

# Narrative-patterns in Christian Hagiography

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## *Falling by the wayside in Clement of Alexandria and Epiphanius*

To illustrate the theme of repentance, Clement of Alexandria tells a story about the apostle John coming from Patmos to Ephesus and of his setting out from there to regulate ecclesiastical affairs in the neighbouring provinces; in one city not far from Ephesus he had left in the care of the local bishop a young man, physically well-endowed, good-looking, and spirited, and had then gone back to Ephesus; the bishop brought the young man up and finally baptized him, but then relaxed his guard, which led to the young man's falling in with and being corrupted by some contemporaries of his who were idle, dissolute, and versed in evil ways (τῷ δὲ ἀνέσεως πρὸ ὥρας λαβομένῳ προσφθείρονται τινες ἥλικες ἀργοὶ καὶ ἀπερρωγότες, ἐθάδες κακῶν); at first they led him astray through expensive banquets, then they seduced him into going out at night to steal clothes, next they asked him to do something more terrible, and gradually he became used to wrongdoing, abandoned hope in the salvation offered by God, and ended up putting together a band of robbers and practising a particularly bloody form of banditry. The story ends with John's securing his repentance (*Q.d.s.* 42.1–15).

The tale certainly captured the imagination of later generations: Eusebius repeats it verbatim (*HE* 3.23.6–19); and it is

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recounted more or less accurately by a number of other authors.<sup>1</sup> It so impressed itself on Epiphanius that he uses part of the same story-pattern when he digresses from his discussion of the Ebionite heresy to recount the conversion of the Palestinian Jew Josephus to Christianity (*Haer.* 30.4.1–12.10). The story that he tells is that Josephus had been one of the council of advisors of the Jewish patriarch of Tiberias, who on his death-bed had left his son in the charge of Josephus and another man of good character (παραδούς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν κομιδῇ νέον ὄντα Ἰωσήφω τε καὶ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἐπιεικεστάτῳ, 30.6.5); when the boy came of age, certain of his contemporaries, who were idle fellows and versed in wickedness, fell in with him and corrupted him (ὡς οὖν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκμαῖον τῆς ἡλικίας ὁ νέος ἤρχετο, προσεφθείροντο αὐτῷ τινες ἥλικες ἀργοὶ καὶ ἐθάδες κακῶν); the young men got the patriarch to change his ways and encouraged him to fornicate with women and to use magic to force them to come to him against their will (30.7.2–3). In Epiphanius, it is not the young man who repents and is converted to Christianity; he is the instrument through whom Josephus eventually comes to see the light, after being confronted with repeated instances of God's power.

Nothing in Epiphanius allows us to decide whether he draws on Clement or on Eusebius. External considerations would suggest that Eusebius is the more likely source. What is not at issue is Epiphanius' dependence; the reminiscence of the Greek is so close that Epiphanius would appear to have had a text of one or the other of the two authors in front of him as he wrote. That assumption may not be correct and another explanation may be in order. Epiphanius' modelling his narrative on the story in Clement necessarily raises doubts about the reliability of his account of the conversion of Josephus. He maintains that he heard the tale of the conversion from the mouth of the aged Josephus himself when he stayed with him in Scythopolis. He

<sup>1</sup>They are collected by Otto Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus III* (GCS 17.3 [Leipzig 1909]) 188.

adds as a circumstantial detail that he and some like-minded persons had come to Scythopolis to see Eusebius, the exiled bishop of Vercella, who had been given refuge in Josephus' house, and that while he was there, he and his companions had questioned Josephus about his conversion to Christianity and had heard about it from him and not from someone who had merely rumour to purvey (30.5.1–3). A further touch almost certainly designed to strengthen the reader's confidence in the authenticity of the story is the expression of uncertainty on Epiphanius' part over the name of the young patriarch who is led astray: he thinks he was called Ioudas, but he is not altogether certain, because much time has elapsed (30.7.2).<sup>2</sup>

Epiphanius may well have heard in outline a story somewhat like the one he tells, but the version he recounts almost certainly represents an artistic reworking of the tale he had heard to fit the pattern provided by Clement in which an older man is given charge of a younger man, who, despite the best efforts of his older companion, is led astray by the dissolute companions with whom he falls in. It calls for some comment that Epiphanius should not only borrow the story-pattern, but repeat Clement's words virtually verbatim. The same phenomenon is to be observed in stories about the defeat of magic: not only is the same story-pattern apparent, but the same words are very often used to articulate the story.

