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Edited by *Erik Hallager* and *Sine Riisager*



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# Identifying incubation areas in Pagan and Early Christian times\*

*Hedvig von Ehrenheim*

The incubation rite might be defined as institutionalized dream healing. Worshippers would come to a sanctuary with the intent to prepare themselves according to custom and then lay down in a special place in the sanctuary, hoping for an epiphany of the deity in a dream. It could be a way to seek to know the future or to cure a disease. Incubation was known throughout antiquity and also performed in the cults of certain saints in Early Christian times.

The preparatory rites could consist of abstinence from certain types of food, purification, prayer and sacrifice, and then after the cure, thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup> The divinity would heal either directly in the worshipper's sleep, or give advice that would lead to a cure. To judge by Early Christian miracle stories it is clear that prayer and participation in the communion were important, as well as the ensuing thanksgiving following a cure. Thus, pagan incubation was surrounded by rituals present elsewhere in pagan religions, and Christian incubation by the rituals of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

The first aim of this paper is to investigate whether incubation architecture is at all identifiable in cases when there are no textual sources that tell us that a particular building was used. Does incubation architecture, pagan and Early Christian, have any distinguishing features? A second aim is to briefly discuss what kind of architecture was used for incubation practices in pagan and Early Christian times respectively. Will different architecture tell us something about the differences in pagan and Christian incubation?

I have limited my inquiry to a selection of sanctuaries where literary evidence show that incubation was practised, *i.e.* the Asklepieia in Epidauros, Athens, Pergamon and the Amphiarion in Oropos, as the textual evidence forms the basis of our knowl-

edge of incubation. I prefer not to examine here sanctuaries where incubation probably was practised, but where only architecture attests to the rite. In the case of Asklepieia it is usually, and probably most often safely, assumed that wherever there is a sanctuary of Asklepios, there was also incubation. However, caution might be taken in presupposing that there were incubation areas in all Asklepieia, especially in smaller sanctuaries inside cities.<sup>3</sup> The pagan sanctuaries selected here are hopefully diagnostic of the problem of how to identify incubation areas. They are all large and well-known incubation sanctuaries, well published, and literary and/or epigraphical evidence show clearly that incubation was practised at these sanctuaries.

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This article was written long before the monumental publications of J. Riethmüller and M. Melfi. This being a methodological discussion on both pagan and Early Christian incubation areas, I still think the reader will find uses for this text.

<sup>1</sup> The basic structure of these rituals is presented in *e.g.* Dillon 1994, 255; Graf 1992, 188–95.

<sup>2</sup> Deubner, though, states that continuity can be traced in incubation ritual (Deubner 1900, 57), and MacMullen 1997, 126–7, who states that incubation was taken over 'without check or change' from eastern pagan to eastern Christian worship. Although one may speak of a continuity in the larger sense, specifics in incubation practice differ. I refer to my forthcoming dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> DiVita 1982.

Thus, among pagan sanctuaries with both literary and archaeological/architectural evidence for incubation there are the Asklepieia in Epidauros, Athens, Pergamon and the Amphiaraiion in Oropos. The architecture for each site that has been presented by various scholars as representative of incubation architecture will be examined. In the second part of the paper, the evidence for incubation architecture in Early Christian incubation cults will be investigated.

## Pagan incubation architecture

Incubation was performed in special places within a sanctuary. In Graeco-Roman times the sleeping-halls would be called *adyton*<sup>4</sup>, *abaton*<sup>5</sup> ('the innermost of the sanctuary; the place that is not to be trodden'), *enkoimeterion*<sup>6</sup> or *koimeterion*<sup>7</sup> ('sleeping room'). Incubation might also be performed in a cave.<sup>8</sup> Generally, the context of the texts do not give us much information on what sort of a building was used as the sleeping-hall.<sup>9</sup> The words

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *ICr* 1.17.9 (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC), 15 (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) (Asklepios at Lebena); Epidaurian iama B18 (38) (restored) (For the Epidaurian iamata, I am following the numbering of LiDonnici 1995); *IG* IV2 1, 128 (The Isyllos hymn, on the Asklepieion at Trikka: this might also be interpreted as 'innermost sanctuary').

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Epidaurian iamata A1, A2, A6, A7, A11, A15, A17, B4, B7, B8, B9, B17, C7, C21 (restored); *ICr* 1.17.11B (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *IvP* 264 = LSAM 14; *AvP* VIII.3.161=Wörrle 1969 (Asklepios at Pergamon); Woodward 1911–12, 144 no. 3 (Asklepios at Beroia, 128 BC); *IG* IV2 1, 127 (Epidauros, 224 C.E.).

<sup>7</sup> E.g. *IG* 7.235 (=LSCG 69) (Amfiaraos at Oropos, 387–377 BC).

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Strabo 14.1.44 (Charonium close to Acharaka).

<sup>9</sup> In Epidaurian iama B18, a man was carried out of the *adyton* and put down in front of the temple. This shows that the sleeping-hall was a closed building and that it was not identical to the temple at Epidauros. Likewise, in A6, it is made clear that the *abaton* and the temple are two separate buildings. In A2, Ithmonika of Pellene consults the god on a three-year pregnancy. After her dream vision, she rushed out of the *abaton* and as soon as she was outside the sacred area she gave birth. Here it is clear that the *abaton* was situated within the sacred area. In A11, Aischines climbs up a tree and looks 'over into the *abaton*' (ὑπὲρέκλυτε εἰς τὸ ἄβατον). This suggests

*abaton* and *adyton*, used at Asklepieia at Epidauros and Lebena, seem to indicate the sacred and secret nature of the ritual, while *enkoimeterion* and *koimeterion* more generally denote an area specially designed for sleeping.<sup>10</sup>

There is no terminology to speak of here, just as there is no consistent terminology for 'to incubate'. Deubner listed a total of nine verbs used when describing incubation.<sup>11</sup> There are even more verbs used, with a varying degree of specialization. All of them in another context mean simply 'to sleep' ('to sleep among', 'to sleep in' etc.). The verbs are: ἐγκαθεύδω,<sup>12</sup> ἐγκατάκειμαι,<sup>13</sup> ἐγκατακλίνομαι,<sup>14</sup> ἐγκατακοιμάομαι,<sup>15</sup> ἐγκοιμάομαι,<sup>16</sup> ἐγκοιμίζομαι,<sup>17</sup>

that at the time of this iama the building was either without a roof, or that the interior somehow could be seen from a higher level. In A15, a stone in front of the *abaton* is explained by a paralyzed man having brought it there according to the command of the god. In B7, the floor/ground (δάπεδον) of the *abaton* was covered with blood as a result of a dramatic cure, indicating a floor inside a building. In the Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse two separate sleeping spaces are mentioned, the large and the small *enkoimeterion*. In the *IG* 7.235 of Oropos, the prescription is that women and men must sleep separately, west and east of the altar.

<sup>10</sup> See also Graf 1992, 186–7, for a discussion of the significance of the words for incubation hall. He stresses the secrecy of the space as a sign of its especially sacral nature.

<sup>11</sup> Deubner 1900, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Lato (Unknown cult), LSS 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. E.g. LSS 26 (unknown divinity 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, restored (ἐγκαθεύδουτο)); E.g. *IG* 7.235 (Amphiaraos at Oropos, 387–377 BC); 35 Epidaurian iamata (A1, A3, A4, A6–9, A11, A13, A15, A19, B1(21)–B5(25), B7(27), B8(28), B10(30)–B15(35), B17(37)–B22(42), C3(46), C5(48), C10(53), C11(54), C20(63)); Lex Sacra Amphipolis (Asklepios in Amphipolis, first half 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, SEG 44.505); Aristid. 6.39 [Dindorf]; Suda s.v. Domninos (T427) = Damaskios, *Vitae Isidori reliquiae* fr. 218 [Zintzen].

<sup>13</sup> Ar. *Plut.* 742 (Asklepios at Piraeus or Athens, although it might be argued here that the people are just described as lying in the dormitory together with Ploutos).

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Ar. *Plut.* 621, ((in the active, Ploutos is laid down in the sanctuary by his friends) Asklepios at Athens or Piraeus); Hyp. *Ad Eux.* 14 (Amfiaraos at Oropos); Aristid. *Or.sacr.* 3.7; Menand. Papyrus Diotiana b, 1–15 (T419) (Asklepios).

<sup>15</sup> E.g. in Hdt. 8.134 (Amfiaraos); Epidaurian iamata A1, A2, D1(67); LSS 52 (Sarapis on Delos 181/180 BC, restored).

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Epidaurian iamata C19 (62, much restored), C21(64), C23 (66); LSAM 14 restored: ἐγκοιμῶσθαι (Asklepios in Pergamon, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, see Wörrle 1969, 178 n. 51); Plut. *Moralia* = *Cons. ad Apoll.* 109C (Psychomanteum in South-

ἐγκοιτάζομαι,<sup>18</sup> ἐννυχεύω,<sup>19</sup> ἐπικατακοιμάομαι,<sup>20</sup> ἐφεύδω,<sup>21</sup> καθεύδω,<sup>22</sup> καθυπνώω,<sup>23</sup> καταδαρθάνω,<sup>24</sup> κατάκειμαι,<sup>25</sup> κατακλίνομαι,<sup>26</sup> κατακοιμάομαι,<sup>27</sup> κοιμάομαι,<sup>28</sup> κοιτάζομαι.<sup>29</sup> Many of these verbs mean simply ‘to sleep’, and here I am not looking for a secondary meaning of ‘to incubate’ – but I argue that no special terms were needed: people often seem to have said: ‘let’s go and sleep in the sanctuary of Asklepios’. The absence of a special term for ‘to incubate’ suggests that for some reason a special word for a clearly distinguished and well-defined rite was not needed. The fact that different verbs for sleeping may be used within the same source further underlines this.

