sorrow from her close friends. The writing offers a glimpse into the community of the early African church, and it may represent an early third century, proto-Montanist document circulating within the Montanist circle of Tertullian himself.

THE FIRST DREAM VISION

***Transitus*, sacrifice, and preparation as dream motifs**

> Then my brother said to me: "Dear sister, you are greatly privileged; surely you might ask for a vision to discover whether you are to be condemned or freed."

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version exists also, extant in a single manuscript: H = codex Hierosolymitanus S. Sepulchri I. According to Musurillo, the Greek version is derived from the Latin original (p. xxvii). See also Jacqueline Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité: Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction …* (Paris, 1996). For the history of the text, see J. A. Robinson, *Texts and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, Vol 1 (Cambridge, 1891); and P. Franchi de Cavalieri, *La Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Rome, 1896). See also Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua* (Irving, Texas: University of Dallas, 1980): 4–5; Jacqueline Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité: Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction …* (Paris, 1996). For the history of the text, see J. A. Robinson, *Texts and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, Vol 1 (Cambridge, 1891); and P. Franchi de Cavalieri, *La Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Rome, 1896).

Faithfully I promised that I would, for I knew that I could speak with the Lord, whose great blessings I had come to experience. And so I said: "I shall tell you tomorrow." Then I made my request and this was the vision I had.

I saw a ladder of tremendous height made of bronze, reaching all the way to the heavens, but it was so narrow that only one person could climb up at a time. To the sides of the ladder were attached all sorts of metal weapons: there were swords, spears, hooks, daggers, and spikes; so that if anyone tried to climb up carelessly or without paying attention, he would be mangled and his flesh would adhere to the weapons.

At the foot of the ladder lay a dragon of enormous size, and it would attack those who tried to climb up and try to terrify them from doing so. And Saturus was the first to go up, he who was later to give himself up of his own accord. He had been the builder of our strength, although he was not present when we were arrested. And he arrived at the tip of the staircase and he looked back and said to me: "Perpetua, I am waiting for you. But take care; do not let the dragon bite you."

She said, "He will not harm me, in the name of Jesus Christ." Slowly as though he were afraid of me, the dragon stuck his head out from underneath the ladder. Then, using it as my first step, I trod on his head and went up.

Then I saw an immense garden, and in it a gray-haired man sat in shepherd's garb; he was tall, and milking sheep. And standing around him were many thousands of people clad in white garments. He raised his head, looked at me, and said: "I am glad you have come, my child."

He called me over to him and gave me, as it were, a mouthful of the milk he was drawing; and I took it into my cupped hands and consumed it. And all those who stood around said: "Amen!" At the sound of this word I came to, with the taste of something sweet still in my mouth. I at once told this to my brother, and we both realized that we would have to suffer,

> and that from now on we would no longer have any hope in this life. (*Acts of Perpetua* 4.1–10)[3]

Perpetua speaks of a "vision" (*visionem*, 4.1), although her comment at the end of the account that she "woke up" (*experrecta sum*) suggests that she had a night dream/vision.[4] The brother's words, "you are greatly privileged; surely you might ask for a vision to discover," acknowledges the existence of an "inner" knowledge to be accessed through a dreaming experience which holds the secret as to the plight of his sister. He encourages her to "ask" (*postules*) for a vision, thus specifying the practice of dream incubation, in which a patron enters sleep with the deliberate intention to acquire some kind of revelation. Here it is the knowledge of the future: whether or not Perpetua will die or be freed from imprisonment. The dire circumstances of Perpetua and her baby, and also the suffering of those close to Perpetua and who pity her, drive the incubation petition and experience (4.9). Unlike the Asclepius cult and other dreams, no reference to a temple setting occurs here.

As with other dreams considered in this study, Perpetua has a dream "experience." She refers to the *experta* of great blessings, and of being able to "speak to the Lord" (4.2), and her dream account has many of the movements which make up a dream experience. The account suggests that she made her request (*postulaui*, prayed?) for a vision, slept and had a dream, and reported the content of her dream to her brother "the next day" (4.2).

Perpetua's reference to a "bronze ladder of tremendous height reaching all the way to the heavens" relates the *transitus* from the material world to the spiritual world. The ladder facilitates progressive (step-by-step) movement into an "inner knowing" of the dream revelation (cf. Apuleius' Isis cult initiation), which will consist of the partaking of a portion of milk (4.8). The dream experience thus entails a bringing to (higher) consciousness some inner knowledge within her unconscious.

The passage from earth to heaven has dangers and is fraught with difficulty. The very narrow dimensions of the ladder constrict

[3] Herbert Musurillo, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 111–12.

[4] Cf. 4.10; 7.9; 8.4; 10.13.

and intensify any movement upon the ladder. Metal weapons—swords, spears, hooks, daggers and spikes—are attached to the sides of the ladder and will mangle and catch the flesh of anyone who tries "to climb up carelessly or without paying attention" (4.3). Only one person can climb the ladder. It must be done with extreme concentration and deliberation, and there can be no turning back or looking back (cf. Lot's wife). The climb must be done alone, without the help of another:

> I saw a ladder of tremendous height made of bronze, reaching all the way to the heavens, but it was so narrow that only one person could climb up at a time. To the sides of the ladder were attached all sorts of metal weapons: there were swords, spears, hooks, daggers, and spikes; so that if anyone tried to climb up carelessly or without paying attention, he would be mangled and his flesh would adhere to the weapons. (*Acts of Perpetua* 4.3–4)[5]

The dream entails a (rite of) passage which is perilous, demanding, and dangerous.[6] It takes very seriously the potential dangers of bringing to consciousness the workings of the unconscious life of Perpetua—a phenomenon considered above in Chapter Two where taking knowledge from the more sublime regions of human beings may or may not exact a penalty.

As one who "was later to give himself up of his own accord" (4.5), Saturus appears to have a *sacrificial role* in the dream. He is first

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[5] Herbert Musurillo, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 111. Cf. the singularity and "immediacy" of dream experiences of Isis, Aristides, and Joseph.

[6] Cf. Zosimos' vision of fifteen steps which facilitate a process of spiritualization of the dreamer who is transformed from a lower to higher state of consciousness. See Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 90ff. According to von Franz, the imagery of ascending steps has its origins in ancient Egyptian mysteries and the planetary spheres through which the posthumous soul journeys to the deity. Additionally, the Mithraic mysteries relates a *klimax heptapylos*, which entails ascent by means of a stair with seven gates through the metals of the seven planets (lead, iron, mercury, and alloy for Venus, silver, gold). See von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua*, 16–17.

to climb the ladder, before Perpetua's own progression takes place. At the top of the ladder he looks back to Perpetua and the lower world, tells her that he is waiting for her, and warns her: "Do not let the dragon bite you" (4.4). Perpetua writes:

> Saturus was the first to go up, he who was later to go give himself up for his own accord. He had been the builder of our strength, although he was not present when we were arrested. And he arrived at the tip of the staircase and he looked back and said to me: "Perpetua, I am waiting for you. But take care; do not let the dragon bite you." (*Acts of Perpetua* 4.4)

The figure of Saturus accepts willingly the immanence of the torturous ladder (martyrdom), and in this way readies Perpetua who is earth-bound to accomplish her own *transitus*. The dream is "preparing" Perpetua to come to terms with the reality of her fate in the waking world—that is, her execution in the amphitheater which is only days away. As von Franz suggests, Saturus represents a strong, proactive (and un-lived) masculine aspect of the dreamer (Perpetua's "animus"), somehow coming into focus in the dream, and giving her impetus, instructions and direction toward the reception of a higher state of being.

Subduing the dragon

Perpetua's reliance on the "word"—*Non me nocebit, in nomine Iesu Christi* ("He will not harm me, in the name of Jesus Christ")—protects her from the treacherous bite of the dragon, and subdues the dragon which slowly, as if afraid of Perpetua, sticks out its head from underneath the ladder. The dragon serves Perpetua's purpose of ascent, and provides her with the initial step toward the heavenly sphere: "Then, using it as my first step, I trod on his head and went up" (4.7). The imagery recalls Genesis 3:15, where it is declared that Eve and her offspring will crush the head of the serpent.[7] It also relays the strong dualistic perceptions between good and evil

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[7] Cf. Isa 27:1, "leviathan … the dragon that is in the sea."

characteristic of the Montanist religion with which she is possibly associated.[8]

In antiquity, the serpents may also represent "regeneration." The sinuous, chthonic imagery of the serpent, bound to the earth, renders an instinctive, "nature-spirit" quality, as depicted in a fresco of this Perpetua vision in the Roman catacombs, in which the serpent resides amidst a cornfield, out of which ascends the ladder.[9] The serpent symbolizes an earth spirit of fertility—something found also in the Egyptian death and resurrection deities of vegetation such as Attis, Osiris, Adonis, and the Phrygian Papas.[10] It was seen with the Asclepius cult that the serpent marks, directs and symbolizes the presence and temple of the god Asclepius. Some instances of cures from the bite of a serpent appear in the Asclepius testimonies,[11] and it was seen in chapter one that pits filled with serpents were next to the Asclepius temple altar.[12]

As an earth-sprit, the dragon represents Perpetua's own, instinctive will to live in the waking world; and it is this which she subdues and steps upon in order to ascend the ladder to a higher realm. This act of conquest finds parallels with Isis' struggle with the angel Amnael in the Isis to Horus alchemical text (above),[13] and

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[8] Herbert Musurillo, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxvi. See also the conflict with the dragon in Rev. 12.3ff.

[9] Fernand Cabrol, editor, *Dictionannaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1907): Vol. II, col. 151, and also under "Balbina."

[10] Von Franze, *The Passion of Perpetua*, 23. Cf. Number 21.9, Moses places a bronze snake on a pole, and anyone who had been bitten by a snake and looked upon the image was healed. Possibly the Saviour-serpent was a symbol of Christ. Ibid., 22.

[11] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 966, no. 121–125 [second half of the fourth century BCE]. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, p. 233.

[12] See Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Corinth: A Guide to the Asklepieion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[13] Like the Asclepius cult, the Isis cult practiced incubation healing, and it is not unlikely that early Christians in Egypt participated in these incubation practices and Isis worship—something which in late antiquity Cyril of Alexandria (fifth century CE) objects to and seeks to undermine.

the great sea monster symbolizing the anti-Christ in the Shepherd Hermas. Perpetua may have been familiar with both sources, which were extant during her life.

Whether or not the early Christian church perceived the serpent in regenerative terms is unclear. Von Franz argues that this dream of Perpetua reflects African Christianity's break from this earth-god association. The ladder from earth to heaven relates Perpetua's renunciation of the mortal, earth-world, and there can be no turning back. She writes:

> In this connection the dragon clearly appears as the symbol for an "unconscious nature-spirit," as "the wisdom of the earth"; and therefore, seen from the Christian standpoint, it represents at the same time the Pagan conception of the world in which experiences of the Deity, or of the spirit, were projected into the material reality of the world. In antiquity, man experienced the Deity through a feeling of being gripped and moved by the phenomena of nature: in the rustling of the Dodonean oaks, in the murmuring of a fountain in the starry heavens and the glow of the rising son. In these he saw the manifestations of the highest power. This form of experience, however, had obviously become unsatisfying, even destructive, and as the dream shows it had to be "surmounted" rather than overcome … Consequently in the vision, the dragon stands for the danger of slipping back into the old Pagan spiritual attitude, out of which the ladder shows the way to a higher consciousness.[14]

In his discussion on the incubation shrine at Menouthis, not far from Alexandria, John McGuckin writes: "The Isis cult was renowned among all the ancient Mysteries for the warmth of its iconography and spirituality, its mystical as well as great magical appeal, and also for its extremely liberal syncretism. Allied with this, the celebration of splendidly arranged liturgical processions and rituals, its special appeal to women, and the provision of a healing cult, must have made Menouthis a pilgrimage site to rival the attractions of St. Mark's basilica, even for Christians." See John Anthony McGuckin, "The Influence of the Isis Cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology," *Studia Patristica*, Vol. 24 (1993): 293.

[14] Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua*, 23–24.

Von Franz is rather sweeping in her comment. She makes a broad distinction between what she calls "Christian" and "Pagan," and she speaks of a "Christian standpoint," as if early Christianity was of a unified consensus, as opposed to a variety of early Christian cults. However, the strong contrast between earth and heaven in the vision, coupled with the reference to the abyss of separation in Perpetua's second vision (below), seems to point toward a *differentiation* from the "bodily, instinctive" world by early Montanist Christianity in second century CE Africa. Such movement contrasts the deliberate and ritual embrace of the earth and its resources by the Asclepius cult. More will be said about this below.

Implicit within the strong contrast between earth and the transcendent realm is the *resistance* of Perpetua (and her community) to the "world" which she is leaving behind and to which her father vehemently wants her to return:

> While we were still under arrest my father out of love for me was trying to persuade me and shake my resolution. "Father," I said, "do you see this vase here, for example, or waterpot or whatever?" "Yes, I do," he said. And I told him: "Could it be called by any other name than what it is?" And he said: "No." "Well, so too I cannot be called anything other than what I am, a Christian." At this my father was so angered by the word "Christian" that he moved towards me as though he would pluck my eyes out. But he left it at that and departed, vanquished along with his diabolical arguments. (3.1–3)

Perpetua's refusal to cede to her father's passionate request that she renounce her Christian ways (cf. her father's tearful imploring in 5.1ff) appears to relate what Vincent L. Wimbush refers to, in the context of discussion regarding ascetic impulse, as a "critical attitude of resistance, a refusal to orient the body, language, indeed the self in the world in traditional or socially acceptable ways."[15] The

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[15] Vincent L. Wimbush, "The Ascetic Impulse in Early Christianity: Some Methodological Challenges," *Studia Patristica*, Vol. 25 (1993): 467. See also his essay entitled, "… Not of This World …: Early Christianity as Rhetorical and Social Formation," in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Collo-*

martyrdom of Perpetua and her cohorts represent a radical opposition to the world which entails a giving over of the body as an ultimate sacrifice in the community's battle for self-definition.[16] The African church was one of many early Christian groups in the process of social (re)formation—one of many movements responding to a "loss of world" in the ancient Mediterranean world. Wimbush notes:

> In comparative-sociological-historical perspective Christianity is not viewed as a unique phenomenon. With respect to the ascetic impulse, it can be viewed as one of many movements having their origins in a period in which "loss of world", some degree of alienation from and critique of world, was not uncommon across many different cultural divisions. The whole of the period from the first millennium BCE through late antiquity is especially significant for such an interest. This period was first designated the "Axial Age" by Karl Jaspers; it has since been taken up by others and further discussed and explained. It is a period characterized by the critique and eventual rupture of the traditional, static "holistic" societies and aristocratic empires of antiquity. The critique was inspired by the "transcendent visions" of group elites. Such visions reflected the conceptual and existential tension that obtained between the traditional order and the Other that was imagined, and eventually led to such a critical evaluation of traditions that they inspired a devaluation and renunciation of the world.[17]

Perpetua's martyrdom in the arena makes "concrete" the subjugation of and break from the serpent—that is, her attachment to the earth and all that represents: motherhood, family devotion, ties to her father, and the "world" values and traditions bonding those things in her waking twenty-one years. So beckoning and poignant is this world that Perpetua cannot look back, as she transcends the ladder, lest she be swallowed up by the pull of that world. At the

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quium Honoring Burton L. Mack, edited by Elizabeth Castelli and Hal Taussig (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996): 23–36.