*Stories of magic and magicians in the Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger*

The *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* was written by a monk who was present during the lifetime of its subject and was an

<sup>2</sup>For discussion of Herodotus' use of detail and of doubt to secure the reader's belief in the story he has concocted, see Detlev Fehling, *Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, Invention and Narrative Art*, transl. J. G. Howie (ARCA 21 [Leeds 1989]) 120–128.

eye-witness to some of the miracles performed by the saint.<sup>3</sup> Since Symeon died in 592, the *Life* must have been composed at some time, probably not long, after that date.<sup>4</sup> It is unusually long for the *Life* of a saint and is a particularly rich source of information about many subjects, not least of them magic-working and magic-workers. It has, in addition, much to say about the considerable opposition that Symeon's miracle-working encountered, on the part mainly of fellow-churchmen, and about their dismissal of the miracles as acts of sorcery.

The form in which stories about saints healing the effects of magic-working are told has not been studied.<sup>5</sup> There is a standard narrative-pattern to many of them. It must go back well into the fourth century, but in this case what the prototype

<sup>3</sup>*v.Sym.Styl.J.* praef.14–17 van den Ven: ὅσα τοίνυν παρὰ τῶν προηγησαμένων ἡμᾶς παραλαβόντες ἰσχύσαμεν διατηρῆσαι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐθεασάμεθα αὐτόπται τούτων γενέσθαι καταξιωθέντες, ἀναγκαῖον ἠγησάμεθα γράψαι νῦν. See further, Paul van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune* (SH 32 [1962–70]) I 101–108\*. Paul Speck, "Ikonoklasmus und die Anfänge der makedonischen Renaissance," *Poikila Byzantina* 4: *Varia* 1 (1984) 178–179, argues for a date in the later rather than the earlier seventh century on the basis of the most famous passage in the *Life*, the description of an attempt on the part of a mob to destroy an image of the saint set above the door of his workshop by a grateful craftsman (158). Speck believes that the passage reflects a time at which images of saints were only valued by a minority of Christians. That is to ignore the point of the story, which is that a mob made up of persons opposed to the Stylite because of his constant denunciation of their paganism (ὡς πολλάκις ἐλέγξαντα τὴν κακοπιστίαν καὶ πλάνην τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐλληνιζόντων) took the opportunity presented by the icon to foment trouble against him. Context would suggest that the mob, if not identical with the devotees of astrology, believers in fate, and Manichaeans whose hostility to Symeon is the subject of the previous paragraph, have a good deal in common with them (157). Whoever they are, they are far from being ordinary Christians as Speck would have it.

<sup>4</sup>For the date of Symeon's death, see van den Ven (*supra* n.3) I 124\*.

<sup>5</sup>Some of the stories about encounters between saints and magicians are collected by H. J. Magoulias, "The Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries A.D.: Sorcery, Relics and Icons," *Byzantion* 37 (1967) 228–269. The *topos* of the female martyr accused of sorcery, because of the miraculous protection heaven affords her, is dealt with by Serafino Prete, "Some *Loci* in Ancient Latin Historiography," in David Neiman/Margaret Schatkin, edd., *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky* (*Orient ChristAnal* 195 [Rome 1973]) 313–314.

is for the story-pattern is a mystery. The same is true of stories about the opposition a saint encounters and the charges made by his fellow-clerics about his miracle-working being nothing but sorcery: they too have a characteristic form.