Large studies have mapped the architecture of Asklepieia. J. Riethmüller writes that incubation areas as a rule are housed in stoas, but that also other types of buildings can occur.<sup>30</sup> He also notes a characteristic closeness to water structures. Another comprehensive study on architecture in Asklepieia is the dissertation of E. Armpis.<sup>31</sup> She reaches the conclusion that incubation halls could have different appearances in different sanctuaries.<sup>32</sup> She puts up four criteria for the appearance of an incubation hall, based on the incubation stoa at Epidauros.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, the incubation hall was placed close to the temple. Her general explanation of this is that incubation would have been at its most effective close to the holiest place in the sanctuary. Secondly, the incubation hall should be related to water-structures of some kind, in order to have access to water for purifications before incubation. Thirdly, incubation halls should according to Armpis also be determined by the need for seclusion. Only those who had prepared ritually for the event could have access to the incubation hall. Fourthly, Armpis points to the practice of putting occasional finds, such as healing inscriptions, in the incubation hall in order to set the the right mood for the incubants.<sup>34</sup>

## Asklepieion in Epidauros

The reason for starting this examination with Epidauros is that it is the only sanctuary where a text pinpoints the location of an incubation building which is also archaeologically well documented. Recent

excavations, led by V. Lambrinoudakis, have further clarified the architectural history of the site.<sup>35</sup>

A cult to Asklepios can be proven at Epidauros from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, or even the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>36</sup> The sanctuary grew on a larger

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ern Italy); Strabo 14.1.44 (Plutonium in Acharaka); Strabo 11.7.1 (Unknown god at Anariace by the Caspian sea); Strabo 17.1.17 (Sarapis at Canopus); Strabo 16.2.35 (Jewish incubation); Arrianus *Anab.* 7.26.2 (Sarapis); Arrian. *Epict.* 2.16.17; *Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse AvP* VIII.161.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Epidaurian iamata A11, C22(65). The verb is used in the active in Aristid. *Or.Sacr.* 1.43, but in a context which is difficult to interpret (a priest tells Aristides of a dream where he put a ham hock to sleep in the temple of Asklepios).

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Epidaurian iama A12.

<sup>19</sup> To sleep in or on, Plut. *Def.Or.* 45 (“... passed the night in the sacred precinct and went to sleep.”) (Mopsus, Cilicia).

<sup>20</sup> Hdt. 4.172 (The manes (ancestor spirits) of the Augilae (Nasamones) in the Cyrenaica).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. IC 1.17.3,9 (Asklepios in Lebena, 3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century BC); *ICr* 1.17.9, l. 9 (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. IG 7.235 (Amfiaraos at Oropos, 387–377 BC); Epidaurian iama C5(48); Ar. *Plut.* 669, 672 (Asklepios at Athens or Piraeus); Paus. 1.34 (Amfiaraos at Oropos); Paus 3.26.1 (Ino in Laconia); Paus. 2.27.3 (Epidauros).

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Epidaurian iama B9 (29).

<sup>24</sup> Used in the Aor. Pass (as found in later writers such as Philostr. According to the LSJ: κατεδάρθην: Philostr. *VS* 1.25.4 (Asklepios at Pergamon, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century AD).

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Ar. *Plut.* 671 (Asklepios at Athens or Piraeus). Here, Carion describes how they all lay down in the dormitory.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Ar. *Plut.* 662 ((in the active, Ploutos is laid down in the sanctuary by his friends) Asklepios at Athens or Piraeus); Ar. *Vesp.* 123 (Asklepios at Aegina); Hyp. *Ad Eux.* 18 (Amfiaraos at Oropos). In the active: Aelian. *NA* 9.33 (Epidauros).

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Plut. *De def.or.* 45 (Mopsus, Cilicia), (“... passed the night in the sacred precinct and went to sleep.”). In the active: Hdt. 8.134 (Amfiaraos).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Hyp. *Ad Eux.* 14. (Amfiaraos at Oropos c. 330–328 BC).

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Pind. *Ol.* 4.65–80, Bellerophon goes to sleep on the altar of Athena. This is in fact not a regular incubation, rather a vision in a dream by a single person sleeping in a temple.

<sup>30</sup> Riethmüller 2005, 385–7. See also Riethmüller 1999, 129.

<sup>31</sup> Armpis 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Armpis 2001, 118.

<sup>33</sup> Armpis 2001, 121–2.

<sup>34</sup> See Dillon 1994, 259–60 for the didactic nature of the iamata.

<sup>35</sup> Lambrinoudakis 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Dedications to Asklepios: IG IV2 1.136 (500–475 BC), 143 (475–450 BC). The dates according to Jeffery 1990, 180, 182 no. 10. Constructions from the 6<sup>th</sup> century: Lambrinoudakis 2002, 216, 219.

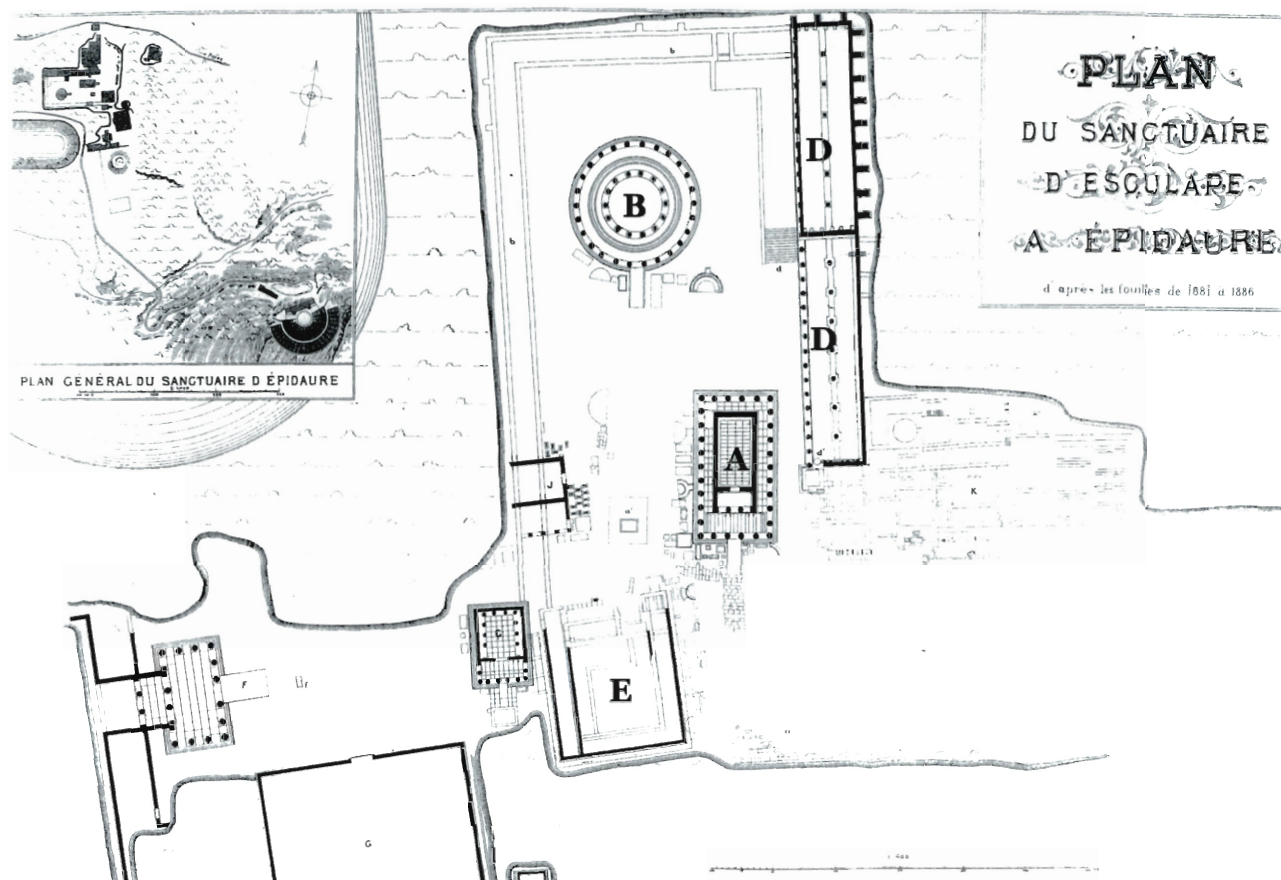


Fig. 1a. Asklepieion in Epidauros, from Kavvadias 1891.

scale around 370 BC, with the construction of the temple of Asklepios.<sup>37</sup>

We know that the worshippers slept in a special sleeping hall, called the *abaton* or *adyton*, mentioned in healing inscriptions, (*iamata*), written down on four large stelae in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>38</sup> Incubation has been argued to have been practised at Epidauros from at least the time of the *iamata*, believed by LiDonnici to have been edited from various smaller inscriptions at the site by the priests of Epidauros, dating back in time a maximum of 100 years.<sup>39</sup>

Pausanias 2.27.2–3 writes that “Over against the temple is the place where the suppliants of the god sleep (τοῦ ναοῦ δὲ ἐστὶ πέραν ἔνθα οἱ ἰκέται τοῦ θεοῦ καθεύδουσιν). Near has been built a circular building of white marble, called Tholos, which is worth seeing.” According to the LSJ, Pausanias frequently uses *πέραν* for ‘over against, opposite’. Pausanias, having described the statue in the temple, is prob-

ably standing at the entrance of the temple (‘A’ on Fig. 1a). What possible buildings do we have ‘over against/opposite’ the temple that might fit the description of Pausanias’ as the place where the suppliants would sleep? Looking at the plan, the tholos for obvious reasons being ‘B’ on Fig. 1a, two strong alternatives appear: the stoa north of the temple, and Building E south of the temple. The preposition *πέραν* does not give a certain indication whether Pausanias is pointing to the north or the south when mentioning a building ‘over against’ the temple.<sup>40</sup> Pausanias is known for his, from the

<sup>37</sup> Burford 1969, 53–5. He dates the temple to c. 375–370 BC and the tholos to c. 365–360 BC.