[16] Cf. Wimbush, "The Ascetic Impulse," 465.

[17] Wimbush, "The Ascetic Impulse," 465–66.

core of the dream there exists an inner resistance to the world below, and the (heroic) task/journey requires the differentiation from its mass by the dreamer through the personal and singular ascent into the "transcendent vision" of the new world of the immense garden, shepherd, white robes and sweet milk. In this way the *materia* of the waking world has itself propagated into "otherness," not unlike the philosopher's stone yielded from the refining process of crude material (but distinct from a Roman notion of the "participation" of vegetation in the deification of Augustus).[18] A "spiritualization" of plant, mineral and animal *materia* occurs as these things are caught up and themselves "transformed" by and within the early Christian (re)imagining of *terminus*—that is, the top of the bronze ladder.

The martyr/prison dream of Perpetua thus gives imagistic expression to and experience of "alienation from the world," and rebodies the visioning of another world void of dragons and replete with nurturing and regeneration. It catches up a spirit (ecstasy) of martyrdom found in also in the history and writings of ancient Israel,[19] and in the lives and writings of early Christian figures such as Ignatius of Antioch.[20]

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[18] See above, Auria Agusti.

[19] This "loss of world" and its core quality of resistance in Perpetua's dreams to yield the self to "the world" has resonance with events in Jewish history such as the Babylonian exile, the Maccabean revolt and the literature which issues from these conflicts. Nearer the time of Perpetua there occurs the Roman siege of the Masada fortress in 73 CE, where the Jews inside the fortress martyr themselves by committing a mass suicide, rather than surrender to Roman troops. For post-exilic texts see social reforms of the Book of Ezra (chs. 9–2) and Nehemiah, read in light of Daniel L. Smith, "The Politics of Ezra: Sociological Indicators of Postexilic Judaean Society," edited by P. R. Davies, in *Second Temple Studies 1: Persian Period* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991). For Maccabean texts see H. Anderson, trans, 3 Maccabees, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985); H. Anderson, trans, 4 Maccabees, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985). For Masada see Josephus, *The Jewish War* III.70–109; VII.252–408, translated by H. St. J.

Thackery, LCL (1927.); Christopher Hawkes, "The Roman Siege of Masada," *Antiquity*, vol 3 (1929): 195–213; Yael Zerubavel, "The Fall of Masada," in *Collective Memory and Recovered Roots: the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994.)

[20] Ignatius of Antioch, an early second century CE figure, also chose not to participate in the ways of the world, and offered himself as a sacrifice to the beasts in the arena at Rome. It is uncertain what happened in Syria to result in Ignatius' crisis and martyrdom. See William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985): 3–7; Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Epistles of Ignatius," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 384–5. Like Perpetua, he has a radical resistance to his immediate world-circumstances—including those who care for him (cf. Perpetua's father, *Acts of Perpetua*, 5) and don't want him to go through with his martyrdom: "Grant me nothing more than that I be poured out to God, while an altar is still ready, that forming yourselves in a chorus of love, you may sing to the Father in Christ Jesus, that God has vouchsafed that the bishop of Syria shall be found at the setting of the sun, having fetched him from the sun's rising. It is good to set to the world towards God, that I may rise to him" (*Ignatius to the Romans* 2). Ignatius longs for the teeth of the beasts, that he might have the ecstasy of death and enter into the higher realm. Although his letters do not contain dream-visions per se, there are sections which are ecstatic in tone. To the Romans he writes: "I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread of Christ. Rather, entice the wild beasts that they may become my tomb, and leave no trace of my body, that when I fall asleep I be not a burden to any. Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not even see my body. Beseech Christ on my behalf, that I may be found a sacrifice through these instruments" (*Ignatius to the Romans* 4). Cf. *Ig. to Ro.*. 6. In his letter to the Ephesians Ignatius interprets the mystery of the nativity of Jesus in Matt 2, and the shining of the star, "with the sun and moon gathered in chorus around this star … and all magic was dissolved …" (*Ign. to Eph.*, 19). He writes his letters in strong dualistic language which set up an oppositional view of the world and those who live in it. Cf. the Johannine literature and what Vincent L. Wimbush refers to as the language and rhetoric of "*kosmos*-opposition"—that is, opposition to all outsiders ("… Not of This World …," 31). Believers live under the rule of the bishop in "harmony and in prayer with

one another" (*Trall.* 12). Believers are to "stand firm as an anvil which is smitten." To Polycarp he writes: "Do not let those that appear to be plausible, but teach strange things, overthrow you. Stand firm as an anvil which is smitten. The task of great athletes is to suffer punishment and yet conquer. But especially must we endure all things for the sake of God, that he also may endure us. Mark the seasons. Wait for him who is above seasons, timeless, invisible, who for our sakes became visible, who cannot be touched, who cannot suffer, who for our sakes accepted suffering, who in every way endured for our sakes" (*Ignatius to Polycarp* 3). Believers are also to shun non-believers such as heretics and those who "interpret Judaism" (*Phil.* 6). He vilifies such groups, and identifies them with the "prince of this world." There is to be no association between believers and non-believers: "… unless they speak of Jesus Christ, [they] are to me tombstones and sepulchres of the dead, on whom only names of persons are written. Flee then from the wicked arts and snares of the prince of this world, lest you be afflicted by his device, and grow weak in love; but come all together with undivided heart" (*Phil.* 6). Cf. *Eph.* 7, 16; *Magn.* 5, 8, 11; *Trall.* 6, 10–11; *Phil.* 2, 6; *Smyrn.* 4, 6–7; *Pol.* 3) and the "Prince of this world" (*Eph.* 17; *Magn.* 1; *Trall.* 8; *Rom.* 7). Cf. dualistic imagery in Perpetua's dream-visions: the dragon which she subdues in her first vision (4), and the Egyptian whom she battles in her fourth vision (10). Ignatius's letters become a media of social formation and definition for the Syrian Church around the central role of the bishop (*Eph.* 3–6; *Magn.* 4, 6; *Trall.* 2; 7; *Phld.* 8; *Smyrn.* 8–9). Couched in an ecstatic expression of transcendent, "otherworldliness" (Vincent L. Wimbush, "… Not of This World …," 26). Ignatius, as Perpetua, anticipates the imminent judgment of his god, in behalf of whom he is going to have himself killed. (Self) sacrifice, vision/ecstasy, and discourse (*Acts of Perpetua*, Letters of Ignatius, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees) combine to create a strategically powerful, evocative form of religio-political resistance and community self-definition. What Bernard Siegel refers to as "defense structuring." Quotation taken from Daniel L. Smith, "The Politics of Ezra," 84. For further discussion, see Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991); Harry O. Maier, "The Charismatic Authority of Ignatius of Antioch: a Sociological Analysis." *Studies in Religion.* 18/2 (Spring 1989): 185–99; Wayne A. Meeks, "Loving and Hating the World," in *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993); Rene Girard, *The scapegoat* (Baltimore:

According to Ignatius, Christians are also to shun non-believers such as heretics and those who "interpret Judaism."[21] He vilifies such groups, and identifies them with the "prince of this world."

Like Perpetua, Ignatius also experienced a "loss of world," a world which he casts in radically opposite terms, and which he rejects for another world(-vision). Like Perpetua, he has a radical resistance to his immediate world-circumstances—including those who care for him[22]—and want him not to go through with his martyrdom. His letters show how self-sacrifice, vision/ecstasy, and discourse combine to create a strategically powerful, evocative form of religio-political resistance and community self-definition—what Bernard Siegel refers to as "defense structuring."

Dreams become powerful media for the social formation of the early African church and its resistance to and critique of the waking world which has come to afford no nurturing or regeneration, and from which Perpetua is distinguishing herself in her dreams and in the terror of the waking world and her execution. Her dream brings to consciousness this process of differentiation and shows her what it is she yearns for and receives, and in this way it has a constituting, healing force. She wakes and knows that she will be martyred, but the interpretation evokes no evidence of disquietude or disturbance in her (as one should expect!). Rather, her words to her father following the vision suggest a sense of resolution come from the dream experience, and she is ready to meet her fate:

> A few days later there was a rumor that we were going to be given a hearing. My father also arrived from the city, worn with worry, and he came to see me with the idea of persuading me … I tried to comfort him saying: "It will all happen in the prisoners dock as God wills; for you may be sure that we are

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John Hopkins University Press, 1986); Susan Mizruchi, *The science of sacrifice: American lit and modern* (1998); Judith Perkins, "The 'Self' as Sufferer," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 84, no. 3 (1992): 245–72.

[21] *Phil.* 6.

[22] Cf. Perpetua's father, *Acts of Perpetua*, 5.

> not left to ourselves but are all in his power. (*Acts of Perpetua* 5.1, 6)

The four qualities of Perpetua's experience

As seen in other dreams above, Perpetua's dream is rooted in bodily experiences (sight, taste, consumption, hearing, cupping of hands, and "flesh"). Other dream experience movements seen above appear here also. The ladder suspended between earth and heaven represents "liminality"—an in-between state accentuated by Perpetua's hesitation to climb the rungs to the top.[23] The imagery of the bronze ladder, garden setting, and the sweet milk the dream imagery includes a range of natural sources (mineral, plant, and animal), and points to the significance of the natural sources for the dreamer and her world.

In her dream Perpetua undergoes a "transformative" experience in which she moves from a lower level to a higher level of being. The graded, methodical movement of her progression, determined by the constricting, step-by-step ladder which she ascends, underscores the theme of "preparation" noted in other dreams above in this investigation, in which the initiate is "prepared" to receive the divine revelation. Only after a succession of struggles with the angel did Isis receive the divine formula, and Aristides, after going through the ritual preparations of temple incubation, had to struggle with Asclepius in his dream before he was ready to receive the inner knowing which he could not fully explain the Asclepius temple assistant upon waking.

The dream does not occur as media of divine, salvific initiative in the human world by which the subject, and those associated with her, are kept from harm's way and thus sustained to progress in the

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[23] For a foundational, anthropological discussion on liminality, see V. W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Harmonsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), which builds from the work of Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1908), and explores transactional rituals and the symbolism of the liminal state—an ambiguous state in which the initiate is thought of as an embryo or a newborn infant, or thought of as "dead." Turner develops *Ritual Process* from his earlier paper entitled, "Betwixt and Between (1967: 93–111).

waking world. On the contrary, Perpetua's dream reveals the inevitable destruction to come both to herself and Saturus. However, the dream also reveals that this destruction is to be followed by a higher state of being, and so it points to, in the end, Perpetua's rebirth[24] into the thousands clad in white in heaven. In this way, the dream gives a message of ongoing sustenance—although here it roots itself in an imagistic setting beyond the waking world. The final vision scene in heaven symbolizes a return to the garden of Eden, representative of human happiness and fulfillment, and in this way the dream embodies and "re-contextualizes" the notion of salvation and human "prosperity" in the waking world seen above in, for example, Jacob's ladder dream at the Bethel sanctuary (Gen 28:10–18), in which Jacob receives the divine revelation: he will have land, fertility and divine guidance in the waking world. Again, this contrasts the Asclepius' cult focus on immediate, bodily healing. As with Matthew 1–2, Perpetua's dream does not aim toward the healing of the body and the relief of physical suffering in the waking world. Rather, bodily suffering becomes the means of an "inner knowing" connected with the non-waking, envisioned world.

As noted above, Perpetua takes the initiative to obtain revelation, and in her dream both the sleeping and waking worlds have "non-secretive," public settings. She dreams as one of a larger community which includes her brother—one of several close relations to Perpetua—who encourages her incubation initiative and experience, and to whom she immediately relates the content and interpretation of her dream. Within the dream itself Saturus, a shepherd and "thousands of people clad in white," appear alongside Perpetua. This motif of public, community orientation with regard to dreams and dreaming contrasts the themes of secrecy seen in Matthew 1–2, the magical papyri, and the Isis cult, and to some extent Aristides' wormwood dream.

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[24] Thus the partaking of milk? Cf. 1 Pet 2:2: "… as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the world, that you may grow: if it be so that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious"; see also Heb 5:12, 1 Cor 3:2. The *Odes of Solomon* refers to milk as a divine *materia* given to the world (*Ode*. 29).

Perpetua has a dream-vision which makes known to her the course her life will take. Both she and her brother realize that the dream experience relates the martyrdom to come in the waking world: "that we would have to suffer, and that from now on we would no longer have any hope in this life" (4.10). The dream then anticipates Perpetua's execution, which is perceived as a ritual passage into a higher state of being.

Perpetua's dream has a "testimony" form of expression which is similar to the Asclepius cult incubation testimonies, and quite unlike the narrative presentation of the dreams and dream figure of Joseph in Matthew 1–2. The emotional, searching quality of Perpetua's dream-vision relates some real-life trauma experience. This contrasts Matthew's "literary" presentation of Joseph's dreams, which require a careful hearing of textual nuances by the Matthean community in order to apprehend their full meaning. As noted above, the sense that dreams take place as a function of language experience does not occur with Perpetua's dreams, as it does in Matthew—although the importance of the demonstrative use of spoken "word" does occur, as noted above.