Tales about saints nullifying the spells sorcerers have cast on someone take the following form in Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* and Cyril of Scythopolis' *Life of Euthymus*: a disgruntled party (τοῦ σκοποῦ ἀποτυχὸν ἀπομανεῖς κατ' αὐτοῦ, Cyr. S. v. *Euthym.* 57 [Schwartz, *TU* 49.2]) or someone unsuccessful in attaining the object of his sexual desires (μὴ δυνάμενος αὐτήν δελεάσαι, Pall. *H.Laus.* 17.6) approaches and has a conversation with a sorcerer to ask for help (προσομιλεῖ γόητί τι, v. *Euthym.* 57; προσωμίλησε γόητι, *H.Laus.* 17.6); the γόης on the receipt of a considerable fee (λαβὼν τὸ ἰκανόν, v. *Euthym.* 57; *H.Laus.* 17.6) proceeds to apply his magic (ἐχρήσαντο ταῖς διαβολικαῖς μαγγανείαις, v. *Euthym.* 57; ἐχρήσατο ταῖς γοητικαῖς μαγγανείαις, *H.Laus.* 17.6); the saint is called on for help and defeats the demon conjured up by the magician, but reprimands the party whom he has saved for laying himself open to demonic attack by not having faithfully attended church and participated in the mass, telling him that it had happened precisely for that reason (τοῦτό σοι συνέβη, ἐπειδὴ πολλῶν παρελθουσῶν ἡμερῶν οὔτε εἰς ἐκκλησίαν εἰσῆλθες οὔτε τοῖς θείοις προσῆλθες μυστηρίοις, v. *Euthym.* 57; ταῦτα γάρ σοι συνέβη τῷ ἐπὶ πέντε ἑβδομάδας μὴ προσεληλυθέναι τοῖς μυστηρίοις, *H.Laus.* 17.9).<sup>6</sup>

It may well be that Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* is the model for the story told in Cyril of Scythopolis' *Life of Euthymus*.<sup>7</sup> But Palladius does not necessarily establish the pattern. Jerome

<sup>6</sup>For magic having no effect on Christians who have taken communion daily, see Anast. S. *Relat.* 50 Nau. John Chrysostom, on the other hand, says specifically that those men who indulge in licentiousness by visiting prostitutes strip themselves of the protection of God and so expose themselves to the magic-working of the prostitutes they frequent (*Hom. in I Cor.* 7:2 5 [PG 51.216]).

<sup>7</sup>On Cyril's *Life of Euthymus* and its sources, see A. J. Festugière, *Les moines d'orient* III.1 *Les moines de Palestine* (Paris 1962) 9–16.

seems to be familiar with it, although he does not follow it mechanically in his *Life of Hilarion*: he introduces variations and manipulates it to fit the special circumstances of his story (*v. Hilar.*12). His story is about a young man from Maiuma in the territory of Gaza who falls violently in love with a virgin of God (*virginem ... iuvenis deperibat*); when she does not respond to his touches, jokes, nods and whistles and so on (*qui cum frequenter tactu, iocis, nutibus, sibilis, et ceteris huiusmodi ... nihil profecisset*), he goes to Memphis to equip himself with the magical arts to return properly armed to the assault on the virgin (*perrexit Memphim, ut confesso vulnere suo magicis artibus rediret armatus ad virginem*); he comes back after a year appropriately equipped and buries strange words and strange characters (*i.e.*  $\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\eta\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ ) inscribed on a sheet of Cypriot bronze below the threshold of the house of the girl (*et subter limen domus puellae portenta quaedam verborum et portentosas figuras, sculptas in aeris Cyprii lamina, defodit*); the girl is driven mad and is brought by her parents to the monastery, where the demon who has been conjured up to plague her confesses to Hilarion and declares that he has been forced to do what he does against his will;<sup>8</sup> the girl is cured, but is reprimanded by the saint for leaving herself open by her conduct to demonic assaults (*et magis reddita sanitate increpuit virginem, cur fecisset talia, per quae daemon intrare potuisset*). Jerome improves on the basic story-pattern by having the young man, instead of consulting professional magicians, go to Egyptian Memphis, the seat of magic-working, to learn magic for himself; the young woman, despite being a Virgin of God, exposes herself to magic, not by failing to attend church, but by

<sup>8</sup>For a demon saying he was forced to enter a man against his will because of magical compulsions, cf. *v. Hilar.* 13.9: *quo similiter et in verba eadem respondente multasque incantationum occasiones et necessitates magicarum artium obtendente*; for the motif of the demon conjured up by a lover to bring a girl to him declaring to a holy man that he has been forced against his will into entering the girl, see Thdt. *H.rel.* 13.10 (SC 234).

coming into contact with a young man, even to the point of his being able to touch her.