<sup>38</sup> IG IV<sup>2</sup>, 1.121–124. There are several translations, a.o. LiDonnici 1995. The numbering of the Epidaurian *iamata* will here follow those made in LiDonnici 1995.

<sup>39</sup> LiDonnici 1995, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Here I would like to thank Ove Strid for expert advice.



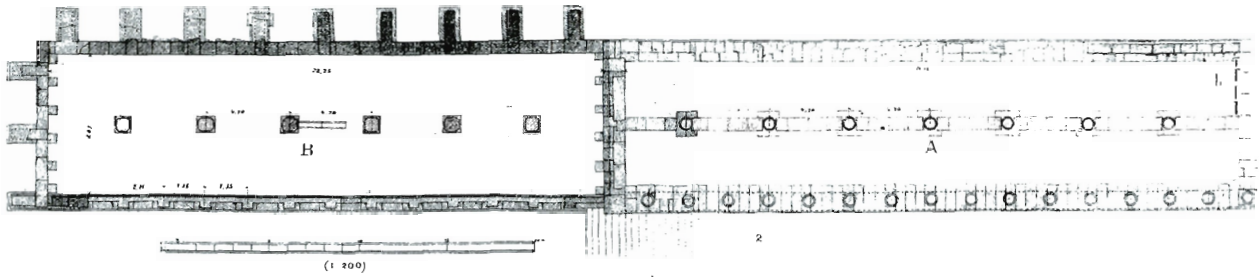


Fig. 1b. The so-called abaton at Epidauros, from Kavvadias 1905, figs. 1–2.

perspective of the modern reader, imprecise topographical information.

Most scholars identify the Ionic stoa ('D' on Fig. 1a) just north of the temple as the *abaton*, following P. Kavvadias, who excavated the site.<sup>41</sup> The stoa consists of an eastern part, *c.* 38 m long, and a western part, *c.* 36 m long.<sup>42</sup> The eastern part of the stoa is one storey high, the western part has two storeys because of the sloping ground. The eastern stoa can on stylistical grounds be dated to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>43</sup> The western stoa was built later, copying the Ionic order of the eastern stoa. This probably dates from Roman times.<sup>44</sup> As has been pointed out it was probably built to accommodate the increasing numbers of

incubants.<sup>45</sup> Riethmüller<sup>46</sup> argues further that the so-called Apellas inscription, a healing miracle from Epidauros around 160 AD, shows that the stoa is the only alternative as incubation area at the time of this inscription.

Some scholars in the past made a case for the Building E being the abaton, either as the sole abaton,<sup>47</sup> or at least before the stoa was built.<sup>48</sup> During new excavations at Epidauros, Building E has however been securely identified as an area for ritual meals.<sup>49</sup> The new excavations have further revealed a predecessor to the Ionic stoa beneath its floor, a small stoa of mud-brick and with rubble foundations dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>50</sup> It seems likely that the mud-brick stoa was used as abaton, as it precedes the later abaton, and since Building E had

<sup>41</sup> Kavvadias 1891, 17–8; Kavvadias 1900, 121–8; This interpretation has been accepted by among others Defrasse and Lechat 1895, 131; Martin and Metzger 1942–43, 331–2, Burford 1969, 62–3, and Lambrinouidakis 2002, 219.

<sup>42</sup> A good plan of the particulars of the stoa can be found in Faraklas 1972, fig. 35.

<sup>43</sup> The dating of the east stoa: Coulton 1976, 46–7, 237–8 (first half of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, due to the style of the Ionic capital and base); Roux 1961, 404: first third of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>44</sup> The dating of the west stoa: Kavvadias 1900, 127; Coulton 1976, 47, 238 (the western extension: Roman(?). Cf. Shoe (Shoe 1936, 124, 175), who dates the extension to the later half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Shoe argues on stylistic grounds, but see arguments of Coulton 1976, 47, n. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Armpis 2001, 121.

<sup>46</sup> Riethmüller 2005, 1. 286. The Apellas inscription: IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 126 l. 18. For previous research on how to read this line of the inscription and how to interpret the 'akoai': Grone 1998, 65, n. 71. The iamata do not say anything about the location of the abaton within the sanctuary, except that it was difficult to see into the building from outside (one had to climb a tree to do so, Epidaurian iama no. A11).

<sup>47</sup> Holwerda 1902, 289–93. Frickenhaus and Hiller von Gaertringen agree with Holwerda (Frickenhaus 1912, 140; Hiller von Gaertringen in IG IV<sup>2</sup>. Prolegomena: p. xxii, no. 8). Holwerda argues that since incubants entered the abaton at night, when healing inscriptions on the walls could not be read the stoa must have been an ordinary stoa. This would explain why the iamata were set up in the stoa: people could read them when seeking shelter from sun or rain. There is, however, no way of knowing whether the iamata were originally placed in the eastern stoa where they were found during the excavations (Kavvadias 1900, 124).

<sup>48</sup> Robert 1933, 390–3; Burford 1969, 50–1.

<sup>49</sup> Lambrinouidakis 2002, 216–7. Both remains of an open-air altar dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, placed underneath the Early Classical (5<sup>th</sup> century) 'Building E' as well as features of the Early Classical 'Building E' speak in favour of this identification. (The features are: a perimetric channel, stoas surrounding the courtyard, and a layer of small stones in both the stoas and on the courtyard around the altar to facilitate cleaning).

<sup>50</sup> Lambrinouidakis 2002, 219.

another function. Combining two functions in one building, however, is not unlikely (using the Building E stoas both for dining and sleeping),<sup>51</sup> but why in that case would there have been a need to build the mud-brick stoa? Through the iamata it seems that there was one building considered to be the abaton,<sup>52</sup> and, furthermore, people could stay at the sanctuary to incubate several times.<sup>53</sup> This suggests the need for a building that was not too small and that had incubation as its prime purpose.

Thus it appears that the stoa can be identified as the abaton at Epidauros, with the help of Pausanias and by safely excluding Building E as a candidate. What features does the stoa have that may help strengthen its identification as abaton and help establish criteria for how to identify incubation areas in general?

Kavvadias has argued that the foundations of the eastern stoa indicate the presence of a dividing wall between piers or columns supporting the roof of the stoa.<sup>54</sup> Why construct a stoa with a secluded part if not for a particular function in which secludedness was of particular importance? Armpis suggests that the inner aisle of the stoa would be the best place for that purpose since incubation was a secluded activity.<sup>55</sup> However, both Holwerda and Mauromatides have opposed this interpretation of the foundations.<sup>56</sup> Holwerda argues that the foundations are for benches, and according to Mauromatides the foundations would not have been able to support inner walls of a height sufficient for the secludedness needed for the rite.

Inside the inner aisle of the eastern stoa there is nothing to indicate a possible permanent division of the area; if men and women slept separately as they did in the Amphiarion of Oropos, Armpis suggests that the division was made by temporary means.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, men and women slept together in the Aristophanes' *Plutus* 688–9 (written in 388 BC, cult of Asklepios at Piraeus or Athens<sup>58</sup>), so there seems to have been no fixed rule.

The western extension of the stoa was built with a lower storey, so as to reach the same ground level as the eastern stoa (as already mentioned, the ground is sloping). Coulton is of the opinion that the roughness of the lower storey of the extension indicates its prime function was to raise the floor

level of the portico above.<sup>59</sup> Armpis suggests that the lower storey was used for incubation, while the upper storey of the western stoa, which has a doorway to the outer 'public' aisle of the eastern stoa, was more likely used as a regular stoa, providing shelter from sun and rain.<sup>60</sup> However, as she points out herself, there were 1.60 m high parapets between the outer columns of the western stoa, something, which indeed made it more secluded. Incubation in the upper storey of the western stoa thus seems possible. The fact that the upper storey of the western stoa had a doorway to the outer, public part of the eastern stoa does not necessar-

<sup>51</sup> As proposed by Robert 1933, 390–3. He suggests that building E contained both an early (end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century) naos of Asklepios as well as a dining area and two incubation-rooms, one for men and one for women.

<sup>52</sup> As seen in the special name, abaton or adyton, attached to the building. In the iama A11 can be read that it was difficult to see into the building from outside (one had to climb a tree in order to do so).

<sup>53</sup> It seems that people could stay for a period of time in the sanctuary, sleeping more than one night in the abaton. *E.g.* iama C21(64) (a four month stay), *Anth.Pal.* 6.330 (a three months stay), B5(25), B13(33), C18(61) (here it is only made clear that the incubants did not obtain any clear dream and went home – one might assume that they tried to sleep in the sanctuary at least more than once). Further, in Roman times, Paus. 2.27.6 attests to the dire need for buildings outside the sanctuary where worshippers beyond hope might die, or women might give birth. This indeed suggests that many stayed for a longer visit.