THE OTHER VISIONS OF PERPETUA

The ladder dream of Perpetua represents one of four visions she experiences during this fourteen day time period prior to her death. She tells of a second night "showing" (*nocte ostensum*) in which she saw her young brother Dinocrates coming out of a dark hole with many others, all of whom are dirty, thirsty and pale. He has a wound from a facial cancer which killed him at the age of seven. The dream suggests Perpetua's deep feelings and inner imagery around his disturbing death. She speaks of a great abyss between herself and her brother which kept them apart, and there was a pool full of water which Dinocrates was unable to drink because he could not reach his mouth the tall height of the rim. In the dream Perpetua beheld her brother in a state of physical suffering.

The reference to the abyss in Perpetua's dream has parallels in Luke 16:19–32, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and may relay a notion of what is perceived by the early African Christians

to be the imminence of the "last days"—something the writer of Perpetua's martyrology notes in section one.[25] As in Perpetua's first vision, with the dangerous, constricting ladder stretching the abyss from earth to heaven, there can be no turning back. The imagery of the underworld may presage the later (seventh century) Christian belief and conceptions of "purgatory"—that is, the place where the dead prepare for entry into heaven. Possibly the story content and imagery circulated in some original source among the early Christian cults.[26] Moved with sorrow for her brother, Perpetua prays for her brother "day and night with tears and sighs" that his suffering should end (7.10). It may be that her brother committed some offense against the church and/or his baptism prior to his death.[27]

In a third vision (*ostensum*) Perpetua again sees her brother, but he was "all clean, well dressed, and refreshed" (8.1). His face-wound has healed, and the level of the rim of the pool of water is lower so that he can drink from it freely. She notes the placement of a golden bowl full of water above the rim of the pool of water, and how Dinocrates "drew close and began to drink from it, and yet the bowel remained full" (8.4). Von Franz notes how the golden bowel imagery calls up ancient alchemical motifs. The vessel of Hermes was perceived to be consubstantial with its contents. In the Hermetic treatise *The Crater*, it is told how God created the universe, filled a vessel (baptismal font) with Nous, and sent it down into the waking world where people could dip themselves in it and receive a share of "consciousness" or enlightenment.[28] In the ancient alchemical writing, the *Treatise of Comarius to Cleopatra*, holy waters descend to penetrate and waken the dead who are prostrate,

[25] The author quotes from Acts 2:17–18, paraphrasing the prophet Joel 2:28: "In the last days, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and their sons and daughters shall prophesy …"

[26] Cf. the Book of Enoch, which depicts an underworld having a dark place for sinners, and a light place in the middle in which there is a bright spring of water (Ch. 22).

[27] See St. Augustine, *De origine animae* 1.12. See also the vision of drinking water in the *Martyrdom of Marian and James* 6.13–15 as symbolic of the acceptance of martyrdom and its grace.

[28] See Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, pp.405ff.

chained and crushed in the darkness of Hades. The spirit clothes them in divine and spiritual glory, and they come out of the earth. The text continues:

> … they array themselves in light and glory; in that they had increased in accordance with nature, and their figures had been transformed, and they had arisen from sleep, and had come forth from Hades. The body of the fire had given them birth … and as they came forth from it they clothed themselves in glory, and it [the body of fire] brought them complete oneness, and the image was fulfilled through body, soul and spirit, and became one.[29]

As a fundamental element of the natural world, water had meaning as a symbol of rebirth and new life, and Perpetua's vision makes clear reference to this meaning embodied in the renewal of Perpetua's brother, having drunk enough of the water, "he began to play as children do" (8.4a).[30]

Visions 2–3 together relate at their core bodily suffering and the relief of that suffering. On the one hand, Dinocrates appears in a sordid, degenerating state, unable to partake of the re-creative essence of the pool of water. Perpetua understands her prayers in the waking world on behalf of her dead brother to have caused his resuscitation in the underworld, and he has continued access to the water of the pool and of the golden bowl which gives him health and bodily healing. His partaking of the water, facilitated by Perpetua's intercession on his behalf, readies Dinocrates for his reception beyond the confines of the early Christian notion of Purgatory.

As in the first dream, imagery consists of specific kinds of *materia* (water, golden bowl; cf. the bronze ladder, vegetation, and sheep's milk) which are perceived to have a significant role in the transformation experience. In the dream the underworld or place of pre-entry into the higher world gives both dreams a sense of "liminality." However, no notion of "epiphany" occurs. Both dreams make known Perpetua's inner need for resolution regarding

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[29] M. Berthelot, *Collection*, Vol II, p. 297.

[30] Cf. the vision of Saturus, which concludes similarly: "Then the elders said to us: 'Go and play'" (12.6).

her brother's difficult death, and address Perpetua's inner disturbance with a sense a final "resolve." According to the dream revelation, her brother has received nourishment and healing. He is well, and a sense of burden has lifted from Perpetua through these dream experiences.

Again, Perpetua's dreams occur in inextricable relation with the body and body experiences (thirst, tears, wound, scar, etc.). This relationship will continue in her fourth and final vision just prior to her actual martyrdom by beasts in the amphitheater. In this dream she has physical battle with an Egyptian (*contra me Aegyptius*, 10.6), whose head she steps upon in an act of victory (10.11). The motif of transformation is quite strong in the vision, in which Perpetua "suddenly was a man" (*facta sum masculus*, 10.7). Another figure in the dream—"a man of marvelous stature"—wears sandals "wondrously made of gold and silver, and he carried a wand like an athletic trainer and a green branch on which there were golden apples" (10.8). This strong, animus figure has a detached, but somewhat heroic role, in that he can both kill and give life. If the Egyptian wins the contest, the tall man will slay her with a sword. If she wins the battle against the Egyptian, the tall man will give to her a branch of golden apples.

The contest results in Perpetua's ceremonial reception of the golden apples (divine secret?) from the trainer, and her progression to towards the "Gate of Life" (*portam Sanauiuariam* [10.13]).[31] With this fourth vision once more the accomplishment of a higher consciousness occurs as Perpetua, through her victory, transcends the earth realm. Plant and mineral sources participate in this event of differentiation, and presage the ripe world of afterlife which she has won:

> The crowd began to shout and my assistants started to sing psalms. Then I walked up to the trainer and took the branch [with golden apples]. He kissed me and said to me: "Peace be

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[31] Victorious gladiators, and those in the arena whom the people spared, exited this gate, named Porta Sanavivaria. Dead combatants were carried out through the Porta Libitinensis, of Gate of Libitina. Herbert Musurillo, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 119, n.12.

> with you, my daughter!" I began to walk in triumph towards the Gate of Life. Then I awoke. I realized that it was not with wild animals that I would fight but with the Devil, but I knew that I would win the victory. (*Acts of Perpetua* 10.14–15)

According to her interpretation, the Egyptian, whose head Perpetua steps upon,[32] does not represent her instinctive, earth-bound nature. Rather, he symbolizes *diabolum*—described by her as a *foedus specie*—"foul, horrible sight" [10.6]. Von Franz interprets the Egyptian to symbolize the powerful wisdom of the land and religion of ancient Egypt, which the African Church rejects and vilifies.[33] The radically oppositional imagery in Perpetua's dream may also relate an inner response to the (waking-world) racial-color differences in antiquity,[34] so that in her dreams, Perpetua perceives the Egyptian as "otherness," and upon waking, calls him "Satan." A mix of socio-cultural differences interact on an unconscious level, and brings, according to Perpetua's testimony, an awareness of her fate and imminent execution.

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[32] In the dream she overcomes him and "steps on his head," recalling a similar scene in the first vision, when she steps on the head of the serpent.

[33] Von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua*, 50.

[34] Vincent L. Wimbush, "Ascetic Behavior and Color-Ful Language: Stories About Ethiopian Moses," in *Discursive Foundations, Ascetic Piety and Interpretation of Early Christian Literature, Part 2*, Semeia 58 (Atlanta:, Scholars Press, 1992): 86. Gay Byron examines the ways ancient Christian writers perceived Egyptians in negative terms. She writes: "Within the postapostolic writings such as *The Epistle of Barnabus* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* μέλας was used as a color referent to indicate the evil within the world that should be avoided … Among the church fathers, Blacks as well as Egyptians and Ethiopians served as ethnic tropes within the writings. Both Tertullian and Origen used Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Blacks to symbolize the sins of the early church and the vices that caused one to stray from faith." Gay Lyne Byron, "Egyptians, Ethiopians, Blacks, and Blackness In Ancient Christian Literature: A History of Taxonomy of Ethno-Political Rhetorics" (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1999): 204–5. See also her publication, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002).

A "savior" epiphany figure does not occur in this vision. Rather, Perpetua's own initiative and inner resources (her contest with the Egyptian) gain her the "prize." Emphasis lies more upon the dreamer's own resourcefulness and bravery in these dreams, as opposed to an intervening deity acting in behalf of the dreamer, as seen in the dreams of Isis, Joseph, and Aristides. The notion of bodily suffering and healing does not take place here, as it does in the other visions.

The early Christian concept of after-life

The motif of "nurture" (regeneration), prevalent in chapter 2 of Perpetua's martyrdom and Perpetua's mothering of her baby, occurs in the scene of heaven (4.8):

> Then I saw an immense garden, and in it a gray-haired man sat in shepherd's garb; he was tall, and milking sheep. And standing around him were many thousands of people clad in white garments. He raised his head, looked at me, and said: "I am glad you have come, my child." He called me over to him and gave me, as it were, a mouthful of milk he was drawing; and I took it into my cupped hands and consumed it. And all those who stood around said: "Amen!" (4.8)

The scene centers around the figure of a shepherd drawing "milk" from a sheep. This is the first time in this investigation that *animal materia* has occurred, although the magical papyri spells often include animal products in recipes, in addition to plant and minerals. A life-giving source essential for the development of newborn offspring, milk appears to signal "new birth." Perpetua has come into at a new state of being which is quite distinct from that below. Possibly, Perpetua's dream signifies an early Christian Eucharist ritual and the use of milk rather than wine and bread. Her receiving of the milk in cupped hands (*iunctis manibus*), and the choral response at her consumption of the sacred *materia* ("Amen!"), underscores the ritual nature of the dream movement.[35] The scene of many

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[35] For the drinking of milk after baptism, see Tertullian, *De corona* 3.3.

thousands of people clad in white garments relates a ritual imagery similar to that of Aristides' wormwood dream experience. Apuelius also relates such a scene in his ritual initiation into the Isis cult. The scene of the "immense" garden (*immensum horti*) echoes the image of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:4b–20.

Perpetua's vision of the immense garden surely represents an early Christian perception of the afterlife. A similar imagery appears in the vision of Saturus (following Perpetua's' fourth vision) in sections 11–12, consists of a garden—one "with rose bushes and all manner of flowers. The trees were as tall as cypresses, and their leaves were constantly falling" (11.4). According to the dream experience, the garden was an open area which faced east, "free of the world," and had an intense light (*lucem inmensam*, 11.2–4). Saturus, Perpetua and many other martyrs there are sustained by a "most delicious odor that seemed to satisfy us" (13.10). Saturus' visions have ample associations with the natural world—rose bushes and flowers, cypresses and falling leaves, intense light—interactive with sacred imagery and ritual. Physical sensations such as smell, sight, hearing ("sound of voices in unison chanting endlessly: 'Holy, holy, holy!'"),[36] touch, and a kiss interact with a ritual worship of the aged man by angels and martyrs.

The central figure of the shepherd in Perpetua's vision as one who cares for the well-being of the flock represents an early Christian symbol of Christ. Asclepius was also referred to as a shepherd, as one who heals and cares for those dependent upon him. The figure of a shepherd was central also in the second century CE *Shepherd of Hermas*, a writing probably familiar to Perpetua and the editor of her martyrdom account. The figure of the shepherd was seen in Matthew 1–2. Philo offers a description of the ancient perception of the cosmic significance of the shepherd who governs like his flock "the earth and the water, the air and the fire, and all that in them is, plants and living beings":

> The role of the shepherd is such an exceedingly good one, that it is not only ascribed to kings and wise men, and to the souls which have been purified through initiation, but also, and

[36] Cf. Rev 4:8.

> rightly, to God himself, the leader of the universe. For, as if in a meadow or pasture, the Shepherd and Kin-God, with justice and law, governs (as if they were a flock of sheep) the earth and the water, the air and the fire, and all that in them is, plants and living beings, mortal and immortal, and also the nature of the heavens, and the circling of sun and moon, and the rhythmic dances of the stars, He sets over them his upright Word [Logos], his first-born Son, who will receive the charge of this holy flock as the vice-regent of the Great King. (Philo, *de Agricultra* 50–51)[37]

As with Perpetua's first vision, the vision of Saturus which follows Perpetua's fourth vision also includes the figure of an "aged man," "The Lord," who sits on the throne inside the gates, worshipped by the martyrs and angels in white robes worship (12.1–5). Lifted by four angels, Perpetua and Saturus kiss the aged man, and he touches their faces with his hand, and the elders instruct them: *Ite et ludite* ("Go and play" [12.6]).[38] Saturus' dream concludes with Perpetua's words: "Thanks be to God that I am happier here now than I was in the flesh" (12.7).

Perpetua's dream visions and her experience of healing that come from them entail a *mixture of word and ritual event*. A gray-haired man surrounded by thousands of people ritually clad in white garments becomes the source of new life. Perpetua subdues the deadly dragon with the incantation of the name of her deity. Echoing the rite of Christian baptism, the flowing water of a golden cup fills with new life Dinocrates who is in a place of suffering, and for whom Perpetua offers up words of supplication day and night (*feci pro illo orationem die et nocte*). With much acclaim Perpetua realizes the words of the athletic trainer: *Filia, pax tecum* ("Daughter, peace be to you"), and receives the branch with golden apples, as the crowd sings psalms, and she is released triumphantly into new life. In these dream-visions both (non-temple) references to ritual experience and this evocation of (sacred) "word" give "salvation"—that is, (renewed) existence separate from the waking world.

[37] Translation by Marie-Louise Von Franz, *The Passion of Perpetua*, *40.*

[38] Perpetua's was at the age of 13–14.