A further variation on the pattern is to be discerned in one of the stories from which the Faust-legend ultimately derives: the Devil in his envy of the human race puts it into the mind of a disgruntled cleric to approach magicians for help in righting the wrongs he feels have been done him; this leads to his making contact with a Jewish magician, who introduces the man to his patron, the Devil; the Devil then gets the man to renounce his Christian faith. Thus in the version of the tale ascribed to Theophilus in *Codex Marcianus gr. cl.* 1101 there is: θεωρήσας οὖν ὁ ἀεὶ πολεμῶν τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ φθονήσας τὰς αὐτοῦ ἀρετάς, ὑποβάλλει αὐτὸν λογισμοῖς ὥστε φαρμακοῖς προσομιλῆσαι (164.21–22 Radermacher).<sup>9</sup> This story cannot be earlier than 650 and is unlikely to be later than 850.<sup>10</sup>

Elements in the story-pattern are almost certainly older than Palladius. One of these is the theme of the Christian woman who by coming into physical contact with men exposes herself to magic-working, but is in spite of herself saved from its effects. The motif is to be found embedded in Epiphanius' story about the Jewish youth whom Josephus had tried to keep on the straight and narrow. The youth comes with some comrades-in-mischief to Gadara to attend an annual festival and while there goes to the baths, where he is greatly attracted to a Christian woman; in what sounds to be the *Laconicum* or *sudatorium* he contrives to rub against her (διῶν ἐν τῷ ἀέρι παρενέτριψεν τὴν πλευρὰν τῆ πλευρᾶ τοῦ γυναιίου),<sup>11</sup> the woman being a

<sup>9</sup>For ὑποβάλλειν used of the Devil planting an idea, cf. Ath. *Ep.Aeg.lib.*, PG 25.545; *v.Sym.J.* 130; *v.Marthaë* 54 van den Ven.

<sup>10</sup>L. Radermacher, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage: Der Zauberer Cyprianus; Die Erzählung des Helladius Theophilus* (SBWien 206.4 [1927]) 69.

<sup>11</sup>For young men rubbing against young women at an all-night festival at the feast of the Martyr Cyprian in Carthage in the 470's, cf. F. Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hipponne, Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique* (Paris 1996) no. 5.5: *quomodo curatum est, quanta prudentia inventum, quanta instantia perfectum, ut illi qui,*

Christian crosses herself in the name of Christ (ἡ δὲ ἑαυτὴν ἐσφραγίσσατο εἰς ὄνομα Χριστοῦ οἷα δὴ Χριστιανὴ οὖσα); despite her contravening Christian precept by engaging in mixed bathing, the youth is not allowed to succeed in his attempt on her, so that God may display a miracle (ἵνα δείξῃ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια, τοῦ ἐπιχειρήματος τὸ μειράκιον ἀπέτυχεν).<sup>12</sup> What the woman had laid herself open to is very likely to have been the kind of touching-spell referred to in the magical papyri as a παράψιμον ἀγώγιμον (PGM IV.2173–2174, VII.973, XII.62; *Suppl. Mag.* II 82 fr. A.2).

The author of the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* is evidently familiar with the narrative-pattern just examined, since he uses it in the one story in the *Life* that tells of Symeon defeating the effects of magic-working (49): a man who hates a certain old man approaches and has a conversation with magicians (ἄνθρωπος τις ἐχθραίνων γέροντί τινι φαρμάκοις προσομιλήσας).<sup>13</sup> The rest of the pattern is, however, absent and is replaced by another pattern. The help that is sought from the sorcerers is that with the aid of demons the old man and his sons should be broken, that they should be pushed off a cliff, and that the cattle of the old man should disappear. In the midst of his affliction an angel comes from the Lord to tell the old man to bring bread to the monastery where there is a shortage of food and that he should lay hold of the fringe of Symeon's robe and the bonds affecting his house will be buried in the lowest

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*cum ingressi essent, discretis locis futuri erant, etiam per discreta ingrederentur, nec in angusto intrantes inciperent quod postea perficere molirentur.*

<sup>12</sup>*Haer.* 1.2.30.7 (GCS 25.342–343; PG 41.417). On mixed bathing under the Roman Empire, see Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor 1999) 26–29, and on the development of a more rigorous attitude towards nudity within Christianity, see Georg Schöllgen, “Entwicklungen der spätantiken Bademoral im Spiegel der Textüberlieferung der Syrischen Didaskalie,” in Manfred Wacht, ed., *Panchaia: Festschrift für Klaus Thraede* (=JAC Ergänzungsbd. 22 [Münster 1995]) 182–194.