<sup>54</sup> Kavvadias 1900, 122; Kavvadias 1905, 78–9.; Coulton 1976, 47 (the inner columns of the original stoa were connected with a screen); Armpis 2001, 120. Furthermore, the east stoa at Epidauros may, according to Kavvadias, have influenced the architecture of the Athenian sleeping hall (built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC), since the cult of Asklepios at Athens probably was introduced from Epidauros (Kavvadias 1891, 18).

<sup>55</sup> Armpis 2001, 120. The need for privacy in incubation is best illustrated by Epidaurian iama A11, where Aischines climbed up in a tree in order to spy on the incubants in the abaton.

<sup>56</sup> Holwerda 1902, 291 (Holwerda cites an opinion of Dörpfeld, but gives no reference); Kritzas & Mauromatides 1988, 16.

<sup>57</sup> Armpis 2001, 120.

<sup>58</sup> See Aleshire 1989, 13; Parker 1996, 181.

<sup>59</sup> Coulton 1976, 107. Armpis 2001, 121 remarks that even though the basement had primarily structural functions, this does not rule out an additional, ritual, function.

<sup>60</sup> Armpis 2001, 120–1.



ily mean that it was equally public in its character. The doorway might simply have been the entrance to the second, larger incubation hall. All in all, the need for seclusion seems an important criterion, and it can also be noted archaeologically at Epidaurous, even if the exact details of which space was used for incubation cannot be determined.

Further, along the eastern inner wall of the eastern stoa a series of bases were found *in situ*. It has been suggested that they were bases supporting the stelae with iamata inscriptions, which were found inside the eastern stoa during the excavations.<sup>61</sup> Kavvadias was of the opinion that the inscriptions were originally set up somewhere else.<sup>62</sup> Pausanias (2.27.3) only writes that the inscriptions were displayed within the peribolos, the enclosure. He writes that there used to be more stelae, but that six remained in his time. Four stelae were found during the excavations. The fact that some of the cure inscriptions were found in the east stoa can thus not be used as an argument pro or contra the identification of the east stoa as the sleeping hall. They were apparently set up there in the last period when the sanctuary was in use. They were probably read there during the day. Since Pausanias 2.27.3 wrote that the stelae were displayed within the peribolos, not specifying ‘in the sleeping area’ (which he mentioned five sentences up in the text) it seems likely that they were not displayed inside the stoa at the time of Pausanias. Hence, the presence of cure inscriptions within a building does not identify it as an incubation building.

There is a well from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC incorporated into the southeast corner of the stoa.<sup>63</sup> Against the eastern wall of the stoa there is also a building of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, probably a bath.<sup>64</sup> Kavvadias argued that water structures such as the well and the bath just east of the stoa were there primarily to serve for purificatory purposes before incubation.<sup>65</sup> The close connection with water by the incubation hall at Epidaurous has made scholars set closeness to water as a general criterium for identifying an incubation area in the cult of Asklepios.<sup>66</sup>

Much has been written on the usefulness of water both in preparations before incubation and as an element in cures.<sup>67</sup> But water served not only thirst quenching, cultic and iatric, but also sanitary

purposes at a sanctuary where many worshippers stayed for a longer time.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the water source to serve cultic, e.g. purificatory, purposes may not have been situated exclusively close to the abaton—the incubants might have purified themselves elsewhere in the sanctuary, for instance by the fountains, then to go on and enter the abaton. It might be added here that in Aristophanes’ *Plutus* 655–9 incubants purify themselves by bathing in the sea. Thus purification before incubation might also have been performed outside the sanctuary. In the LSAM 14, an inscription from Pergamon of Roman times, purification is made well before entering the dormitory. Of course, there is a possibility that there might have been a purification ritual at Epidaurous just before entering the abaton that we know nothing about.

As a general rule, however, it seems that closeness to water structures should not be the only criterion when identifying an incubation area.

<sup>61</sup> Kavvadias 1900, 124.

<sup>62</sup> Kavvadias 1900, 124; Kavvadias 1905, 68.

<sup>63</sup> Kavvadias 1891, 18.

<sup>64</sup> Kavvadias 1905, 88–9; Martin & Metzger 1942–43, 328–30; Armpis 2001, 119, 153–4; Lambrinouidakis 2002, 219–20.

<sup>65</sup> Kavvadias 1905; 88–9. Kavvadias 1891, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Armpis 2001, 153–4; Lambrinouidakis 2002, 219–20. It is not clear if the well was still in use at the time of the construction of the Late Classical stoa, but it must have been at the time of the mud-brick stoa excavated by Lambrinouidakis underneath. Martin & Metzger 1942–43, 331, argue that the well ceased to be in use with the construction of the stoa, but that it remained as a remnant of the archaic cult of the place. Armpis 2001, 153–4, believes that the well stayed in use. For a mention of the stone channel along the eastern wall of the eastern stoa, see Martin & Metzger 1942–43, 331. For the mud-brick stoa with rubble foundations dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, see Lambrinouidakis 2002, 219.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. Riethmüller 2005, vol. 1, 378. See further Dillon 1997, 158–9, 214. Baths in connection with incubation served both a purificatory and curative function. Many incubation cures that have been described have baths as an element. See e.g. the IG IV<sup>2</sup> 126 (Apellas inscription from Epidaurous, c. 160 AD), Marc Antoninus *In semet ipsum* 5.8, and Aristid. *Or.Sacr.* 1.7, 1.8, 1.18, 1.20–21, 1.34, 1.50, 3.6, 5.22–24. See also Ginouvès 1962, 349–61; Ginouvès 1994; Guettel Cole 1988; Lambrinouidakis 1994.

<sup>68</sup> That the bath at Epidaurous served a daily need for cleanness can be seen in the Epidaurian iama C 22 (65) where a blind man lost his oil bottle in the bath.

## Asklepieion in Athens

As far as we know, the cult of Asklepios was introduced in Athens on the initiative of a private person, Telemachos, in the year 420/19.<sup>69</sup> The early buildings that the first sources refer to were probably made of wood.<sup>70</sup> The oldest structure in the sanctuary, predating the shrine of Asklepios, is the archaic spring house, dated to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (see Fig. 2a).<sup>71</sup> According to Camp, the sanctuary was laid out in the 5<sup>th</sup> century: the sacred spring, an altar, the temenos enclosure and maybe also the Ionic stoa.<sup>72</sup> Travlos dates the Ionic stoa to 425–400 BC. The doors of the rooms in the Ionic stoa are placed so that there can be little doubt that the rooms housed *klinai* for meals (eleven per room). The temple we see today was built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, along with an altar and the eastern, Doric stoa (in two storeys). In Roman times a smaller stoa south of the temple was added.<sup>73</sup>

The Doric stoa of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>74</sup> has been identified as an incubation hall by, among others, Kavvadias and Allen and Caskey.<sup>75</sup> Their main argument is the likeness to the incubation stoa at Epidauros. Allen and Caskey are, moreover, of the opinion that incubation took place in the upper storey of the stoa. Also Armpis identifies the Doric, north, stoa as the incubation hall, arguing that it is the only building in the sanctuary the function of which has not been identified, it resembles the

incubation stoa at Epidauros, and that it lies in close proximity to water structures.<sup>76</sup> Kavvadias has previously put forward the hypothesis that just as the well in the abaton of Epidauros served purificatory purposes, so did the Doric stoa at Athens have access to water for the same reason.<sup>77</sup>

None of these arguments is necessarily conclusive, but as the written sources make it very likely that incubation was indeed practised at the Asklepieion at Athens, the Doric stoa seems to be the best location for this, mainly by exclusion of other possibilities. Two other alternatives have been suggested.

First, S. Walker has suggested that the Ionic

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<sup>69</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 4960–4961; Parker 1996, 175. The plague ravaged Athens in 430–426 BC, and this event is believed to be part of the reason for the introduction of the cult of Asklepios.

<sup>70</sup> SEG 25.226(a); Armpis 2001, 259.

<sup>71</sup> Travlos 1971, 138.

<sup>72</sup> Camp 2001, 154.

<sup>73</sup> Travlos 1971, 127–9. An earlier propylon, of which nothing remains, was probably replaced in Augustan times by the one seen on Fig. 2a. The sanctuary suffered damages during the Herulian invasion 267 AD, but was rebuilt, probably during the reign of Julianus. At this point certain changes were made in the Doric stoa, see Travlos 1971, fig. 177.

<sup>74</sup> Between 338 and the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC according to Armpis 2001, 124.

<sup>75</sup> Kavvadias 1891, 18; Allen & Caskey 1911, 43.