This same mixture of word and ritual event occur in other dreams of this investigation, including the dream of Aristides, who experiences the remedy to his suffering, and sets that experience to word and discourse in his *Sacred Tales*. Unlike the Asclepius cult however, plant, mineral (and animal) *materia* have no concrete function (e.g., the application of a herbal prescription procured from a dream) in Perpetua's visions, but rather itself undergo a transformative process by which it is spiritualized ("inspired") as part of the higher consciousness, and is thus renewed from its old-world, waking-world context. Perpetua's dreams catch up natural world resources into "an immense garden" of uninterrupted replenishment to be experienced by those who have entered into its place.

In all of the visions of Perpetua some experience of compensation occurs, in which Perpetua comes into a new state of being which involves a departure and separation from the lower world. The "new realm" of the sleeper's dream consists of nourishment and healing through the senses of taste, thirst, hearing, seeing and touch. Her dreams are rooted in bodily experience, an experience which prepares her for the oncoming destruction of her body (as happened with her brother's years ago) which she is offering up sacrificially for the superior realm of the African community's perception of the afterlife.

Together these dream visions, combined with the accounts and visions of other martyrs such as Felicitas, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, and Stephen become a collective and poignant rhetoric of early Christian cults. This inner dream-world provides a malleable and provocative media by which early Christian communities might (re)-define and envision religio-political ideals and boundaries of the outer world. As trauma literature which proclaims the splendor and honor of the *sanctis martyribus* (1.6), martyrological visions became for early Christian cults a powerful and provocative rhetoric to rally a sense of self-identification and edification: "For this reason we deem it imperative to set them forth [visions and works of the Spirit] and to make them known through the word for the glory of God," writes the narrator of Perpetua's martyrdom (1.5).

Dream visions of Perpetua fed into "a specialized sphere of ideological power,"[39] a burgeoning martyrological literature of "resistance" against what had become for these cults "former ways." Dreams function to mark the (subsequent) "Other," and both validate and reinforce first what is perceived to be a privileging of the dreamer as *magna dignationes es*, and second, the socio-political beliefs, practices, visions and rhetoric of the community which the dreamer represents. Dream experiences thus became politicized by early Christian cults as the means (weapon?) of religio-political validation and self-definition. This is far different from the uses of dream experiences in combination with plant and mineral derivatives by the Asclepius cult as a means of bodily healing.

Although the gray-haired man in Perpetua's first vision may symbolize some perception of early Christian deity, these visions overall lack any definitive sense of "epiphany," by which the dreamer is "acted upon" by an intervening deity (cf. Asclepius testimonies) or "angel" (cf. Matt 1–2; and "Isis to Horus"). Rather, human beings (Saturus, Dinocrates, the Egyptian, the athletic trainer) have key places in her dreams. This is to say that there is no real "divine saviour" or "saving being" present in these dreams. Perpetua's salvation/healing—which is the attainment of differentiation from the lower world—occurs as a result of her own initiative. In the dream experience she takes it upon herself (with the encouragement of Saturus) to confront the dragon and the Egyptian, and enter into the "realm of life." The notion of divine initiative—what Perpetua refers to as "great blessings" (*beneficia tanta*, 4.2)—entails providing the dream experiences as media of (healing) preparation for the execution. Perpetua—and "other recent examples"[40]—understands herself to be "inspired by the spirit" (*et mihi Spiritus dictauit*).[41] Deity provides for, but does not (explicitly) appear in Perpetua's dreams, which she herself requests and/or for whom she prays. For Perpetua and her second-century community, dreams are inspired by God who does not play a central role within the actual dream experience. Rather, members of the church as-

[39] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1, p. 338.

[40] *The Acts of Perpetua* 1.2

[41] *The Acts of Perpetua* 3.5.

sume the saving role within the sleeper's dream. Saturus goes first up the ladder, instructs Perpetua about the dangers of the dragon, and by his example and urging, encourages her own ascent to "salvation." The athletic trainer has command in the arena. He hushes the crowd to silence, (ritually) delimits the terms of battle, and seems, in an unspoken way, to presage and facilitate Perpetua's ultimate entrance into the Gate of Life. This absence of the element of divine epiphany, and the prominence of human saviour figures in Perpetua's dream visions, may reflect the early Christian notion of African Church membership being an extensions of the actual "body of Christ," and the growing roles of individual members (deacons, elders, bishops) in the "salvation" ministry of the church taking shape in the late second century. (In Chapter 6 of this study it will be seen how Gregory of Nazianzus plays a singular, salvific role in his mother's dream.)

As intimated already, the notions of *healing and salvation* in Perpetua's dream-vision are not easily separated. Her dream-vision experiences provide her with a sense of "resolution," some kind of "inner knowing" which allows her to come to terms with the inevitability of her coming death in the arena (4.10). It occurs to compensate the loss of all that she is letting go—motherhood (6.10), the embrace of her father (5.6), mother (3.8), friends and a familiar world. It also offers some sense of validation of her Christian baptism and beliefs which have brought these things to pass.

The outcome of her visions (1, 2–3, and 4) is an implicit calm which (appears)[42] to replace her anxious state regarding the uncertainty of future events, the well-being of her baby, and her long-suppressed feelings about her younger brother's death and condition in the afterworld. In this way her dreams have a healing, compensatory effect, one which includes for Perpetua a notion of divine presence. She has confidence that her visions come from God, and that her dreaming occurs as part of a divine purpose being realized in her immediate existence. This is consistent with the notion of divine presence noted in other Jewish-Christian dreams, in which the deity works out a salvific purpose for humanity in con-

[42] It is not certain to what extent Perpetua's dream accounts may have been edited.

crete terms predicted in the dreams. Through the dream visions, the dreamer and those associated with her are sustained in the waking world (see chap. 4). In the case of Perpetua however, sustenance entails an acceptance of the forthcoming martyrdom which is part of divine plan of ultimate salvation (and judgment) in the last days—what Tertullian refers to as *ultima saeculi spatia decretam* ("the last stage of time").[43] Thus, Tertullian quotes from Acts 2:17–18 (paraphrasing Joel 2:28):

> In the last days, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and their sons and daughters shall prophesy and on my manservants and my maidservants I will pour my Spirit, and the young shall see visions and the old men shall dream dreams.

Perpetua's dreams, and the narration around her dreams, express a definitive yearning for what is being perceived to be this ultimate salvation, one which suggests her community's unrest with the Greco-Roman world. Its embrace of *Spiritus Sancti* (1.5) as the source of visions and "gifts to all" makes Perpetua's community unique as a cult which relies on (magic-) religious reception and practice of "numinous" experience. These dreams are to be read as experiences come from this heightened awareness of *spiritus*, and the belief in the near and imminent eschaton.

I find Perpetua's dream-visions to be especially important for the understanding of early Christian dreams. Like the Asclepius cult, and to some extent like Matthew, the dream-visions show rife imagery of *materia* throughout her dreaming experiences. Similar to Matthew, and unlike the Asclepius cult, the overarching emphasis of her dreams falls upon the notion of "ultimate salvation." Perpetua's dreaming underscores the saving act of God being lived out in her own life, the life of the African Church, and in the history of the ancient world. As martyrological material, this notion of revealed, divine purpose has a sense of urgency which compliments and/or exceeds the active presence of divinity found Matthew's dream accounts (Joseph and his family being saved from the ever-growing danger of Herod). Perpetua's dream-visions relate what

[43] *The Acts of Perpetua* 1.3.

appears to be an intensification of this salvific presence and purpose, an intensification made by the mix of dreams with second century Christian martyrdom.

CHAPTER 6: GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS AND ST AUGUSTINE

> We shall pray for a dream, even as Homer, perchance, prayed. And if you are worthy, the god far away is present with you, Nay, even what time the god sets little store on these matters, he comes to your side if only you are asleep; and this is the whole system of initiation. In it no one has ever yet lamented his poverty, on the ground that thus he had less possessions than the rich. (Synesius of Cyrene, *Concerning Dreams*).[1]

THE MOTHER OF GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

The final dreams considered in this investigation come from two women—Nonna, the mother of Gregory of Nazianzus; and Monica, mother of Augustine. Each is representative, respectively, of eastern and western Christianity of late antiquity. The sons present the accounts: Gregory (c.330–390 CE) in his *Orations*, and Augustine (354–430 CE) in his *Confessions*. Each dream will receive attention individually, and a comparative discussion will follow.

> She thought she saw me, who was her favorite—for not even in her dreams did she prefer any other of us—coming up to her suddenly at night, with a basket of pure white loaves, which I blessed and crossed as I was wont to do, and then fed and strengthened her, and she became stronger. The nocturnal vision was a real action. For, in consequence, she became more herself and of better hope, as is manifest by a clear and evident

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[1] Translation by Augustine Fitzgerald, in Morton T. Kelsey, *Dreams: The Dark Speech of the Spirit: A Christian Interpretation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1968): 270.

> token. The next morning, when I paid her a visit, I saw at once that she was brighter, and when I asked, as usual, what kind of a night she had passed, and if she wished for anything, she replied, "My child, you most readily and kindly fed me, and then you ask how I am. I am very well and at ease." Her maids too made signs to me to offer no resistance, and to accept her answer at once, lest she should be thrown back into despondency, if the truth were laid bare (38–42).[2]

Gregory of Nazianzus, in *Oration* XVIII, "On the Death of His Father," recalls the dream of his mother Nonna, who "was attacked by sickness," and whose life was in danger for many days because she did not eat. No remedy for the illness could be found. Unlike Asclepius cult dream accounts, the account of Nonna's dream entails no notion of a concretization in the waking world of a dream remedy revealed in the dream; nor is this an incubation dream in which Nonna purposely sleeps to dream and experience a knowledge. This dream has no divine epiphany after the way of other dreams, such as the appearance of Asclepius in the dream of Aristides.[3]

However, Gregory is quite clear to note the notion of some kind of revelatory experience in which his mother is acted upon, and that she saw (ἔδοξεν) the figure of Gregory himself quickly coming into recognition in the night (ἀθρόως ἐπιστάντα νυχτὸς). The adverb ἀθρόως, "quickly," refers to an overwhelming and complete event, and Gregory's use of the word points to his mother's experience as a (passive) subject of a dream "experience" (not

[2] I am working from Gregory Nanzianzen, *Oration* XVIII, §xxx.35–42, vol. 35.1 *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1857). For English translation see Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations*, translated by Charles Gordon Browne, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, series 2, vol. 7 (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, reprint of 1894 edition): 264.

[3] Aristides, *Oratio* XLVIII.31–35. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T417, p. 210–11.

epiphany) acted upon her. This same phenomenon has consistently turned up in other dream experiences in this investigation.[4]

His use of the word ἐπίσταμαι, meaning "to know, or to understand," suggests some kind of "revelatory" event occurring at the beginning of the dream (compare Saul's not recognizing the voice of the Lord until the fourth dream incubation experience). The participial form emphasizes the ongoing, progressive nature of the recognition experience. Dearly loved by his mother,[5] Gregory becomes the object of Nonna's fixed attention in the dream. In a way, the figure of Gregory in Nonna's dream replaces the figure of a divine being such as a god or angel seen in dream experiences of Aristides (Asclepius), Isis (the angels), Solomon (Samuel from the underworld),[6] and Joseph in Matthew 1–2 (angel of the Lord). *Gregory* now serves as the healing shepherd who tends to the needs of the suffering one.[7]

According to Gregory, Nonna sees her son appear with a basket and "shining white breads." His use of the word λαμπροτάτων

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[4] Isis is twice accosted by the dream angel. A revelation is made known in the clearest way possible (Ἐδηλώθη ὡς ἐναργέστατα) to Aristides (*Oratio* XLVIII.31). An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph (ἐφάνη αὐτῷ) in a dream (Mt. 1.20). Dream incubation entails the phenomenon of dream visitation by a deity (YHWH repeatedly visits Samuel sleeping in the temple, 1 Sam 2:1–18.

[5] Gregory notes his mother's preference for him. Speaking of his family life, he writes: "not even in her dream—οὐδ᾽ ἐν ὀνείρῳ—did she prefer any other of us" (*Oration* XVIII.30).

[6] 1 Sam 27:3–25.

[7] Cf. Asclepius the "shepherd" healer, whose "staff is set before our minds that unless we are supported … in so far as falling continually into sickness is concerned, stumbling we would fall sooner than necessary." Cornutus [first century CE], *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, Cp. 33. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T705, p. 368. See also the shepherd-healer figure in Perpetua's first dream-vision: "Then I saw an immense garden, and in it a gray-haired man sat in shepherd's garb; he was tall, and milking sheep … And he called me over to him and gave me, as it were, a mouthful of the milk he was drawing; and I took it in my hands and consumed it." *Acts of Perpetua* 4.8ff.

renders a supernatural, brilliant quality to the bread contained by a basket vessel.[8] The imagery suggests a concentration of glowing, immediate energy within the bread and around the figure of Gregory, who blesses the bread (ἐπευξάμενόν αὐτοῖς). In the dream his mother sees him "cross the bread" (σφαγίσαντα), a ritual act having strong sacrificial resonance.[9]

Media and mediation

In the dream experience Gregory feeds (θρέψαι) Nonna [the bread], this way taking on a maternal, nurturing role toward his mother[10]—something seen with the shepherd who feeds and nourishes Perpetua in her first dream vision.[11] In Nonna's dream the nourishment rushes forth (ῥῶσαι), and she became stronger (συναγαγεῖν τὴν δύναμιν). Gregory's language underscores the sense of a co-merging of forces and elements into a singular, efficacious healing event. The shining bread, Gregory's singular, demonstrative presence, his administration of the bread, and his mother's visual and physical interaction conjoin (συναγαγεῖν) and give her "power" (δύναμις).

The dream mixes together *materia* (plant, loaves) and the "spiritual" realm (blessing and crossing of pure white loaves), and by the mediation of Gregory, the dream experience effects Nonna's bodily healing. Eucharistic elements are experienced in the sleeper's dream to give bodily healing. Rooted in "bodily" experience, she is fed loaves which she consumes and strength returns to her. Having the power to heal his mother, Gregory "himself" becomes a means of bodily healing and regeneration.[12] John McGuckin notes the paral-

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[8] Cf. sacred barley used at sacrifice in *Odyssey* 3.442.