<sup>13</sup>Van den Ven (*supra* n.3) II 55, who is unfamiliar with the story-pattern and misunderstands φαρμάκοις, translates: “Un homme haïssait un vieillard et, familiarisé avec l’emploi des drogues.”

reaches of the earth (καταχθονισθήσονται ἐν τοῖς κατωτάτοις μέρεσι τῆς γῆς τὰ δέσμα τοῦ οἴκου σου). This the old man does and in addition has earth and water blessed by the Stylite, with which he proceeds on his return to sprinkle himself, his sons, his house, and his remaining cattle and his wine (καὶ ῥαντίζει ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶνον). The demons are put to flight and all is restored to health.

The latter part of the story represents a pattern to be seen in Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*: an object closely connected with a saint is used to defeat magic and a catalogue is given of the men, animals, and equipment sprinkled with the sanctified water. Hilarion is approached by a Christian member of the curial class in Gaza who is required by reason of his rank to provide a chariot-team to race in games in Gaza; he is afraid that his team will be defeated by the magic-working of a rival, a pagan *duumvir*, and asks for Hilarion's help. Hilarion reluctantly accedes to the request and orders that a clay cup from which he himself is wont to drink be filled with water and given to the man. With the water from the vessel the man sprinkles the stable, his horses, his charioteers, his chariot, and the starting-gates (*quem cum accepisset Italicus, et stabulum et equos et aurigas suos, rhedam carcerumque repagula aspersit*). When the starting-signal is given, the Christian horses fly ahead, while those of the pagan are held back. There is much shouting on the part of the pagans, who cry out, proclaiming the defeat of the local deity, Marnas: *Marnas victus est a Christo* (11).

Epiphanius provides a further instance of the pattern in his digression on the life of the converted Jew, Josephus. At some point after his conversion to Christianity, Josephus was made a *comes* by Constantine. He then asked Constantine's permission to build churches in the cities and villages of Palestine that were settled only by Jews. He began the project in Tiberias, using the remains of the largest religious structure in the city, a

Hadrianeum, whose four walls still stood to the height of a man. As lime was needed, seven kilns to produce it were set up, but they could not be got to burn, since the Jews did not refrain from the magic that was endemic amongst them; well-born Jews were incited to bind down the fire with magical spells. Those in charge of the kilns, seeing what was happening, reported the matter to Josephus. He got hold of a vessel and had it filled with water and then made the sign of the Cross with his finger on it and invoking the name of Jesus asked that the water be given the power to annul the effect of the magic and cause the fire to burn. He then took the water in his own hands and sprinkled it on each one of the kilns (καὶ ῥαίνει ἐκάστῳ φούρ-  
νακι ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος). The spells were now cancelled (ἀνελύετο μὲν τὰ φάρμακα) and the fire burst forth. The mobs who had assembled to see what Josephus would do then uttered an acclamation acknowledging the victory of the Christian god: εἰς θεός, ὁ βοηθῶν τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς (*Haer.* 30.12.1–10).<sup>14</sup> To judge from the narratives of Jerome and Epiphanius, the original story-pattern was a Christian saint defeating the magic of pagans and Jews by sprinkling water from a vessel that had special holy powers, either because of its connections with the saint or because he had endowed it with these powers; victory; and then an acclamation of the victory. The author of the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* draws on the pattern and adapts it to the rather different circumstances of the life of his saint.