<sup>76</sup> Armpis 2001, 122–3. The Athenian Asklepieion is surrounded by a number of water structures. The oldest building on the site is the so-called archaic spring house, dated to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. (The fountain house has primarily been attributed to the nymphs and Pan. Its well was out of use in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Travlos 1971, 138; Martin & Metzger 1949, 347). Further, just behind and incorporated into the incubation stoa, there is a source that interestingly enough continued to be in use in the Early Christian church that was constructed on the site. Just west of the north, Doric stoa there is a structure the function of which has been debated. One hypothesis is that it is a “bothros” (Riethmüller 1999, Riethmüller 2005, 267–73), a sacrificial pit where Asklepios was given chthonic sacrifices aimed at his hero-aspect. See also Lefantzis & Jensen 2009 on a discussion and new dating of the pit. The fact that no bones or traces of combustion have been found in the pit might speak against this identification (Martin & Metzger 1949, 329). Another hypothesis is that the pit is a reservoir (Aleshire 1989, 26–7; Aleshire further believes that the care taken in incorporating the *bothros* into the design of the Doric stoa suggests that it was there before the stoa). One further hypothesis is that it is a well (Armpis 2001, 123–8). Tetrastyle structures over wells are common. The so-called *bothros* is however a bit too broad and shallow for a well (usually 1–1.5 m broad and 3 m deep), see the discussion in Armpis. Armpis argues (p. 127) that the *bothros* received water from the same aquifer as the cave-spring (Wickens 1995, 330 on the aquifer), between the Acropolis limestone capping and an impermeable layer of marls and schists, and that there was therefore no need for a deeper well). The somewhat monumental baldakin-like construction above the pit (see Fig. 2a) has been dated not before the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, possibly the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BC, not before the stoa (Martin & Metzger 1949, 329), or even to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. (Armpis 2001, 125). Robert 1939, 236, is on the other hand of the opinion that the ‘bothros’ existed before the east stoa was built.

<sup>77</sup> Kavvadias 1891, 18.

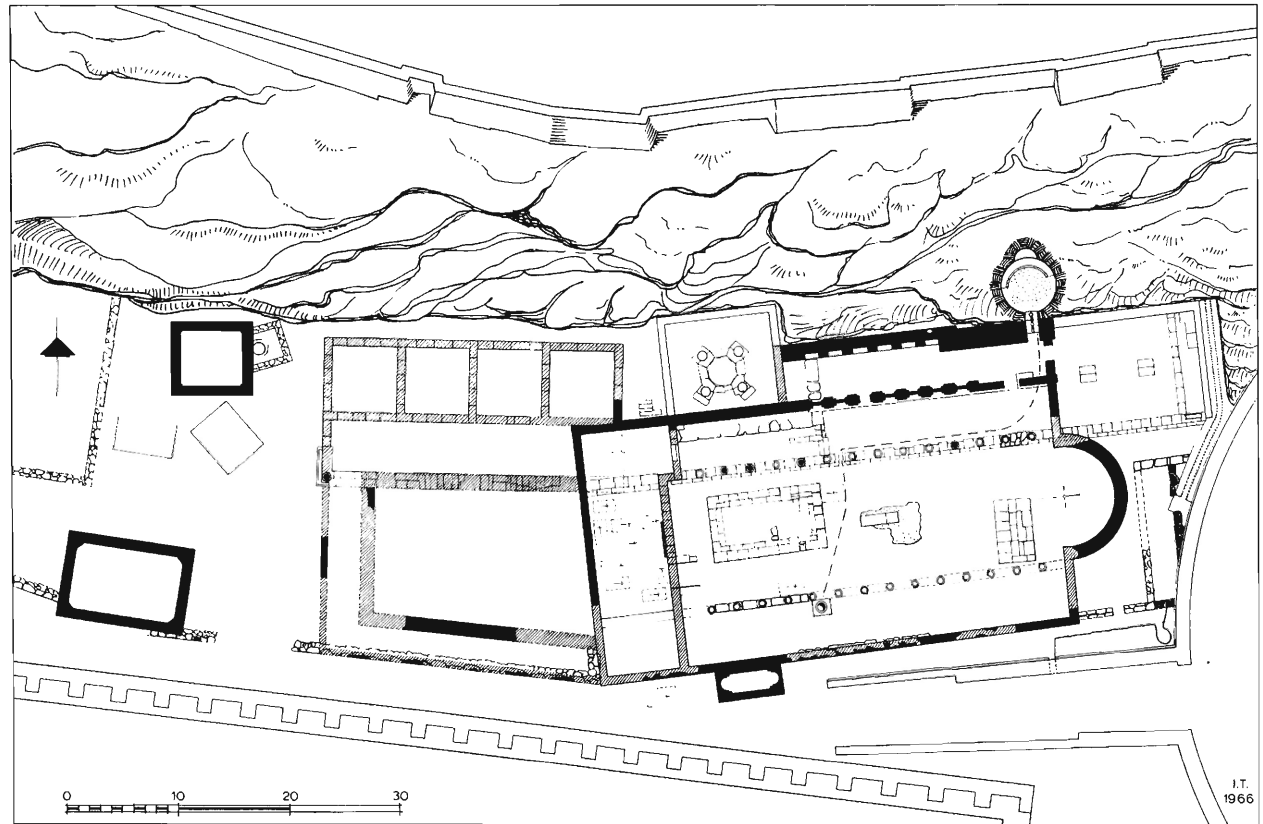
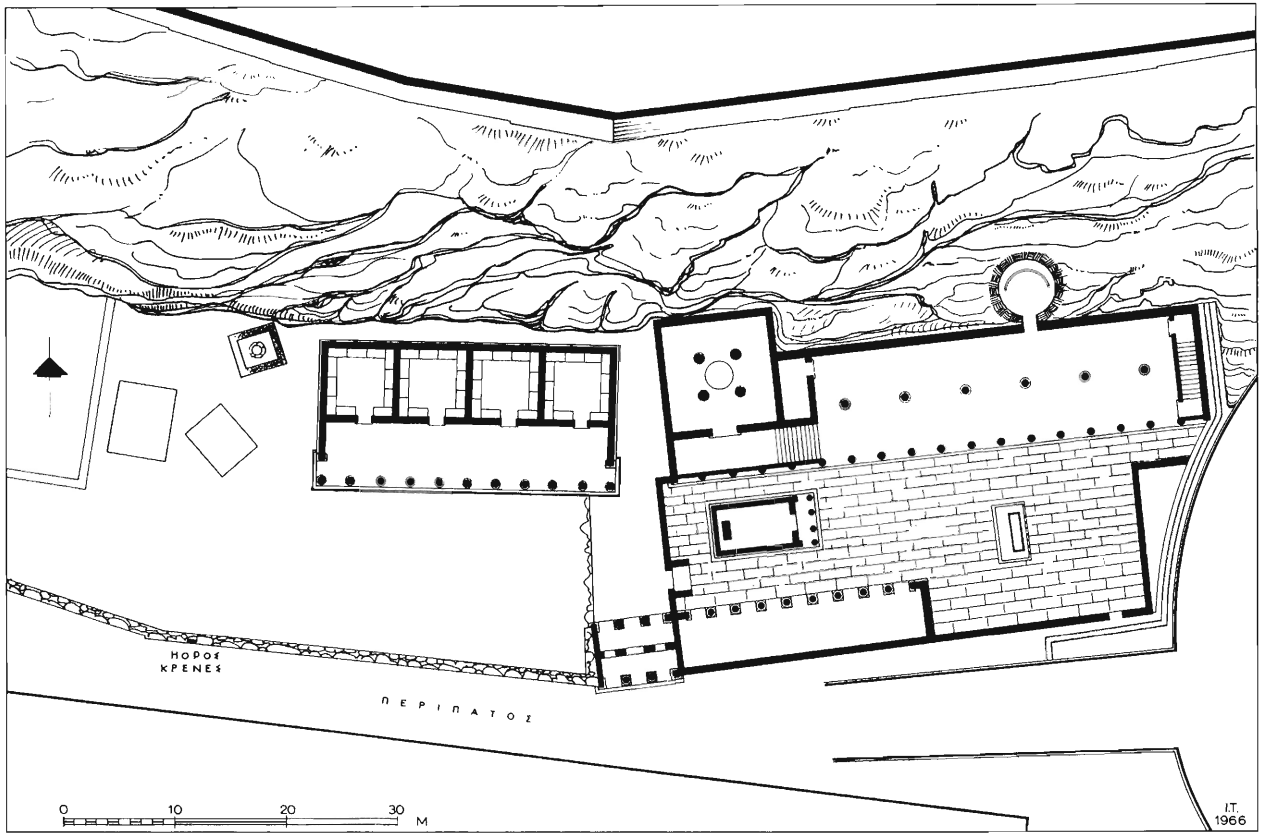


Fig. 2a–b. Asklepieion in Athens, from Travlos 1971, p. 129, figs. 171 and 172. © Ernst Wasmuth Verlag Tübingen.

stoa was used for incubation.<sup>78</sup> It seems however less likely for incubation practices, since the rooms have been fitted for *klinai* in the typical dining room fashion. The identification of the Ionic stoa as an incubation hall is at any rate difficult to make since it is hard to argue against the adaptation of the doors in order to fit dining *klinai*. It is difficult to imagine the Asklepieion without dining facilities, and the Ionian stoa seems to be the best alternative.

Second, S. Aleshire has proposed that the temple itself was used for incubation.<sup>79</sup> She argued that an incubation dormitory is notoriously difficult to identify and suggested the temple as a possible incubation building. She brought forward the incubants in Aristophanes' *Plutus* vv. 659–663, 732–734 (set in Athens or Piraeus), arguing from the text that the incubants sleep in the temple itself. The text, however, never explicitly states where in the temenos they lay down to sleep, but when Asklepios cures Ploutos (*Il.* 732–734) he clicks with his tongue and two snakes come forward towards them 'from the temple' (ἐκ τοῦ νεώ). If they are now lying in the temple, why do the snakes move from the temple and towards the incubants? Or do they come out from an inner room in the temple (both interpretations of the word are possible)? Or did the holy snakes live in the temple and came out when Asklepios called them? Even if the incubants slept inside the temple at the time of Aristophanes, there is no way of knowing whether they later, when the Asklepieion at Athens (or Piraeus) received a more monumental form, received a separate incubation area, just as in Epidauros, from where the cult originated.