[9] Cf. Hdt. 9.61, 72; slaughter of sheep 11.4, 7; Rom 8:36; Acts 8:32; 1 Col 16:7.

[10] Cf. the nourishment taken from the mother's breasts in *Od.* 12.134; Hdt. 1.136; Luke 23:29.

[11] "He called me over to him and gave me, as it were, a mouthful of the milk he was drawing; and I took it into my cupped hands and consumed it" (4.9).

[12] Cf. healing come through the touch of Jesus' garment, Luke 8:42–48.

lel of this dream account with Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law from a fever.[13] The story appears in Mark 1:29–34:

> Jesus and his disciples, including James and John, left the synagogue and went straight to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and as soon as Jesus arrived, he was told about her. He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. After the sun had set and evening had come, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had demons …

Biblical narratives such as Mark 1:29–34 appear to find expression in Nonna's unconscious life, and it becomes an experience of healing. Like Jesus, Gregory takes away the fever of the ailing mother. This dream of Nonna complements her (inner) perception of her son's high calling, impressed upon Nonna in an earlier dream. In this other dream she sees Gregory's face while yet in her womb, and subsequently, when she wakes, names him "Gregorios"—the child of waking visions.[14] Gregory writes how his mother ushered him into the rites of the catechumenate, by which "She dedicated me as a new Samuel in the Temple."[15] It is difficult to know the extent to which such stories were familiar to fourth-century Christian communities, and influenced dreams such as Nonna's.

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[13] John Anthony McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001): 22–23. See also John Anthony McGuckin, "The Vision of St. Gregory of Nazianzen," edited by Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *Studia Patristica*, vol. 32: 145–152 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997); C. M. Szymusiak-Affholder, "Psycholgie et histoire dans le rêve intial de Grégoire Le Théologien," *Philologus* 115 (1971).

[14] *De Vita Sua*, vv. 68–78, PG 37.1034–1035. Cf. pre-birth, divine callings of, e.g., Jeremiah (1:4–5; Luke 1:14–15 (John the Baptist); Luke 1:26–38 (Jesus).

[15] *De Rebus Suis*, vv. 431, PG 37.1002; John Anthony McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, 25.

Observable signs of restoration

On account of the dream experience, Gregory notes that Nonna "became herself" (ἑαυτῆς γίνεται).[16] The dream experience re-creates (γίνομαι) her and somehow (re-) centers her. There is a notion that various aspects of Nonna—emotional, psychological, bodily elements—constellate, so that the dream has served some kind of compensatory function, bringing into balance what was off-set and/or diffused on a psyche-soma level by the sickness.

This restoration through the sleeper's dream shows observable, tangible change in the waking world. Gregory takes pains to underscore the change which has come over his mother: τῷ τοῦτο δῆλον ἐναργεῖ καὶ φανερῷ γνωρίσματι ("by this vision (her health) clear and plainly seen has been reveled").[17] He describes her in the morning after her dream as being quite awake and "very bright and beaming" (φαιδροτέραν). His use of the superlative suggests exaggeration, but more likely relates his sense of surprise at finding his mother in this renewed state of health. His mother's response to his inquiry underscores this sense of "shock," and relays how real the dream experienced was for her: Σύ με ἔθρψας ... ὦ τέκνον ("You fed me, Oh child!").

Nonna describes her son's feeding the bread to her in the dream as both "very willing and generous" (μάλα ἑτοίμως καὶ φιλανθρώπως), and this notion of a flowing and open, recreating activity seems to mark the dream account as a whole. Nonna, withdrawn with sickness, has a dream vision through which she experiences an unhindered exchange of life-sources which she receives and which releases the debilitation connected with her (undisclosed) illness, and makes her wholly present and in good health the next day. The descriptive language of the dream account—feeding, brilliance, generously, readily, clarity, becoming manifest—evokes this outward, "unbinding" movement, and Nonna will have

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[16] Gregory seems to hold Nonna's dream account at an objective distance, implied by his use of the far demonstrative pronoun: ἐξ εκείνου ... ("out of that [dream experience] she became more herself"), *Oration* XVIII.30.

[17] Cf. Heb 4:12; 1 Cor 16:9; Jos. Ant. 14.266; 2 Col 16:3; Herm., Sim. 4.3; Rom 9:22ff; Eph 6:19, etc.

no one doubt the authenticity of the experience and her return to health. She puts to Gregory the question, somewhat mockingly, "Then you ask How am I?" Immediately she follows the question with the answer: λίαν καλῶς τε καὶ γαληνῶς ("exceedingly well and calm!").

Gregory seems to accept the dream experience as a real phenomenon which brought healing to his mother, when nothing else could. He is intentional to note that "the night dream was the true work": καὶ ἡ τῆς νυκτὸς ὄψις, ἔργον ἦν ἀληθείας (39), and also describes in *Oration* XVIII other salvific dream experiences immediately following Nonna's dream.[18] Overall, Gregory appears to recognize dreams as having concrete, salvific consequences in human lives.[19]

THE MOTHER OF AUGUSTINE

Augustine also relates a dream of his mother, Monica, who saw herself standing on top of a wooden rule, as a "beautiful young man" comes toward her." Augustine explains that this dream occurs in relation to Monica's weeping for his delivery from a lifestyle which she does not approve of—what she refers to as the "depth of the mud pit" (11). The dream has a compensatory quality which subsequently gives Monica a sense of assurance of her son's eventual "repentance" from his present lifestyle. Augustine tells the dream:

> For she saw, in her sleep, herself standing upon a wooden rule, and a very beautiful young man coming towards her, with a cheerful countenance and smiling upon her, herself being

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[18] Cf. his escape from a shipwreck through a nightly vision—νυχτερινῆς φαντασίας—and prayer, XXXI.43ff.

[19] The maids who are present during Gregory's visit to Nonna on the morning following her dream signal to him not to resist his mother's claim of the realness and validity of her dream healing, lest she should be "cast back into discouragement (ἀθυμίᾳ), if the truth were laid bare" (γυμνωθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας). It is unclear what "the truth laid bare" means here—perhaps the notion held by all but Nonna that: "it was all merely a dream."

> grieved and far gone with sorrow. The young man demanded from her the causes of her sadness and daily weeping (that he might teach, as they use to do, rather than learn) and she had answered that it was my perdition that she bewailed; and he begged her to be contented, and wished her to observe diligently and behold, that where she herself was, there I was also. When she looked aside, she saw me standing by her upon the same rule. How should this be, that your ears were bent towards the requests of her heart, O God Omnipotent, who has such special care of every one of us, as if you had cared of but one alone; and so regard all, as if but single persons![20]

The rule upon which Monica, and eventually Augustine, stand represents incremental movement. One can move forward or backward, and there occurs no sense of the possibility of lateral movement. It directs and restricts movement—although unlike the ladder in Perpetua's vision, there is no mention of "ascent" from a lower place. Rather, the "wood" *materia* of the rule gives it an earthbound quality. At the same time, the graded measurements of a rule suggest incremental progress (or regress) along the straight and narrow path, a theme quite prevalent in this study with regard to ritual progression, transformation, and recreation. Such delimitation contrasts Augustine's wide, non-committal lifestyle of *falsitatis*, "false belief" (*Confessions* III.11), and compensates for Monica's unfulfilled longing for her son to align himself with the African Church.[21]

At the heart of the dream there occurs the image of the beautiful young man (*venientem ad se iuvenem*)—perhaps a representation of what Monica so wants to see in her own son.[22] He seems to sig-

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[20] Augustine, *Confessions* III.11, translated by William Watts, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912).

[21] Augustine says that his lifestyle of "false belief" continued for nine years after his mother's dream, and infers that after these nine years his life changed (he joined the African church?)—a fulfillment of his mother's dream (*Confessions*, III.11).

[22] Cf. Nonna's son Gregory who tenderly comes before her in her dream.

nify a perception of "vitality" for Monica, and perhaps her Christian community—a perception which idealizes youth, male gender, (physical) beauty, and agility (he is moving toward her). He takes on almost angelic characteristics of a divine being.[23] He has a cheerful countenance and is smiling upon her, in this way evokes an emotional vitality also.

This "fullness" of presence of the beautiful young man contrasts strikingly Monica's grief and sorrow. A similar contrast occurs in Nonna's dream, in which the radiant bread counters her turned-in, taciturn state of mind and condition. (Was she by nature taciturn?) In the end, she herself assumes this brightness of constitution (which seems to confuse her nurses and Gregory himself). In Monica's dream the tension of these opposites appears to yield a declaration of the reason for her sadness and daily weeping: *perditionem meam se plangere* ("she bewails my perdition").

As seen in other dreams of this investigation, Monica receives an "inner knowledge," being told that "where she herself was, there was I [Augustine] also." She looks and sees her son standing by her on the same rule, and from this revelation she gains not only comfort, but conviction in the inherent value of the dream experience and its prediction. Upon first hearing the dream, Augustine interprets it to his own advantage to mean that Monica will someday come round to conform to his (non-Christian) point of view. Monica firmly replies: "No … it was not told to me, you are where he is; but where you are, there he is."[24] Augustine explains how this show of resolve ("inner knowing") on the part of his mother made a lasting impression upon him:

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[23] Cf. the man at the empty tomb of Jesus, Mark 16:5–7. Cf. also the angels who struggle with Isis (above), and the movements of Asclepius who comes toward the dreamers at night—e.g., Aristides' dream (*Oratio* XLVIII.31–35). Perpetua sees her brother young and strong in her second dream vision (*Acts of Perpetua* 8), and Gregory of Nazianzus, bearing baskets of super-white bread, has a "divine" quality as he appears to Nonna (*Oration* 18.30).

[24] *Confessions*, III.11.

> I confess to you Lord, that to the best of my remembrance … I was then more moved at this answer by my mother, that she was not put out of conceit by the likelihood of my close interpretation, and that upon the very instant she apprehended what was to be seen by it, which I myself had not perceived before she spoke: I was more moved, is say, at that, than with her dream itself.[25]

Augustine understands this dream to have occurred from divine initiative in response to Monica's grief and prayers. The dreams function as media of divine interaction in the world and lives of the African Christians. It relates the abiding and efficacious purpose of *domine*, one which entails and ensures the "saving" of her son from the dark pit, thus giving Monica reason to hope and continue to pray for her son. As with Nonna's dream, no (explicit) divine epiphany occurs, but rather a central, and somewhat apparitional, central human figure appears and acts toward the dreamer. No sense of struggle occurs in the dream experience,[26] and Nonna receives words and images (the smiling face of the young man) which encourage her and renew her disposition. This dream is not an incubation dream; and it does not relay (in any direct way) any religious ritual associations.

Transformation and "word"

Both Nonna's and Monica's dream involve psyche-soma *transformation*. Nonna has an illness which no one seems to understand or is able to cure. But through her dream experience her condition and her physiological constitution are altered. In the morning she is renewed, "exceedingly well and calm." Likewise, Monica undergoes a transformation through her dream experience. Prior to her dream she suffers over her son, and following the dream she has a sure sense of hope and there is an overall sense of self-purpose and renewal. The dream transformations occur rooted in "bodily sensations" of seeing, hearing, eating, standing, eating; and they issue out of states of physical, body-centered suffering: Nonna's body suffers

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Cf. Isis and the angels; Aristides and Asclepius.

from illness; Monica's suffering entails daily weeping and praying (which has a physical connotation in Augustine's description). However, Nonna's dream relays a definitive notion of *materia* (consumption of shining loaves) as media of healing, and parallels somewhat the dream visions of Perpetua, which also involve (much) imagery of material resources.

No reference to the spoken "word," as seen in Perpetua's vision ("He will not harm me, in the name of Christ" 4.6), occurs in either Monica's or Nonna's dream experiences—although Augustine relates his mother's dream as part of his *Confessions*, which itself participates in and constitutes western Christian rhetoric of late antiquity. Likewise, Gregory of Nazianzus' *Orations* are part of a larger eastern Christian discourse; and Gregory's use of the dream of his mother becomes part of rhetoric to underscore his own separation from his parents and subsequent realization and/or affirmation of his role as a spiritual leader. John McGuckin notes:

> Jesus gave a teaching that the true disciple is one who hears the word of God and prefers it to familial ties. This narrative of the dream-bread is one of the ways Gregory psychologically realized that aspect of his calling. Feeding his mother white bread signals Gregory's transition from the role of the child fed milk by its mother. Now he has reversed the role, and from milk he returns the finest of bread. It is a biblical code to remind the reader of the Pauline axiom that the true disciple must pass from the stage of suckling milk (1 Cor 3:1–3), which means to love on the basis of natural impulses, to that of solid bread, which means to be able to perceive spiritual values with wisdom and authority.[27]

The inner world of dreams given expression in the writings of both authors provide a malleable and provocative media to (re)-define and envision religio-political ideals and boundaries of the outer world. Just how and where such ideals form and differ will receive attention in the final chapter of this investigation.

As seen in most of the dreams considered in this study, some kind of "revelation" takes place in the dream experiences of the

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[27] John Anthony McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, 23.

two mothers. For Nonna this entails the overwhelming and complete appearance of her son "quickly coming into recognition in the night," and who nurtures her to δύναμις. For Monica revelation entails seeing her son standing beside her upon the rule, thus bringing to pass the words of the beautiful young man: "Where you are, there he is." In both cases the women are receiving and passive subjects "acted upon" by a central, human figure in the dream. The figures move toward the dreamer, and each (Gregory, and the "young man") carries an implicit numinous quality which neither Augustine nor Gregory explicitly details. The human figures have divine, transcendent qualities, and in the case of Nonna's dream at least, may relay the developing notion of members of the church assuming the saving role within the sleeper's dream. In both of these dreams the media of divine activity occurs in human life, but deity does not play a central role within the actual dream experience. Both of these observations were seen in Perpetua's dream visions.

The dreams of Nonna and Monica evidence movements seen in other dreams of this investigation. These include transformation, revelation, bodily sensation and imagery, liminality,[28] the submission of both women to the force of the dream experience, the desire of the dreamers for "solution," and that solution given or experienced within the dream, making an observable difference in the overall condition of the dreamer in the waking world.