The third form of story-pattern to be considered in the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* are the episodes in which men speak ill of Symeon or anathematize him, sometimes suggesting that his special powers are to be attributed to sorcery.<sup>15</sup> Envy is the motivating factor in several of these attacks on Symeon by

<sup>14</sup>The acclamation is an exceedingly common one in Syria and Egypt in the form, εἰς θεός ὁ βοηθῶν πᾶσι (*IGLSyr* II 373, 389, 390, 605). Erik Peterson, *EIS ΘΕΟΣ* (Göttingen 1926) 4 n.3, believes the formula comes from the charge of the bishop to his flock: εἰρήνη πάντεσσι.

<sup>15</sup>116, 130, 157, 195, 231, 234, 239.

fellow-clergymen (116, 130, 239). Sometimes their hostility is specifically attributed to envy on the part of the Devil or to envy inspired by the Devil (116, 130). Thus Thomas the presbyter from the village called Paradeisos is moved, borne along by diabolic envy (διαβολικῶ φθόνῳ φερόμενος, 116), to anathematize Symeon. The Georgian presbyters who were moved to say that the miraculous cures effected by hair from Symeon's head brought back by a fellow-Georgian priest and attached to a cross set up in a little hut in the wilds were the product of magic (διὰ περιεργίας) were prompted to do so by the Devil in his envy (ὁ μισόκαλος καὶ βάσκανος δαίμων ὑπέβαλε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, 130).

The *Life of Saint Martha*, the mother of Symeon Stylites the Younger, has a good deal in common with the *Life* of her son; it would appear to have been written by someone who knew the *Life* of the son. At any rate, there is in the *Life of Saint Martha* a Georgian monk from Jerusalem, Sergius by name, who is healed by Symeon; the Devil puts into his mind the idea that Symeon was a sorcerer and that his powers derived from that craft (ὑπέβαλε δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος εἰπεῖν ἐν ἑαυτῷ περὶ τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος φάρμακός ἐστι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐνεργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῷ αἱ δυνάμεις). His ruminations continue and he goes on to conclude that he has been led astray (πεπλάνημαι) to carry εὐλογία of terra-cotta impressed with the likeness of Symeon; he tries to destroy them, but is then struck by leprosy (*v. Marthae* 54–55).<sup>16</sup>

The same story-pattern in an amplified form is encountered a century or more later in the *Life of Gregory, Bishop of Agrigento*: the Devil sees the pure and unblemished life pursued by Gregory and not being able in his envy to bear that sight (ὁ ἀρχέκακος

<sup>16</sup>On the terra-cotta amulets with likenesses of Symeon on them, perhaps brought back by pilgrims who had visited Symeon's monastery on the Mountain of Wonder south of Antioch, and their relationship to incidents described in the *Life*, see Gary Vikan, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *DOP* 38 (1984) 67–74.

διάβολος τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καθαρὰν καὶ ἀκηλίδωτον πολιτείαν, οὐχ ὑπήνεγκεν φθόνῳ φερόμενος) stirs up enmity against Gregory; it takes the form of a presbyter and a deacon who had formerly been at odds with each other forming a friendship and asking each other how long they are going to put up with having as their superior a magician who uses his magic to create illusions (γόητα καὶ φάρμακον καὶ διὰ τῶν μαγειῶν αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν τὰ ψευδῆ) for the uneducated men of the city, and at that a man who had sailed to the land of the heathens to imbibe magical knowledge at the feet of a magician with which to bamboozle men and had used the same language as had Simon Magus to describe his relationship with God (55 Berger).<sup>17</sup> The *Life of Gregory* can be no earlier than the first half of the eighth century and probably no later than the sack of Agrigento by the Arabs in 828.<sup>18</sup> It is at any rate younger by a considerable margin than the *Life of Symeon*. The story-pattern it follows of the saint vilified as a magician will have been well-established by the time it was written. But it does rather look as if the *Life of Symeon* also proceeds along a recognized route. Other *Lives* had travelled the same path before.