Aleshire also argued from Paus. 10.32.12, on the Asklepieion at Tithorea that incubants in general need not have slept in a special sleeping hall. Pausanias described the temple of Asklepios at Tithorea and the statue inside the temple, proceeding to mention that there is a kline to the right of the statue. In my view, this cannot be adduced as proof that incubation was practised inside the temple at Tithorea. One kline cannot have sufficed for the great number of incubants, and its placement inside the temple may have had a more symbolic function rather than being an incubation bed.

Yet another piece of evidence speaks of incu-

bation in the temple: the Suda telling of how the philosopher Plutarchos slept in the Asklepieion

<sup>78</sup> Walker has in an article proposed that incubation may have taken place in the Ionic stoa west of the temple of Asklepios. A shrine of Isis below the Acropolis may have been established by the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD (Walker 1979, 253, 257; Dunand 1973, vol. 2, 134–5). An interesting dedicatory inscription has been found on the Hadrianic naiskos that was preceded by a non-datable building (IG II<sup>2</sup>, 4771, around 128 AD. See Walker 1979, 254–5, 257). Among other things, a female lamp-bearer who also served as a dream interpreter is mentioned in the inscription. Walker argues, on the basis of this inscription, that the cult of Isis at Athens and the Asklepieion shared an incubation hall, and that this was the Ionic stoa between the two sanctuaries. It is known that incubation was practised also in the cult of Isis, but little is known of the particular rites of the cult at Athens. This is an interesting suggestion. Maybe there was not space enough to sleep in the sanctuary. Could it not be possible that people had dreams in their homes and that they memorized them and then retold to the dream interpreter? Maybe the dreams were experienced in the major sanctuary of Isis and Serapis in the city of Athens (see Dunand 1973, vol. 2, 132–4). Dunand (1973, vol. 2, 137) is however of the opinion that the presence of an *oneirocrites* proves that incubation was indeed practised at the sanctuary of Isis on the south slope of the Acropolis. Many dedications were made to Isis, as to other gods, in gratitude for their appearance in a dream (*kat' onar*) (Isis: Dunand 1973, vol. 3, 260 and van Straten 1976, n. 21 with refs.; other gods: van Straten 1976). Maybe these dreams, not necessarily gotten during incubation, needed the guidance of a professional dream interpreter. Since the cult of Asklepios was founded earlier than the cult of Isis, it is not clear why the temple officials would offer their buildings to become the incubation hall of the cult of Isis. There is an additional stoa in the Asklepieion: a southern stoa built in Roman times. Could this have been shared by the two cults, so that the cult of Isis got space for incubation (while incubants hoping to meet Asklepios slept in the northern, Doric, stoa)? Isis was according to Dunand assimilated to Hygieia at Delos and Epidauros, there being connections between Asklepios and the Egyptian gods (Dunand 1973 vol. 2, 112, n.6, 162); cf. Roussel 1915–16, 150, no. 124 of 112/1 BC. (Isis associated with Hygieia at Delos); IG IV<sup>2</sup>, 534, 535 = Vidman 1969, nos. 36 and 37 showing that Isis and Sarapis were celebrated at Epidauros in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD; Paus. 2.27.6 show that a temple was built to "the Egyptian" Asklepios, Hygieia and Apollon). In Vidman 1969, no. 44, an inscription from Mantinea of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (discussed in Dunand 1973, vol. 2, 164, n.1), offers possible evidence that priests of Asklepios took part in Isiac meals. It is, however, difficult to know how far the hospitality of Asklepios at Athens stretched: dedications in his sanctuary, yes, but incubation in his dormitory? It is an interesting question, but difficult to address.

<sup>79</sup> Aleshire 1989, 29–30.

in Athens in the 480s AD.<sup>80</sup> From the place where he slept, “ἐγκαθεύδων τῷ προδόμῳ τοῦ ἱεροῦ”, he could see the cult statue.<sup>81</sup> The author of the passage, Damaskios, who is cited in the 10<sup>th</sup> century Suda, was born in 462 AD and was a student of rhetoric in Athens, later the head of the Neoplatonic school.<sup>82</sup> Hence, he must have been familiar with Athens and seen the Asklepieion. The cult statue being visible to Plutarch in the text strongly suggests that Plutarch slept on the very small porch of the temple (roughly measuring 5 x 2 m). Sleep in this small space suggests, in my view, that only a small number of sleepers were accommodated and accordingly that the rite was in decline by the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Before Christianity, though, votive offerings in Athens provide evidence of a large number of incubants and hence more space would have been needed for incubation. Furthermore, having people sleep in the temple or on its porch might have slowed down the daily services inside the temple due to e.g. the removal of temporary incubation beds in the morning. Moreover, as there is no certain evidence that incubation ever took place in temples, it seems less likely that this would have been the custom for the Asklepieion at Athens, at least before Late Antiquity.

Many scholars have speculated on a possible cultic continuity between the sanctuary of Asklepios and the church that was built on the site fairly soon after the destruction of the Asklepieion some time during the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>83</sup> The church was built above the ruins of the sanctuary at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2b). Many old building elements were incorporated in the church walls, such as the sacred spring beside the former incubation hall. Gregory, following Travlos, argues that since the sacred spring was still used during Christian times, the healing character of the cult must have been present also in the Christian church.<sup>84</sup> An inscription was found near the former Asklepieion that points to the veneration of St. Andreas, a known healing saint.<sup>85</sup> The inscription does not necessarily belong to this church, though.<sup>86</sup> Gregory makes the case that the reuse of architectural elements, i.e. the Doric stoa and the spring, and the evidence of

a cult to St. Andreas show a transition from pagan to Christian healing.

In my view, the adaptation of earlier architectural units does not automatically imply that also the function is taken over. The presence of a fountain in or near a church need not exclusively have served curative purposes; another use might have been for baptism, both a remission of sins and an entering into a new life.<sup>87</sup> As Christians in the time of the Didache (a manual of church life included among the works of the apostolic fathers) were preferably baptized in ‘live water’, that is, water e.g. from a river or a source, might it not have been considered extra beneficial to be baptised with the water from a source?<sup>88</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Suda, s.v. Δομῖνος (T427) (10<sup>th</sup> century AD) = Damaskios, *Vita Isidori* fr. 218 [Zintzen].

<sup>81</sup> The Edelsteins (T427) translate “in the vestibule of the shrine”. In the LSJ πρόδομος, s.v, is translated as, in temples, the opposite of opisthodomos; λέρον of course is often used for temple.

<sup>82</sup> *Neue Pauly* 3 (1997), colls. 291–3, s.v. Damaskios; *PLRE* vol. 2, 342–3 (Damascius 2); cf Hällström 1994, 151–3.

<sup>83</sup> Frantz 1965, 195, argues that the temple was deconsecrated but not destroyed shortly before 485 AD. She further argues that it then was destroyed due to lack of upkeep, an earthquake, or at the hands of Christians, at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup>, and that the church was built on top of it after 529 AD.

<sup>84</sup> Gregory 1986, 238–9.; Travlos 1939, 54–7; Karivieri 1995, 902. The water from the cave spring was also brought by clay pipes under the floor of the basilica to a font or small reservoir outside the southern wall of the basilica (Wickens 1995, 332; Travlos 1939–41, 54, figs. 4 and 20).

<sup>85</sup> It has not been dated. It was published by Bayet 1878, 71, no. 13. See Creaghan & Raubitschek 1947, 29, no. XI.

<sup>86</sup> As Karivieri 1995, 902, has shown, there is a smaller church nearby to which the inscription more probably belongs. Karivieri suggests that the basilica built on top of the Asklepieion was dedicated to Christus Salvator.

<sup>87</sup> Benoit 1953, 223–5; Saxer 1988, *passim* on baptismal rites as described by the church fathers, e.g. 423–45 for a summary of different rites of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>88</sup> Saxer suggests that the blessings of the baptismal water and further elaboration of the rite was partly due to the use of ‘ordinary’ bath water, and not the live water as in the time of the Didache (Saxer 1988, 421). See the Didache 7.1, and Clem. *Contest.* 1 (PG 2.29A): ‘ἀγαγόντα αὐτὸν ἐπὶ ποταμὸν ἢ πηγῆν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ ζῶν ὕδωρ’ (The Clementina, early 3<sup>rd</sup> century material, in its present form probably of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century).