If there is any "acting out" of the dream experience, after the way of Asclepius cult patrons (Ch. 3), it has more to do with a "living out" in the waking world of what for both women is (what Gregory refers to as) the "real action" quality of the dream experience. Nonna will have nothing to do with any notion that her son was not viably present in her dream: "My child, you most readily and kindly fed me, and then you ask how I am!" Monica tells Augustine that he will be where *she* is, and nothing less.

Religious conviction issues from and is justified by way of the dream experience of these women—a phenomenon seen with Perpetua where dreams become the fuel of a "faith" discourse. As

[28] Gregory's coming toward Nonna, Monica's looking "askance" by which she sees her son.

seen with Perpetua, the notions of healing and salvation are not easily separated, and dream experiences provide the dreamer with a sense of "resolution," some kind of "inner knowing" which entails a coming to terms with real-life dilemma and suffering, from which some noticeable psyche-soma release is experienced. The power of dream experience, captured in oral and written testimony, becomes a media of religio-political resistance for the mother dreamers, in response to the opposition and/or skeptical forces of their sons. The maids must tell Gregory not to question his mother's dream and sudden change of health, but to accept it and receive her. Augustine tries to manipulate Monica's dream to his own ends. With noticeable zeal (or rhetoric), the women wholly embrace their dream experiences as evidence of divine presence and salvation being worked out in their own lives and the lives of their sons. For Monica and Nonna, dreams occur inseparably from a purposeful and present Lord who reveals future events. Augustine will come to accept the teachings and practices of the African church, after the example of his mother. Gregory will have a growing role as a healer of the Eastern church,[29] and gives subsequent healing to the dreamer by means of the revelatory dream experience.

These dream experiences of Nonna and Monica differ in the occurrence of body and *materia* imagery. Nonna's dream entails an act of ingestion of choice bread and the physical experience of feeling renewed and sustained by that feeding. Similarly, Perpetua's visions include feeding and ingestion of milk, and rich vegetable gardens.

Monica's dream, however, makes no mention of feeding or of *materia* resources such as bread, milk and vegetables. There is something comparatively non-material about its content, and this quality

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[29] In 379 CE, several years following the death of his father Gregory's writing of *Oration* 18 (which includes his mother's dream), he is called out of a time of retirement and solitude to Constantinople to help a Nicene minority secure freedom from the influences of Arian emperors. His eloquent sermons (including his *Five Orations on the Divinity of the Logos*) win over the support of much of Constantinople, and new ruler of the East, Theodosius. See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, edited by Walter J. Burghardt (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, n.d.): 236–39.

may be the mark of the ascetic orientation of ancient Christian cults of the West, deeply rooted in the unconscious of its adherents. The dream imagery of Nonna[30] and Perpetua[31] may point to a more earth-oriented[32] interest of early Christian cults in the East.

[30] Being feed bread (*Oration* 18.30).

[31] Being fed sheep's milk (*Acts of Perpetua* 4), her brother coming out of a dark hole (*Acts of Perpetua* 7), receiving the green branch with golden apples (*Acts of Perpetua* 10).

[32] Cf. the Asclepius cult focus on herbs and natural resources.

CONCLUSION: DREAMS AND HEALING IN EARLY CHRISTIAN AND ASCLEPIUS CULTS

> And again when the [*sic.*, the Gentiles] learned about the prophecies to the effect that He [*sic.*, Jesus] would heal every disease and would raise the dead, they brought forward Asclepius. (Justin, *Apology* 54.10)[1]

THE ASCEPIUS CULT AND TEMPLE RITUAL

The Asclepius cult relies upon and takes seriously the dreaming process and the ways it regenerates the body, and reveals what might medically and therapeutically be done in waking life to nurture the ailing patron. As we have seen, the Asclepius temple *abaton* functions as the "dream womb" which (architecturally and ritually) "contains" and facilitates the dreamer's unconscious movements which happen during the night. Temple rituals (sacrifice to the god at the altar, suppliant ablution, *abaton* rites) have as their focal point this special chamber, said to house the sleeping god Asclepius himself. The purpose of the *abaton* is to bring together human and deity, thus facilitating an intersecting event between the earth-world and (the cult's perception of) the spiritual world. The *abaton* facilitates "incubating," that is, the gestating, psyche-soma interior processes of the patient. Asclepius temple dream testimonies tell of seeing, hearing, touching of the god, in the mixture of often strange and inexpressible imagery. Almost always some "inner knowing" occurs as part of the dream experience, where the dreamer "receives" a revelation—a plant or mineral healing formula, a healing

[1] Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* III.25.

touch by the god—which may result in some kind of observable, physiological change in the way the dreamer feels upon waking.

The cult then, has as its focus, in a public, demonstrative way, the **inner world** of the patient, and what that unconscious world tells with regard to psyche-soma compensation for healing to occur. At the heart of the Asclepius cult there exists the natural, provocative, and for the most part unexplainable phenomenon of the sleeper's dream, which drives the cult's gradual development and building of temples outward from Epidaurus. This development in particular occurs close to bodies of water,[2] and the temple designers tried to situate such dreaming "outside of town," at a place where one can listen without distraction to inner voices and pay attention to the images of the *abaton* nights. In this way the Asclepius cult seems to pattern its "placement" of dream temples after the liminal nature of dreams themselves. There may be other reasons for the peripheral location of dream temples—including keeping the sick separate from the collective population centers. The isolation of temple experiences nonetheless heightens the healing and incubating processes.

Unique to the Asclepius cult however, is the grounding of the dreaming experience. Dream-healing occurs in relationship with **earth-healing**. On the one hand patients dream. On the other hand patients partake in healing resources of the natural world. This includes temples designed to provide therapeutic use of fresh spring waters, fresh water breezes, sounds and fragrances of tree groves, and the general sense of peace nature provides when attended to and cultivated. The Asclepius cult's use of the regenerative properties of natural resources become a central means of healing. Asclepius cult testimonies tell of a rich knowledge and application of herbal and mineral ointments, salves, potions and formulae, and relay the cult's investment and participation in the larger Greco-Roman use and knowledge of plant and mineral pharmacology and folk medicine. The "Isis to Horus" alchemical vision, and

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[2] Perhaps this way the cult sustains direct, physical connection with the mystery and depth associated with water masses, which may be associated with the unconscious. See for e.g., von Franz, *Alchemy*, 66; Jung, *Dreams*, 148.

the Greek papyri spells show just how refined and extensive this culture was in the ancient world, and how infused it was with mythopoeic imagery of gods, demons, cosmognic beliefs and superstitions. The compensatory force of incubation dreams, combined with the potency of earth-healing, provided efficacious means of healing disease in antiquity. In this way the Asclepius cult offered healing "salvation" to the sick, resulting in a burgeoning popularity and growth of the cult through the second century CE. For the Asclepius cult, salvation entails both the experience of "deity" and of earth, both inward and outward processes—a conjoining of the pharmacists' mortar and pestle and the temple *abaton*.

DREAMS, HEALING AND EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTS

Aristides' dream experience and the detail by which he describes the movements which make up that experience provided a helpful case study as a basis for comparative analysis of early Christian dream experiences. The liminal quality of his dream is striking, as he exclaims: "For I seemed almost to touch him and to perceive that he himself was coming." A strong experience of epiphany, bodily sensations, conflict with (perceived) deity, and a certain element of dreaming awareness by Aristides to get the healing potion from the god in the dream, occurs as part of what makes the account a "good" dream, as M. Masud Khan would say. Upon waking, Aristides knows that he has undergone a significant experience. He has an "inner awareness" of having received something life-giving. Thus, Aristides obtains the wormwood potion and drinks it, as the dream-god told him to do.

This sort of "absolute knowing" with regard to the efficacy of the dream experience occurs in the early Christian dream experiences of Nonna and Monica. Like Aristides, these dreamers know something significant has happened to them in the night, and they relate their dreams to the waking world with conviction. Nonna tells Gregory that he was in her dream and he actually fed her and made her well (and why should he dare to question her about this). Monica opposes her son's interpretation of her dream by informing him that he will be next to her on the rule in the days to come, according to her own sure experience and knowing from the dream. Perpetua never doubts the dream-visions which come to her and which give her the awareness that she is going to a "higher place," that her deceased brother is well and healed in the after-world, and

that she will vanquish the Devil by the word of God. For each of these dreamers there is visceral-certainty that a "divine secret" has been experienced and is now known. This same notion of surety undergirds the dream experiences in Matthew 1–2, 1 Samuel, and Daniel to "make clear the solution" to inner and outer conflict.

This visceral-certainty of the dreamer leads to literal (verses relational) interpretation and response to the dream experience. These dreamers take their dreams "at face value." They interpret them literally, and perceive them in *concrete terms* in the waking world. In this way, the dreams of Aristides, Nonna, and Monica are no different. Each interprets dreams as means of knowing what to do and how to act in the waking world. The same move toward literal interpretation occurs in other dreams of both cults. Asclepius temple testimonies detail how the god actually appears and actually heals those who sleep in *abatons*. These dreamers wake to mix potions and undergo body therapies, making concrete the "divine secret" given in the dream. Similarly, Perpetua "acts out" her "new-world" dream-visions by allowing and enabling her martyrdom to take its course in real life. The boy Samuel will live out the instructions of the voice of YHWH in his fourth incubation dream to become a priest and leader of the people, and the sons of Eli will be killed in the battle with the Philistines, as foretold to Samuel in the same dream. Joseph will carry through his dream-instructions in the day world—word-for-word. The dream conviction of these dreamers occurs as part of the literal interpretation and acting out of dream experiences in the waking world.

In addition to being concretized, dreamers of both the Asclepius and early Christian cults set down to writing and so preserve (and subsequently reduce) their "absolute knowing." Their dreams this way become part of a larger discourse: Aristides' dream-collection, called the *Sacred Tales*, is part of his larger literary "proclamation" consisting of orations which he composes to persuade, move and impress his hearers. Perpetua's martyrdom accounts, Gregory's autobiography, Augustine's autobiography, and Matthew's gospel are part of a larger, early Christian discourse gathering momentum quickly by the second century. Among early Christian cults, and within the larger Greco-Roman world there seems to have been a preoccupation with "word" as a medium of salvation, and dreams like those of Perpetua thus become part of a "language

of resistance" in response to socio-political and religious dislocation.

EPIPHANY: BODY AND SALVATION HISTORY

In both Asclepius and early Christian cults this sense of absolute knowing comes from the epiphany experience of the dream. Asclepius appears to Aristides, who must hold the god in the liminal place in order to obtain the divine secret. The angel suddenly breaks in upon Isis, who must hold him off from her in order to obtain the elixir of life. The Lord mysteriously appears to Samuel sleeping in the temple and to Jacob sleeping at the well. An angel of the Lord comes to Joseph in the night and breaks the cycle of his inner dialogue as to the course of action he should take with Mary.

However, only in Aristides' dreams—and the Asclepius dreams testimonies—does epiphany involve a detailed description of an encounter with a god. The Asclepius cult sources considered in Chapter 3 relay a god who has tangible presence to dreamers ("I almost touched him").[3] He stretches out his healing hand to a patient,"[4] and in the Epidaurian Asclepius temple the god kisses a patient (ἐδόκει οἱ ὁ θεὸς ... φιλῆσαί νιν).[5] Nowhere in early Christian dreams, nor in the ancient Jewish incubation dreams, do detailed descriptions of an image of "the Lord" occur. Nowhere in early Christian dreams, nor ancient incubation dreams, do detailed descriptions of physical interaction with a physical deity occur. God of these early Christian and ancient Jewish dreams is present in dreams, but s/he has no demonstrative form, and there occurs no sense of physical interaction between deity and dreamer.

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[3] See also *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 31 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–237.

[4] Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Theopompos*. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T456, pp. 262–263.

[5] *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IV, 1, nos. 121–22, verse 41 (second half of the fourth century BCE). From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T423, pp. 221–237. C.f. a similar report from the Asclepius temple at Athens: *Marinus, Vita Procli*, Cp. 31. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T446, pp. 256–257.

This lack of bodily detail occurs in light, and perhaps as a result, of, the unique emphasis upon the active and ongoing *presence* of deity made known in the sleeper's dreams of ancient (non-exilic) Judaism and early Christian cults. The "divine secret" often has to do with receiving the "word" of God and the making concrete of his abiding presence and will in the events of the waking world. This (ultimately) results in the subsistence of the dreamer and those associated with him (Jacob's family, "all of Israel," "kingdom of God," the survival of Joseph and family, the vitalization of Monica), and often the dissolution of those who are not associated with the dreamer (other "kingdoms" in the Book of Daniel, "Midian and his whole army," in Judges 7:13–15, Herod the Great). Dream focus upon the saving power of YHWH has its roots in earliest Israel, who adopts the new deity YHWH as god of social justice who acts to bring release to the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt.[6] The Song of Deborah, one of the oldest texts in the Jewish Scriptures, relays the "conviction" of the poet's perception in YHWH's abiding presence:

> Lord, when you went out from Seir,
> When you marched from the region of Edom
> the earth trembled,
> and the heavens poured
> the clouds indeed poured water.
> The mountains quaked before the Lord, the One of Sinai
> before the Lord, the God of Israel. (Judg 5:4–5)[7]

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[6] Reference here is made to the "exodus" of (pre) Israel, who eventually reconstitute themselves into villages, clans and tribes in the Palestinian hill country during the early Iron Age, following breakdown of the Early Bronze Age. Anthony Cresko refers to the exodus movement of a small group of refugees led by a man named Moses out of Egypt, claiming the god YHWH, is on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Anthony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001): 105.

[7] Cf. the Israel monarchy texts such as Psalms 2, 15, 24, 46, 48, 76, 77, 110, 2 Sam 23.