The content of the accusation of sorcery also tends to take a set form: when some of the astrologers, believers in fate, and Manichaeans from Antioch are inclined to attribute the ills they suffer to Symeon, others of their number turn on them and declare that they have suffered mental confusion in concluding that a trickster and charlatan is responsible for the ills affecting them (πλανᾶσθε νομίζοντες ὅτι διὰ τὸν ἐπιθέτην ἐκεῖνον τὰ δεινὰ ἡμῖν ἐπέρχεται, 157); a Cilician bricklayer utters essentially the same words when he encounters a man whose suppurating

<sup>17</sup>Albrecht Berger, *Leontios Presbyteros von Rom: Das Leben des Heiligen Gregorios von Agrigento* (BerlByzArb 60 [1995]) 376, holds that the charge of sorcery made against Gregory looks back to the accusations of sorcery made against Jesus at *Acta Pilati* pp.216, 223 Tischendorf. It is much more likely that Leontius' models are the *Lives* of saints.

<sup>18</sup>So Berger (*supra* n.17) 47–48.

hand had been healed by Symeon, asking him from what form of mental confusion does he suffer in approaching a trickster who achieves his effects through sorcery (τί πλανᾶσθε πρὸς ἄνδρα ἀπερχόμενοι ἐπιθέτην καὶ διὰ φαρμακίας τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιτηδεύοντα; 234). In a work that is closely related in form and content to the *Lives* of saints, the *Historia monachorum*, a man who accompanies choruses by playing on the flute (χοραύλης) charges the martyr Apollonius in exactly the same terms when Apollonius is to be tried in the Thebaid: ἀνόσιον λέγων καὶ ἐπιθέτην καὶ πλάνον καὶ παρὰ πάντος ἀνθρώπου μισούμενον καὶ ὀφείλοντα θᾶπτον ἀποθανεῖν (*H.mon.* 19.3 Festugière).

Those who out of envy speak ill of Symeon are struck by terrible afflictions, generally physical, but there is the presbyter from the village of Kassa who after he has pronounced an anathema on Symeon out of envy sees a host of demons binding his arms behind his back (πλήθος δαιμόνων δησάντων αὐτὸν ὀπισθάγκωνα); when he came to perform mass he could not read from the Gospels, nor raise the holy offering (239). His punishment follows a pattern reserved for clergymen who have truck with diabolical deeds and apparently reflects concern at having such a polluted individual read from the Gospels and perform mass. Anastasius of Sinai, who writes a little later perhaps than the author of the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* and in a form closely related to the edifying hagiographic tale, has a story about a presbyter from a community sixteen miles distant from the capital of Cyprus in the seventh century, Constantia, who through the agency of the Devil became a sorcerer (φάρμακος). The man was brought to trial before the governor of the province and was asked by the senior assessor of the governor how could he dare approach the altar to perform mass and not be afraid that fire would not come down from the heavens and destroy him and that the earth would not open up and swallow him, to which the man replied that he had never in

fact touched the sacraments on the altar, since when he entered the sanctuary, an angel of God had immediately bound his hands behind his back to a pillar (ἐδέσμευε με εἰς τὸν κίονα ὀπισθάγκωνα), dispensed mass itself, and freed the man, once it was finished (*Rel.* 49 Nau).

### *Healing and renunciation*

A further indication that Jerome in his *Life of Hilarion* follows a set form in relating certain episodes in the life of the saint is to be found in a story he tells about a charioteer from Gaza who was brought to Hilarion on a litter, after having been struck rigid by a demon while driving his chariot; he was, in consequence, able neither to move his hands nor turn his neck. Hilarion told him that he could not be healed, unless he expressed belief in Jesus and promised to renounce his old craft (*audit non prius posse sanari quam crederet in Iesum et se sponderet arti pristinae renuntiaturum*). This he did and was healed (*credidit, sponpondit, sanatus est*), but took greater delight in the salvation of his soul than that of his body (*v.Hilar.* 9.4–6).

Leontius of Neapolis in his *Life of Symeon Salos*, a work written in the second half of the seventh century whose subject-matter is the deeds of a holy fool, Symeon Salos, employs the same story-pattern; it is set mainly in Emesa in the previous century.<sup>19</sup> Leontius' story is that some mimes were performing in a theatre and amongst their number was someone who did conjuring tricks with stones, a ψηφῶς.<sup>20</sup> When the conjuror began

<sup>19</sup>Derek Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius' Life and the Late Antique City* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1998) 21–22, argues that the *Life* reflects conditions in the Cyprus of Leontius' day and not those of Syria in the previous century. The situations seem to be largely generic and not those of any one century or location.