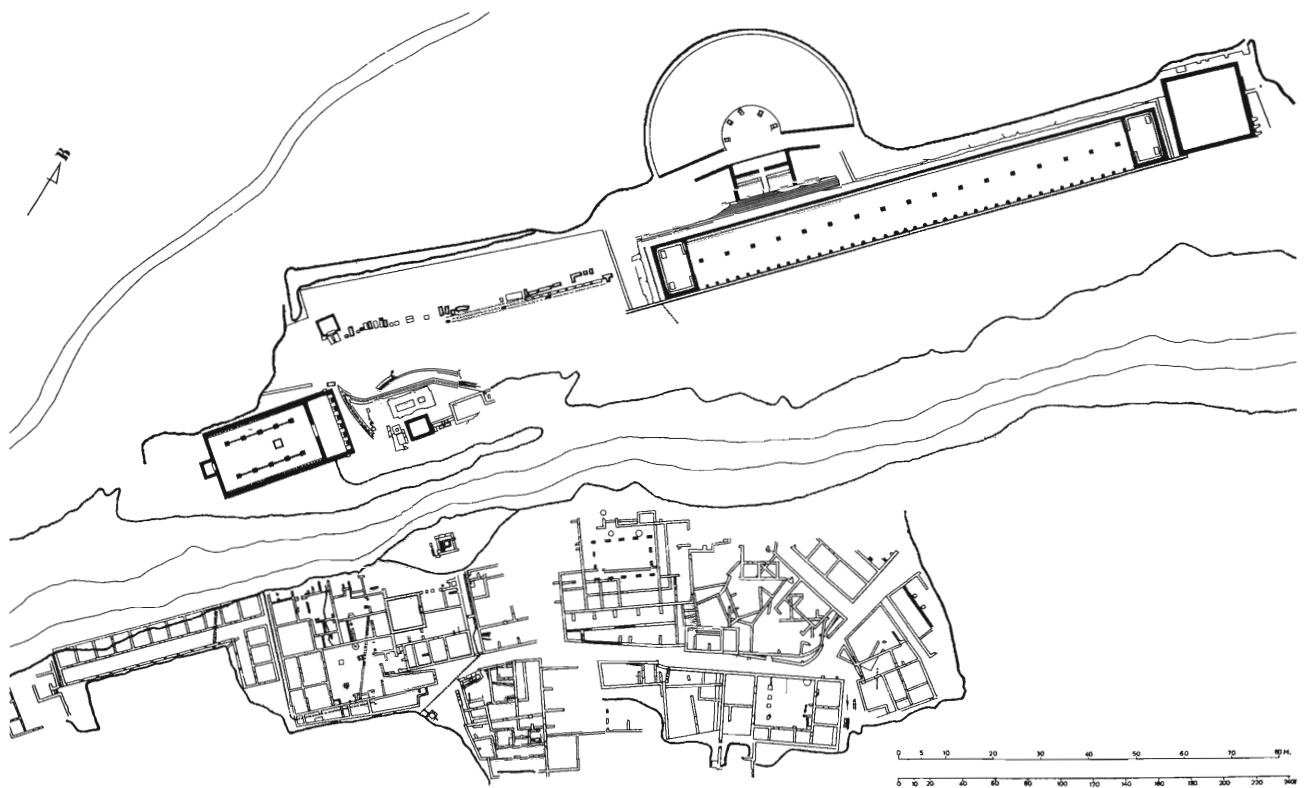


Fig. 3. Amphiaraion in Oropos, from Petrakos 1968, pl. 1.

## The Amphiaraion in Oropos

Another place where the ritual and the preparations for incubation are documented in textual sources is the hero Amphiaraos' sanctuary at Oropos (Fig. 3). The first healings are known from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is possible that incubation with the purpose of learning the future was practised in the cult earlier.<sup>89</sup> The earliest incubation hall has not been reliably identified.<sup>90</sup> The later incubation hall has been identified in a stoa, but it is believed that the incubants used only the two rooms at both ends of the stoa for sleeping.<sup>91</sup> Since epigraphical evidence clearly points out a special building as the place where suppliants slept, the temple can be excluded as incubation area.<sup>92</sup> The stoa is dated to c. 360–340 BC.<sup>93</sup> There are two side rooms constructed on each end (the interior measuring c. 10 x 5.5 m). Inside the stoa 17 Ionic columns support the roof and divide it into two aisles. These two aisles were not separated by any permanent structure.<sup>94</sup> The two

rooms at each end, on the other hand, were separated from the rest of the stoa by thin walls and a fence/parapet between the two Ionic columns that separated these rooms from the hall.

<sup>89</sup> Petropoulou 1981, 58, 63, places the foundation of the oracle at Oropos to 420–414 BC. In 414 BC Amphiaraos is presented as a healer in Aristophanes (*Amphiaraos* fig. 28, CAF I, p. 399). Petropoulou 1985, 176, writes that Amphiaraos probably turned into a healer under influence of the, at the time, very popular cult of Asklepios (formerly giving dream oracles at an unidentified site, near Thebes or Oropos (see further e.g. Parker 1996, 146–9).

<sup>90</sup> Petrakos 1968, 68.

<sup>91</sup> Roesch 1984, 183–4.

<sup>92</sup> IG 7.235 (387–377 BC).

<sup>93</sup> Coulton 1976, 48, n. 2, 269 and p.c. Coulton as of the 26.05.05 for the wider date range. The stoa is c. 110 m long, open along the southern long side. The benches, however, are a later addition, hard to date (Coulton 1968, 183, end of 4<sup>th</sup> century to Roman times).

<sup>94</sup> Pers. comm. Jim Coulton, whom I would like to thank for a fruitful discussion.



According to a so-called *lex sacra* from Oropos dated to 387–377 BC it is known that men and women slept apart.<sup>95</sup> The *lex sacra* is somewhat earlier than the construction of the stoa at Oropos, maybe by 20 years, but as religious customs tend to be conservative it seems a fair assumption that men and women continued to be separated.

The textual material on incubation at the Amphiarion at Oropos gives the impression of a popular cult. The size of the stoa itself testifies to many visitors. The number of incubants may have been larger at times than could be housed in the side rooms: it seems possible, in analogy with the incubation stoa at Epidauros, that people incubated behind temporary screenings in the inner aisle of the stoa.

## The Asklepieion in Pergamon

One of the most famous incubation sanctuaries in Roman times was the Asklepieion at Pergamon. The temple of Asklepios at Pergamon was, according to Pausanias, founded by a private person, Archias, in recognition of a healing at Epidauros.<sup>96</sup> This probably took place during the first half of the 4th century BC.<sup>97</sup>

The building that has been identified as the dormitory was rebuilt no less than five times between the early 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.<sup>98</sup> The dormitory, or *enkoimeterion* as it is called at Pergamon, ‘A’ on Fig. 4, does not resemble the one at Epidauros. The main criteria that Armpis has suggested for an incubation building, proximity to the temple (‘B’ on Fig. 4) and water structures (holy source, ‘C’ on Fig. 4), are, however, fulfilled.

The character of the new additions and rebuildings of the building identified as *enkoimeterion* seems to indicate a need to enlarge the area for incubation (if this indeed was the function for these buildings). The rooms are fairly large,<sup>99</sup> giving an indication that many incubants shared rooms, but that some rooms might have been reserved for an even more secluded activity. The *leges sacrae* Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse, possibly being a Roman copy of one or more Hellenistic original(s),<sup>100</sup> and LSAM 14 of Roman time, speak of a large and a small *enko-*

*imeterion*.<sup>101</sup> In the Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse it seems that the small dormitory is to be used by someone wanting to incubate several times about the same thing. Worshippers at Pergamon, just as at Epidauros, could thus choose to stay longer than for one incubation experience,<sup>102</sup> but at Epidauros, there are as of now no indications of separate rooms for different categories of worshippers. Armpis suggests that the divisions inside the Hellenistic building at Pergamon mirror these two dormitories, and that certain smaller rooms of the Hellenistic building might have been private incubation rooms for prominent incubants, and/or the so-called

<sup>95</sup> IG 7.235 (387–377 BC).

<sup>96</sup> Paus. 2.26.8–9. This is also mentioned in an inscription from Epidauros dated to the 2nd century AD (IG IV<sup>2</sup>, 60).

<sup>97</sup> Hansen 1971, 10–1, 443, has gathered the textual sources, which make it probable that the cult was founded at this time. There are buildings at the site that can be dated as far back as the end of the 5th century BC, but it is c. 275–250 BC that the buildings start to become more coherent. A Hellenistic temple has tentatively been reconstructed to the 3rd century BC, the reign of Filetairos (281–263 BC) (‘B’ on fig. 4).

<sup>98</sup> O. Deubner among others (Deubner 1938, 15, 17, 34, 40) identifies the Hellenistic building next to the well as the incubation space, many times rebuilt. The phases of the building identified as *enkoimeterion* are: 1) c. 275–250 BC, *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), 17–9; 2) around the middle of the 3rd century BC, *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), 29; 3) c. 233–200 BC, *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), 32–3; 4) c. 200–191 BC, *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), 46; 5) after 157– end 150/125 BC, *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), 61–2. These phases of construction correspond to the general building phases 4, 6, 7, 9 and 12 as presented in *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), e.g. pl. 69.

<sup>99</sup> *AvP* XI.1 (Ziegenaus), pl. 69 with the different phases.

<sup>100</sup> Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse ll. 15–9 (*IvP* III, 161A–B). The inscription has been dated by Wörrle (1969, 187) as inscribed at the turn of the 1st and 2nd century AD, or slightly later, upon an earlier original, perhaps of Hellenistic time. Lupu has suggested that the inscription may be a collection made in Roman time of different *leges sacrae* from the sanctuary, of varying date (Lupu 2005, 61).

<sup>101</sup> *IvP* II, no. 264 (=LSAM 14). The LSAM 14, has only been dated on palaeographical grounds from the facsimile reprinted in the Fränkel edition of *IvP* no. 264. Fränkel dates it to Imperial times, while Sokolowski limits the date to the 3rd century AD. Zingerle 1924, 171 as well as Robert 1937, 70–1, n. 8 dates it to the 2nd century AD. Wörrle 1969, 178, n. 51, leans towards the 2nd century AD.

<sup>102</sup> Long term visitors can be seen also e.g. at the Asklepieion at Aegae in Roman times (Philostr. *VA* 1.9).