The sense of the abiding and active being of YHWH in human life, relayed in Deborah's words, carries through the history of the Israelite people. It finds expression as a salvation history being lived out from generation-to-generation into the time of early Christianity—as evidenced in the genealogy in Matthew 1:1–17. Joseph and his family survive because of the abiding and active involvement of ὁ κύριος in the day-to-day journey to escape Herod's blood-lust. Perpetua comes to terms with her oncoming death in the arena and the loss and grief of loved ones because her dreams tell her of a "higher consciousness" and purpose of "the Lord" which precedes her. Monica identifies Augustine with heroes of the faith like Solomon, as a testimony to the saving hand of God being worked from days of old. Early Christian cults experience dream epiphanies as experiences of ongoing divine salvation. This is different from the Asclepius cult, which focuses on immediate, tangible healings by a god who has to be held and/or contained (by and within the *abaton*), per visit, for a healing solution to occur.

MEDIATING DREAM FIGURES

An emphasis upon deity body and embodiment seen with Asclepius cult dreams does not occur in early Christian dream traditions. However, mediating figures do appear in early Christian dreams and bring about some kind of salvific action for the dreamer. The angels in Perpetua's dream-visions, and the dreams of Joseph in Matthew 1–2 function as intermediating agents who free the dreamer from difficulty and/or danger.[8] In some cases these intermediaries appear in human form in the sleeper's dream. The central figure of the shepherd tending the sheep welcomes Perpetua upon her arrival in the higher world and nourishes her with fresh milk. Gregory appears, ghost-like, as the "shepherd" who feeds his mother and takes away her fever. A ghost-like, beautiful young man comes before Monica, his (compensating) presence freeing her from her debilitating misery to see what her son will become, as one aligned on the wood rule. Although the figure of Augustine in

[8] Cf. dreams and visions in extra-canonical literature like 1 Enoch 6; 12–16, Vision of Ezra, Questions of Ezra.

her dream has no demonstrative mediary purpose in Monica's dream, his appearance presages his future role as bishop and spiritual nurture to African Christians. The central role of human males in each of these dreams seems to have parallels with the central, nurturing role of the bishop in early Christianity.

The occurrence of human mediation imagery in early Christian dreams suggests a religious urge toward "personified" representation of salvation. The bodiless voice of God in Shilo temple (1 Samuel 3:1–18),[9] and the appearance of the angel of the Lord in Matthew 1–2, may not be enough for some early Christian groups. These dreams of Monica, Nonna, and to some extent Perpetua[10] seem to relay the desire for a human representation of an "embodied saviour" which has parallels in the New Testament post-resurrection accounts. In John 20 Jesus appears to the disciples in bodily form after his death, beckoning Thomas to touch his side and to feel the flesh of his earthy wound:

> The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." (John 20:22b–29)[11]

[9] Although the fourth dreams says that the Lord "stood" before Samuel (1 Sam 3:14).

[10] See also the Shepherd Hermas, and the Gospel of Thomas.

[11] Cf. Luke 24:36ff: "As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit (πνεῦμα). And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see (ψηλαφήσατε με καὶ ἴδετε); for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them." Cf. the *Acts of Thomas*.

In the case of Perpetua's dream-visions, however, no epiphany of a "saving" figure occurs (with perhaps the exception of the shepherd in the first dream vision). In visions two and three Perpetua sees only her brother—first diseased, then healed—and she interprets his healing to have come as a result of her own initiative of prayer in the waking world. In the final vision Perpetua "saves herself" by struggling with the Egyptian and gaining the prize of golden apples.

This notion of human mediation does not include a central interest in bodily healing experience. For the Asclepius cult a suppliant dreams for the purpose of obtaining a special cure, and acts out the dream's instructions in the hope of gaining relief from bodily suffering. None of the early Christian dreamers use/interpret dreams for the sole purpose bodily healing. Each of the Christian dreams considered have as their ultimate concern the revealed purpose/word of "the Lord." This does not exclude the significance of the occurrence of bodily healing in early Christian dreams. As noted, two of Perpetua's dream-visions focus on her brother's diseased and eventual regenerated body, and Perpetua herself receives bodily replenishment by ingesting the milk-offering. Nonna's dream cures her fever, and the bodily ("narrative") existence of Joseph and his family is preserved through dreams in the midst of much taking of human life. In these dreams bodily health has a role and receives attention; but this role and attention occurs within and as part of the larger emphasis upon salvation history being worked out in the dreams. In this regard, the Asclepius cult and early Christian cults are quite different.

EARLY CHRISTIAN DREAMS AND *MATERIA*

In the sources examined, dreaming and salvation history occur in direct relation to material and the natural world. Perpetua's dream-visions are full with plants and mineral imagery. They are part of the new, regenerative world of the higher consciousness. Monica's dream makes reference to a rule made of wood which grounds her narrow path. The Joseph dream narratives in Matthew 1–2 include the lore of the Magi and the plant offerings of frankincense and myrrh—both highly valued in the ancient world for their restorative properties and as integral elements in religious rituals in funerals, worship, rituals of magic, and as cosmetic. The Book of Daniel shows a rich connection between dreams and *materia* sources. Early Christian dream accounts and imagery considered in this study re-

flect Christian use and practice of folkloric medicine (which includes "folk Judaism") and spells of the waking world and seen in the writings of Theophrastus, Pliny the Elder, the alchemical text "Isis to Horus," and the spells of the Greek magical papyri. Early Christian cults develop in inextricable relation with the magio-religious, syncretistic practices of the larger Hellenistic world.

However, none of the Christian or Jewish dream accounts considered involve plant and mineral potions interpreted for *medicinal* use. Unlike the Asclepius cult, the imagery and description in these dreams of the early Christian cults do not suggest/reflect the practice of pharmacology and therapeutic healing. None of the dream accounts makes reference to formulae solutions, potions, and prescriptions. This leaves a large unknown as to just how early Christians treated suffering and disease. Possibly early Christians themselves made use of Asclepius cult healing services of "bodily salvation," like much of the other Mediterranean population, especially during the second century CE—the height of the Asclepius cult. Such association might provide some explanation for the strong polemic against the Asclepius cult appearing in the writings of such Church figures as Tertullian (c.160–225 CE):

> Pindar, indeed, has not concealed his [*sic.* Asclepius'] true desert; according to him, he [*sic.*, Asclepius] was punished for his avarice and love of gain, influenced by which he would bring the living to their death, rather than the dead to life, by the unlawful use of his medical art which he put up for sale, It is said that his mother was killed by the same fate, and it was only right that she, who had bestowed so dangerous a beast on the world, should escape to heaven on the same ladder, as it were. And yet, the Athenians will not be at a loss how to sacrifice to gods of such a fashion, for they pay honors to Asclepius and his mother amongst their dead. (*Apologeticus*, XIV, 5–6)[12]

Justin Martyr (100–165 CE) also writes:

[12] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T103, p. 52. See also Tertullian, T102, T712, T687.

> And when he [sic., the Devil] brings forward Asclepius as the raiser of the dead and healer of the other diseases, may I not say that in this matter he has imitated prophecies about Christ? (*Dialogues* 69.3)[13]

Adding to this anti-Asclepius polemic by early Christian writers are the parallel portrayals of Jesus and Asclepius by each respective group. According to legend, Asclepius, like Jesus, was killed (by the thunderbolt of Zeus). He also ministered to those in need in the waking world, and like Jesus, he was buried (in Cynosura),[14] and raised to life: "But those who among the Egyptians at one time were persons, but according to human opinion became gods, were Hermes of Thebes and Asclepius of Memphis."[15] Justin speaks of similarities between Jesus and Asclepius, and writes:

> When we say the he [Jesus] made well the lame and the paralytic and those who were feeble from birth and that he resurrected the dead, we shall seem to be mentioning deeds similar to

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[13] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T94, p. 49. See also Justin, T332, T62, T95. Marcianus Aristides (second century CE) writes: "They introduce Asclepius as a god—a physician who devises remedies and compounds of salves to earn his livelihood; for he was indigent. But later he was struck with a thunderbolt by Zeus because of Spartan Tyndareus, and he died. Now if Asclepius, although he was a god, was unable to render aid to himself when struck with a thunderbolt, how shall he succor others? It is impossible that divine nature is indigent or thundered at" (*Apologia* 10.5–6). Origen (185–255 CE) writes: "And again, when it is said of Asclepius that a great multitude both of Greeks and barbarians acknowledge that they have frequently seen, and still see, no mere phantom, but Asclepius himself, healing and doing good, and foretelling the future; Celsus requires us to believe this … although he cannot demonstrate that an incalculable number, as he asserts, of Greeks and barbarians acknowledge the existence of Asclepius" (*Contra Celsum* III.24).

[14] Anonymous, *S. Ignatii Martyrium Romanum*, III, 2. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T117, p. 57.

[15] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* I.21.34. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T829, pp. 424–25. See also Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* VIII.26. From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T329, p. 168.

> and even identical with those which were said to have been performed by Asclepius. (Justin, *Apologia* 22.6)[16]

DREAM MOVEMENTS, TRANSFORMATION, AND TEMPLE SACRIFICE

All of the dreams examined in this study—Greco-Roman, Jewish, and early Christian—have in common various kinds of movements which occur in dream experiences. These may include epiphany, preparation, liminality, struggle, submission, reception of the divine secret, and inner knowing. With most of the dreams considered, these movements—which tend to intensify toward the core experience of receiving the divine secret—result in some kind of psyche-soma "reorientation" or transformation of the dreamer. The elixir given to Isis has regenerative (and deadly) properties, where "life begets life"—something enacted in Apuleius' rite of initiation into the Isis cult. Perpetua awakes from her dream-visions (re)oriented toward the purpose and meaning of her martyrdom. Nonna awakes feeling "very well," not feverish, and Monica experiences a sense of peace after her dream about Augustine. The dreams in Matthew 1–2 change Joseph, who moves from being a person plagued by doubt, to one who responds to divine revelation, and experiences salvation. The dreaming of (and interpretation of dreaming by) Joseph of Genesis reorients and transforms him from slave to governor under Pharaoh. In these examples the sleepers have a dream experiences and emerges being not quite the same person. These inner movements of the sleeper's dream change and fill out the dreamer in ways which ultimately make a difference for that figure in the waking world.

This phenomenon of transformation and/or reorientation through dreaming of early Christian cults is rooted in the rituals of

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[16] From Edelstein, *Asclepius*, T94, p. 49. Cf. T. 423; 67. Edelstein writes: "In short, the similarity between Asclepius and Christ was deep-rooted; it was founded in the very essence of the two figures. In the historical process that had shaped and reshaped the concept of Asclepius this god had become an anticipation, as it were, of Christ who was to be proclaimed to men," ibid., II. p. 137.

temple sacrifice. Joseph's dreams occur in relation to the Magi who offer temple spices at the foot of the Christ child's manger, presaging the life-sacrifice of the same child several decades later. Ecstatic visions come to Perpetua as salve for the horror of her forthcoming sacrifice after that of Christ's own—both sacrifices occurring in relation to the ritual sacrifices of the Jewish temple. Jacob sets up and anoints with oil a pillar at Bethany, and at Beer-sheba offers sacrifice to his God, who appears to him in his dreams. Solomon sacrifices at the temple of Gideon, and YHWH appears to him in a night dream. After the way of the Christian Eucharist, Gregory distributes glowing bread to Nonna, and with cupped hands (*iunctis manibus*) and the praises of worshippers, Perpetua partakes of the fresh milk offering. Early Christian dreaming, and the transformation yielded by that dreaming, occur in inextricable relationship with and as part of temple ritual and sacrifice.

OBSERVATIONS

Thus, early Christian cults have in common various aspects of dreaming and the use of dreams in relation to healing/salvation. These include dream "conviction" ("inner-knowing"), dream concretization in the waking world, fixation of dream conviction/experience in early Christian "discourse," the inner movements of dreams which yield dreamer "transformation," and the use and knowledge of material resources and folklore, rooted in temple sacrifice.

Two aspects of dreams are unique to the early Christian cult dreams considered in this investigation. First, unlike the Asclepius dream testimonies, in none of the dreams do descriptions of bodily experiences of/with a god receive primary emphasis. Nonetheless, intermediating figures—some in human form—play a role in some of the early Christian dream traditions. The appearance of "shadowy" human figures in dreams may represent an early Christian interest in the central role of church figures such as the bishop as saving figures.

Second, the early Christian dream notion of "salvation," with its emphasis upon the abiding presence and purpose of deity, contrasts the Asclepius cult notion of salvation, which consists of direct, bodily healing through incubation dreaming and down-to-earth medicine. For early Christen cults, salvation/healing comes

through the divine, liberative purpose being worked out through the dreamers and the community of that dreamer.

Both the Asclepius cult and early Christian cults value the world of dreams and the world of *materia* and the relationship between these worlds. But while the Asclepius cult pays equal attention to both the unconscious and the earth as potent sources for healing/salvation, many early Christian cults give primary attention to just one—the world of dreams as the locus of divine revelation and dreamer transformation/salvation.

THE SLEEPER'S DREAM: ASCLEPIUS RITUAL AND EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE

Healing occurs through dreams embedded within Asclepius temple ritual and worship inextricably connected with the manipulation of forces (real and perceived) of the natural world, and healing also occurs through dreams as part of a burgeoning prowess (and manipulation) of language and discourse of early Christian rhetoric. A reading of dreams in relation to healing/salvation which builds upon Miller's notion of dreams as semiotic production is to be found somewhere within this interplay between temple ritual and language, sacred plant and sacred word. This book has aimed to determine where and in what way(s) that reading falls within this mix.

An interest in the "word" written and spoken in relation to dreams occurs among the Christian dreamers: for Matthew, Perpetua, Augustine, and Gregory dreams become part of a larger media of "proclaimed" salvation. Matthew, in particular, uses dreams as rhetorical devices to establish relationship between the human and divine worlds. Within the Matthean narrative dreams become a location for "religious meaning" for the Matthean community which is rooted in the Joseph traditions. "Word" becomes the media of interface between human and divine.

For each of the early Christian writers considered, dreams provide material for meaningful psyche-soma engagement at the "root level," and it is this inherent, visceral quality which makes them attractive to early Christian writers in the creating of what David Frankfurter calls "narrating power"—the power of the spoken word. This includes the way dreams become influential media for the social formation of Christian cults experiencing "alienation from the world." Thus, martyrdom accounts like Perpetua are collected into a larger corpus of resistance discourse—Ignatius of An-

tioch, Polycarp—to become a source of religio-political memory and inspiration in wider early Christian circles.