<sup>20</sup>The accent on the word should not be an acute on the ultimate, as LSJ<sup>9</sup> and Lampe *s.v.* have it, but should follow the pattern of other terms for occupations (A. J. Festugière, *Léontios de Néapolis, Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre* [BAH 45 (Paris 1974)] 196–197). It does not mean “a juggler,” as LSJ and Lampe would have it, but “a conjuror with stones.” So H. Blümner, “Fahrende Volk im Altertum,” *SBMünch* (1918) 19; Franz Cumont, *L'Égypte*

to perform his illicit deeds (ἀθέμιτα πράγματα), Symeon took a small stone, made the sign of the Cross on it, and threw it at the man, hitting him on the right hand, causing that hand to wither. No one knew who had thrown the stone. The saint now appeared during the night to the man in his sleep and said to him that he had indeed struck his mark and that unless the man swore to renounce his previous calling, he would not get well (ὄντως ἐπέτυχον, καὶ εἰ μὴ ὁμόσης ὅτι οὐκέτι ἐπιτηδεύεις τοιοῦτόν τι πράξει, οὐχ ὑγιαίνεις). The juggler swore to Symeon by the Mother of God that he would not in future engage in such trickery (οὐ μὴ παρέλθω τοῦ λοιποῦ διὰ τοιοῦτου παιγνιδίου). He then got up and found that his hand was healed (*v.Sym. Sal.* 150 Rydén). The story-pattern in this case is that of a holy man encountering someone following one of the callings denied access to the catechumenate, unless the calling was renounced, and telling him that he could not be healed of the illness afflicting him, if he did not swear to give up his former work.<sup>21</sup> Since it is virtually inconceivable that Leontius had read Jerome, a common source for the story-pattern has to be posited.

### Conclusion

The modern reader on finding clauses in one text reproduced verbatim in another tends to assume that the author of the later of the two texts has had the earlier text in front of him as he wrote. It may be that the authors of some saints' *Lives* did in fact have a text of an earlier *Life* at hand when they wrote or dictated. Cyril of Scythopolis may have had in front of him a text of Palladius' *Lausiac History* or both Palladius and Cyril may have shared a common source. There is another possibility

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*des astrologues* (Brussels 1938) 85 n.4; Louis Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta* II (Amsterdam 1969) 859. The earlier term was a ψηφοπαίκτης.

<sup>21</sup>Persons connected with the theatre and charioteers excluded from the catechumenate: *Trad. App.* 16; *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 8.32.9. For a holy man making mimes abandon the stage and convert to Christianity, see *H.Laus.* 37.

that needs to be considered and that perhaps explains better the almost formulaic character of the language of some of these *Lives* and their reliance on stereotypical story-patterns. The manuscript-tradition of the *Lives* of saints makes it clear that these were living texts, subject to constant reworking and additions. Their translation into Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, and other languages is a further testimony to their popularity. They were, in sum, not only widely, but also perhaps repeatedly read. Melania is said to have read *Lives* of the Desert Fathers when she got tired of reading the Bible and sermons (*v.Mel.* 23). Some of the *Lives* were consciously written to be read aloud to an audience. The author of the *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* says he has adopted a plain and simple style, so that his hearers may be encouraged to place even greater hope in Christ (*praef.* 31–47), while Leontius of Neapolis in his *Life of John of Cyprus* says that he has told the story in an unadorned and humble style, so that uneducated persons might be able to benefit the more from hearing it (*praef.* 65–69).<sup>22</sup> Those who heard the tales must have become familiar with certain distinctive turns of phrase and at the same time with characteristic narrative-sequences. Thoroughly imbued with this material they will have tended to reproduce the turns of phrase and story-patterns that had become second nature to them when they turned their own hand to recounting the life of a saint.

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<sup>22</sup>ὅπερ μάλιστα καὶ πλείω διήγειρεν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν παροῦσαν σπουδὴν, ἵνα τῷ ἐνυπάρχοντι ἡμῖν πεζῷ καὶ ἀκαλλωπίστῳ καὶ χαμηλῷ χαρακτήρι διησώμεθα εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ τὸν ἰδιώτη καὶ ἀγράμματον ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων ὠφελθῆναι.