Dreams therefore have their place in early Christian rhetoric. As poignant mediums they play an important role in its development. Early Christian dreams contribute to and constitute "word." However, the dreams examined in this study show no evidence of occurring ultimately and merely as a function of language. "Discourse" does not beget dream experience. Rather, the dreams examined in this study have a life of their own. The imagery and movements of dreams—the "feeling" of the dreams as creations/events from the dreamer's inner, unconscious, *materia*-related world, has an inherent quality which is difficult ultimately to contain and set down to writing. The dreams considered here occur as human experience, rooted in temple ritual and sacrifice.

Although ancient Christian dreams entail a fixation upon "word" and participate in a larger early Christian rhetoric, they stand out more and are valued by early Christian cults as mediums of dreamer transformation experience, rooted in the ongoing purpose and presence of deity in the sleeping and waking world of the dreamer and the community for/to which that dreamer belongs and speaks. (Bodily) healing often results from such transformative experience, but it does not receive the primary emphasis of attention by early Christian cults. This contrasts with the Asclepius cult focus on incubation dream experiences and immediate, tangible healing results. For early Christian cults "salvation" ultimately and most importantly has to with divine presence being revealed and lived out through the sleeper's dream and waking world. For the Asclepius cult "salvation" is synonymous with bodily healing.

APPENDIX A: PGM TEXTS IN RELATION TO DREAMS AND HEALING

Of the many *Greek Magical Papyri* texts listed, this study has selected those texts (192 total) that are pertinent to the study of the Asclepius cult. The content of these selections include dreams, lists of herbs, plant harvesting rituals, and the treatment of physical illness. Source identification (*Greek Magical Papyri* [*PGM*}, or *Demotic Magical Papyri* [*PDM*]), text citation, type (rite, spell, charm, etc.), and subject-matter (dream, revelation, medicinal) are listed respectively in table columns.

Source	Text	Type	Subject
PGM	I.1–42	Rite	demons
PGM	I.42–195	Spell	demons
PGM	II.1–64	Spell	revelation
PGM	III.187–262	Spell	revelation
PGM	III.612–32	Spell	shadow
PGM	IV.1–25	Spell	revelation
PGM	IV.52–85	Spell	revelation
PGM	IV.86–87	phylactery	daimons
PGM	IV.286–95	Spell	harvest
PGM	IV. 471–73	Verse	Homer
PGM	IV. 474	Verse	Homer
PGM	IV. 475–829	Liturgy	Mythras
PGM	IV. 830	Verse	Homer
PGM	IV. 835–49	text	astrology
PGM	IV. 930–1114	charm	vision
PGM	IV. 1115–66	stele	prayer
PGM	IV. 1227–64	rite	daimons
PGM	IV. 2140–44	spell	corpse
PGM	IV. 2145–2240	verse	Homer
PGM	IV. 2241–2358	document	moon
PGM	IV. 2967–3006	spell	harvest
PGM	IV. 3172–3208	charm	dream
PGM	V. 1–54–69	spell	vision
PGM	V. 370–446	spell	revelation

PGM	Va. 1–3	spell	vision
PGM	VII. 1–148	oracle	Homer
PGM	VII. 193–96	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 197–98	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 199–201	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 203–5	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 206–7	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 208–0	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 209–10	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 211–12	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 213–14	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 218–21	phylactery	medical
PGM	VII. 222–49	request	dream oracle
PGM	VII. 250–54	request	dream oracle
PGM	VII. 255–59	spell	lamp
PGM	VII. 260–71	spell	medical
PGM	VII. 272–83	spell	astrology
PGM	VII. 284–99	spell	astrology
PGM	VII. 319–34	charm	vision
PGM	VII. 335–47	charm	vision
PGM	VII. 348–58	divination	boy
PGM	VII. 359–69	request	dream oracle
PGM	VII. 407–10	spell	dream
PGM	VII. 478–90	spell	dream rev
PGM	VII. 505–28	spell	daimon
PGM	VII. 540–78	divination	lamp
PGM	VII. 591–92	prayer	invocation
PGM	VII. 664–85	request	dream rev
PGM	VII. 703–26	request	dream oracle
PGM	VII. 727–39	charm	vision
PGM	VII. 740–55	request	dream oracle
PGM	VII. 756–94	prayer	prayer
PGM	VII. 795–845	oracle/divination	dream
PGM	VII. 846–61	spell	revelation
PGM	VII. 862–918	spell	moon
PGM	VII. 1009–16	divination	dream
PGM	VIII. 64–100	request	dream oracle
PGM	XII. 21–49	prayer	remedy
PGM	XII. 1–13	rite	epiphany
PGM	XII. 14–95	spell	daimon
PGM	XII. 96–106	recipes	recipes
PGM	XII. 107–21	charm	dreams
PGM	XII. 121–43	spell	dreams
PGM	XII. 144–52	request	dream
PGM	XII. 153–60	spell	divine rev
PGM	XII. 190–92	request	dream oracle
PGM	XII. 193–201	spell	gold

PGM	XII. 351–64	spell	sphere
PDM	XIV. 1–92	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 93–114	spell	revelation
PDM	XIV. 115	spell	vision?
PDM	XIV. 116	spell	vision?
PDM	XIV. 295–308	inquiry	vessel
PDM	XIV. 239–95	inquiry	vessel
PDM	XIV. 376–94	recipes	recipes
PDM	XIV. 395–427	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 528–53	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 554–62	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 563–74	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 574–85	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 585–93	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 594–620	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 620–26	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 627–35	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 695–700	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 701–5	divination	vessel
PDM	XIV. 805–40	inquiry	vessel
PDM	XIV. 851–55	inquiry	vessel
PDM	XIV. 886–96	recipes	herbs
PDM	XIV. 897–910	list	herbs & minerals
PDM	XIV. 920–29	information	mineral
PDM	XIV. 935–39	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 940–52	information	herbs
PDM	XIV. 953–55	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 956–60	test	medical
PDM	XIV. 961–65	prescriptions	medical
PDM	XIV. 966–69	information	herbs
PDM	XIV. 970–77	prescriptions	medical
PDM	XIV. 978–80	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 981–84	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 985–92	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 993–1002	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 1003–14	amulet	medical
PDM	XIV. 1015–20	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 1021–23	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 1024–25	prescription	medical
PDM	XIV. 1070–77	spell	dreams
PDM	XIV. 1078–89	request	revelation
PDM	XIV. 1097–1103	spell	medical
PDM	XIV. 1104–9	recipe	medical
PDM	XIV. 1110–29	spell	divination
PDM	XIV. 1163–79	spell	vessel
PDM	XIV. 1219–27	spell	medical
PGM	XVIIb. 1–23	prayer	prayer

PGM	XIIIa. 1–4	amulet	medical
PGM	XIIIb. 1–7	amulet	medical
PGM	XX. 1–4	spell	medical
PGM	XX.4–12	charm	medical
PGM	XX. 13–19	charm	medical
PGM	XXIIa. 1–27	recipes	medical
PGM	XXIIb. 1–26	prayer	prayer
PGM	XXIIb. 27–31	request	dream oracle
PGM	XXIIb. 32–35	request	dream oracle
PGM	XXXVIIIa. 1–7	spell	medical
PGM	XXXVIIIb. 1–9	spell	medical
PGM	XXXVIIIc. 1–11	spell	medical
PGM	XXIX.1–10	prayer	prayer
PGM	XXXII. 1–25	amulet	medical
PGM	XXXIV.1–24	fragment	novel
PGM	XXXVI. 320–32	spell	medical
PGM	XLIII. 1–27	amulet	medical
PGM	XLIV. 1–18	amulet	medical
PGM	XLVI.1–4	request	revelation
PGM	LVII. 1–37	rite	daimon
PDM	lxi. 1–30	spell	revelation
PDM	lxi. 43–48	remedy	medical
PDM	lxi. 49–57	remedy	medical
PDM	lxi. 58–62	spell	medical
PDM	lxi. 63–78	spell	dream rev
PGM	LXII. 52–75	horoscope	astrology
PGM	LXV. 4–7	spell	medical
PGM	LXXVII. 1–24	charm	revelation
PGM	LXXXIX. 1–27	phylactery	medical
PGM	XC. 14–18	salve	medical
PGM	XCI. 1–14	amulet	medical
PGM	XCIII. 1–6	rite	sacrifice
PGM	XCIV. 1–3	spell	voces magicae
PGM	XCIV. 4–6	powder	medical
PGM	XCIV. 7–9	spell	medical
PGM	XCIV. 10–16	phylactery	medical
PGM	XCIV. 17–21	spell	daimon
PGM	XCIV. 22–26	spell	medical
PGM	XCIV. 27–35	spell	medical
PGM	XCIV. 36–38	spell	medical
PGM	XCIV. 39–60	spell	medical
PGM	XCV. 14–18	remedy	medical
PGM	XCVII. 1–6	spell	medical
PGM	XCVII. 1–6. 15–17	spell	medical
PGM	CII. 1–17	request	dream oracle
PGM	CIV. 1–8	amulet	medical
PGM	CVI. 1–10	amulet	medical

PGM	CX. 1–12	horoscope	astrology
PGM	CXI. 1–15	instructions	figures
PGM	CXII. 1–15	amulet	medical
PGM	CXIII. 1–4	amulet	medical
PGM	CXIV. 1–14	amulet	medical
PGM	CXV. 1–7	amulet	medical
PGM	CXIXb. 4–5	spell	medical
PGM	CXX. 1–13	amulet	medical
PGM	CXXII. 5–25	enchantment	apples
PGM	CXXII. 51–55	spell	medical
PGM	CXXIIa. 1–23	spell	voces magicae
PGM	CXXIIIa.	spell	medical
PGM	CXXIIIa.	spell	medical
PGM	CXXIIIb.	spell	voces magicae
PGM	CXXIIIc.	spell	voces magicae
PGM	CXXIIId.	spell	voces magicae
PGM	CXXVII.1–12	prescriptions	medical
PGM	CXXVIII.1–12	phylactery	medical
PGM	CXXX.1–13	spell	medical
PGM	Sup. 1–6	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 7–18	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 19–27	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 28–40	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 40–60	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 60–101	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 101–16	spell	dream
PGM	Sup. 117–30	spell	dream

APPENDIX B: TEXTS OF ARISTIDES'S AND THE ASCLEPIUS CULT

Aristides represents an important source for the understanding of the Asclepius cult in the second century CE. Edelstein collects over fifty references to Asclepius by Aristides. About twenty of the testimonies refer to some aspect of the cult itself: attendants, sacrifice, festivals, purification rites, sacrifice, etc. About fifteen other testimonies make reference to medicine and healing. The title and text citation of Aristides' writings appear in the first two columns. Edelstein's reference number occurs in the third column. The subject interest in relation to the Asclepius cult addressed by Aristides occurs, and a brief (cursory) description occurs in columns four and five.

Title 1	Text	Text#	Subject	Description
Orations	XLVIII. 40–43	449A	medical	Athena
Orations	XLIX. 29–30	410	medical	drugs of A to heal body
Orations	XLIX. 28	411	medical	eat drug and wheat bread
Orations	XLVII. 61	493	cult	antidotes
Orations	L. 23	403	medical	Egypt
Orations	VII. 46	280	deification	wife Epione and children
Orations	XLVII. 6	571	cult	festival of A
Orations	XXVIII.1–24	282	deification	dreams became waking reality; oratory aid: eulogy of A & gods
Orations	L. 56	302	deification	stretch hand; in sky enthronement of A
Orations	XXXVIII. 24	323	myth	relieve me of my disease; body obey wishes of the soul; life lived w/ease
Orations	LII. 1	400	medical	illness from age 12; many visions lead me to Epidaurus
Orations	XLVII. 65	408	medical	paradoxical things: running barefoot

Orations	XLIX. 46–48	325	medical/deif	Isis/Sarapis surgery
Orations	XXIII.15–18	402	medical	leader of mysteries; stern cable of salvation
Orations	XLVII. 57	418	medical	human physician yields
Orations	L. 9	460	medical	protection fr illness: Athena also protects
Orations	XLVIII. 31–35	417	medical	remedy wormwood
Orations	XLVII. 11	485	sanctuary	candles, temple doors closed
Orations	LI. 28	485a	cult	white and priests GK
Orations	XLVIII. 31	486	cult	entrance, purity rit; white garments
Orations	L. 6	518	cult	purification
Orations	XLVII. 32	544	cult	temple doorkeeper, candles, vomit
Orations	XLVIII. 81	569A	cult	Perg, baptise? GK
Orations	XLVIII. 74	570	cult	clay smeared on body in honor of A
Orations	L. 46	808	sanctuary	votive offering, tripod, dream
Orations	XLII, 1–15	317	deification	sac and incense; Hesiod; speeches inspired by A; res, rhet, elix, hand; grateful for speech most of all
Orations	L. 102	491b	cult	sacrifice? GK
Orations	XLVIII. 29	495	cult	sacristants
Orations	XLVIII. 35	497	cult	sacristants
Orations	XLVIII. 47	498	cult	sacristants
Orations	XLVIII. 27	504	cult	sacrifice in rit, pits, ring = finger
Orations	XLII. 4	303	cult	guides and rules as saviour of the whole
Orations	XXVII. 132	464B	med sav	saviour
Orations	L. 3	812	sanctuary	Perg?
Orations	XLVII. 17	814	sanctuary	Smyrna
Orations	L. 17	435	medical	struggle
Orations	L. 64	412; 491c	medical	priest and surgery
Orations	XXXIX. 14–15	409	deification	well: miraculous
Orations	XXIX. 1–18	804	deif	well at Perg
Orations	LII. 1–5	805	sanctuary	water at Perg
Orations	XLVIII. 4	316	deification	to be invoked
Orations	XLVIII. 80	408A; 411A	medical	garmnet GK
Orations	XLVIII. 21	602	cult	praise of A
Orations	L. 42	604	cult	praise of A
Orations	L. 44	605	cult	praise of A

Orations	L. 43	605a	cult	praise of A
Orations	XLVII. 73	606	cult	praise of A
Orations	XLVIII. 30	806	sanctuary	all dressed in white; speech
Orations	XLVII. 44	543	cult	Pergamon: wreath
Orations	XLVII. 45	543A	Cult	wreath

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