*perithutai* or *therapeutai*, long-term visitors, attested for at the sanctuary.<sup>103</sup> Prominent incubants would no doubt have been men like Caracalla who, according to Herodianus, stayed for some time at the sanctuary.<sup>104</sup> Special groups of worshippers called *therapeutai* and *perithutai* are described in Pergamene inscriptions<sup>105</sup> as well as in Aristides.<sup>106</sup>

During the Roman phase the Asklepieion expanded considerably, with the addition of several new buildings, among others the temple to Zeus-Asklepios built *c.* AD 140, as well as the so-called Lower Circular Building, 'D' on Fig. 4. The excavators suggest that the Lower Circular Building might have been used for incubations, at least at an early stage, as a replacement for the old *enkoimeterion* in the middle of the courtyard.<sup>107</sup> They do not think that this was the only possible function for the building, its function as a 'Kurbau' so clearly coming through in the architecture. Armpis writes that the coldwater basins served purificatory purposes, hinting at a possible function for preparation for incubation and actual sleeping in the Lower Circular Building. She adds though that it might also just have been an ordinary coldwater bath.<sup>108</sup>

It seems clear that as the number of incubants increased during Roman times, there was a need for more incubation areas. The Lower Circular Building might be an option, although it seems to me unpractical to sleep inside a bath with such a clear secondary function. The excavators have also suggested the basement below the southern stoa of mid-Imperial times as an additional dormitory, 'E' on Fig. 4.<sup>109</sup> This seems to be a plausible hypothesis, given the direct connection with the early cult centre (Hellenistic temple and dormitory) via the cryptoporticus. The incubants would have been able to pass the fountain/well by the entrance of the tunnel 'F' on Fig. 4, go down the cool and dark tunnel to the lower floor of the south stoa. The excavators further suggest that the 'large *enkoimeterion*' mentioned in the Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse corresponds to the basement of the south stoa, whereas the 'small *enkoimeterion*' refers to the Hellenistic, many times rebuilt, dormitory.

<sup>103</sup> Armpis 2001, 142. See further Sokolowski 1973, 408–12, on the different groups of worshippers incubating at Pergamon. Sokolowski sees the *therapeutai* as a group of 'organized

worshippers' who took part in the services of the temple, but also incubated as private persons, comparing them to the *katochoi* as well as *therapeutai* of some temples of Sarapis. We know very little of these two associations. See further Pleket 1981, 159–61 (*therapeutai* in the cult of Asklepios and in cults of Oriental gods); Sly 1996, 139; Engelman 1975, 32; Roussel 1916, 253–5 (*therapeutai* in Egyptian cults on Delos); Ziebarth 1896, 203 (*therapeutai* on Delos, in the cults of the Egyptian gods as well as in the cult of Dea Syria (where they according to Ziebarth enjoyed an official status. Ziebarth also mentions *therapeutai* in the cult of Asklepios at Aenos). As the very general meaning of *therapeutes*, worshipper, implies, Galen, who spent time at Pergamon, called himself a *therapeutes* of the god (VI.41.XIX.9 Kühn). Ziebarth 1896, 203 believes the *therapeutai* to have been a loosely knit guild of doctors and other learned men at the sanctuary. Sokolowski further conjectures that the duty of the *therapeutai* was to sacrifice on a regular basis, 'perithuo'. As the *therapeutai* and *perithutai* are mentioned together, the meaning of περιθύω and περιθύτης has been a matter of discussion. Wörrle (1969, 183) points out that the fact that the verb *perithuo* and attached substantive only appears in Pergamon makes it difficult to say with any certainty what it covers. He conjectures that it might be some kind of cultic procession, possibly including a sacrifice around altars (Wörrle 1969, 182). Sokolowski 1973 suggests that the prefix 'peri' strengthens on the verb itself, not necessarily implying a circular movement. Thus, he suggests that the verb, as in five possibly parallel applications of the prefix, implies an iterated action, 'to sacrifice regularly'.

<sup>104</sup> Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci* 4.8.3 (=T437).

<sup>105</sup> *AvP* VIII.3, no. 47 (2<sup>nd</sup>/beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> century), no. 79 (first half 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), no. 122 (no date), no. 140 (time of Antoninus Pius), no. 152 (possibly second half of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD); Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse (Wörrle 1969=*AvP* VIII.3, no. 161, *perithutai*).

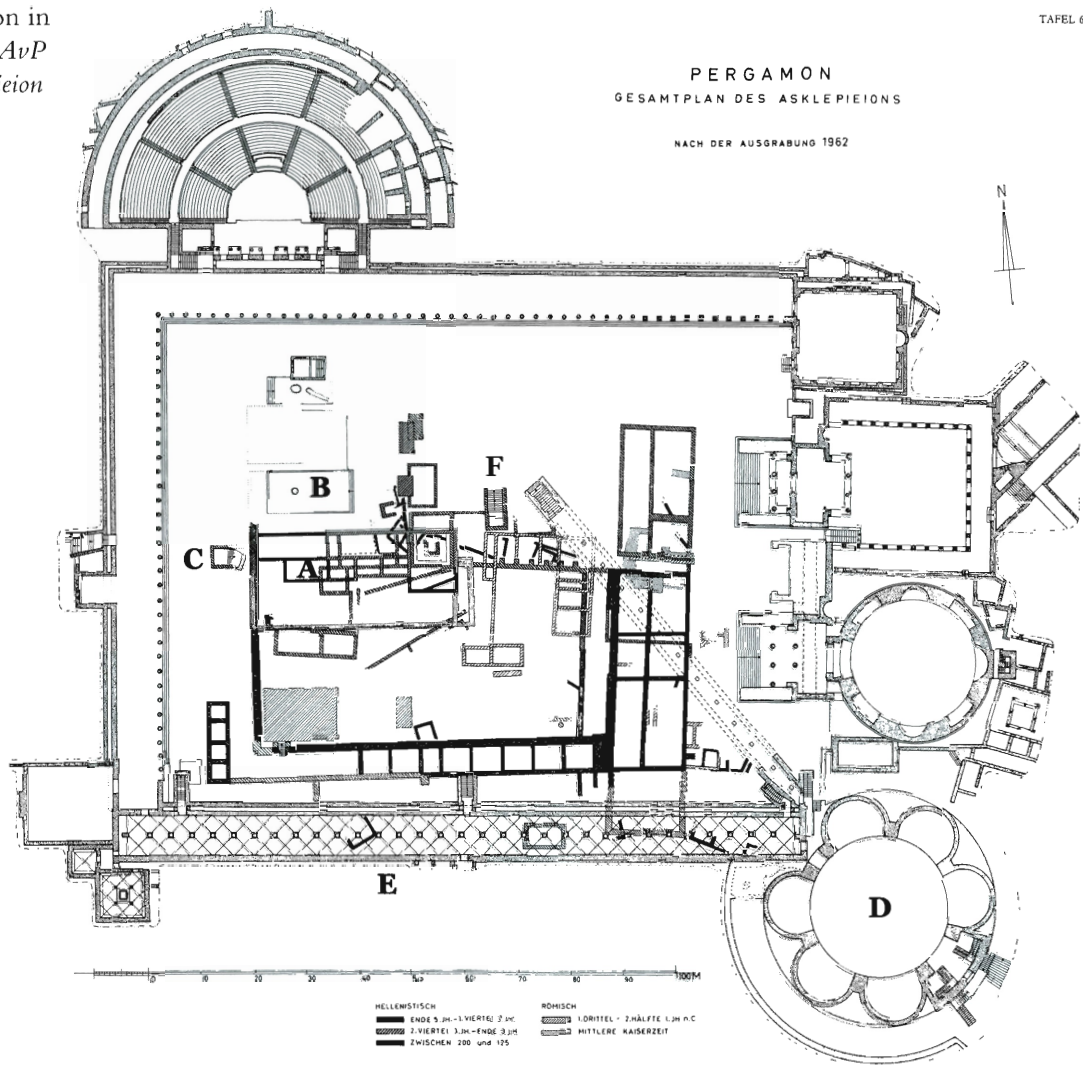
<sup>106</sup> On *therapeutai*: Aristid. *Or.Sacr.* 1.23, 2.47, 4.16, 4.18, 4.50, calling himself θεραπευτής and his fellows συνθεραπευταί or συμφοιηταί. Aristides uses the word θεραπεύειν for serving the god, *e.g.* when standing next to the statue of the god when the paean is sung (4.50). It might seem that this place was reserved to a smaller group of worshippers (the total amount of worshippers coming to the Asklepieion presumably being larger than would comfortably fit around the statue inside the temple). In 4.16 Aristides and Sedatius are set apart as "two of the more distinguished *therapeutai*", implying that there was indeed a separate and more distinguished group of worshippers at the sanctuary. Cf. also the evidence for *therapeutai* in Athens in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD: SEG 39.229 (= Aleshire 1991, 171).

<sup>107</sup> *AvP* XI.3, 76–100, incubation purpose: 76–7, on water structures including water basins: 89–92 (Ziegenaus); *AvP* VIII.3 (1969), 14 n. 4 (Habicht); Armpis 2001, 247, 142. Deubner believes that it may have been used as bath as well as for cures, and for walking around in a cool space when summer was at its hottest (Deubner 1938, 60).

<sup>108</sup> Armpis 2001, 142, 247.

<sup>109</sup> Hoffmann 1998, 54–5.

Fig. 4. Asklepieion in Pergamon, from *AvP* XI.1. *Das Asklepieion* 1, pl. 68.



In my view, there is nothing to say that the incubation areas for the different groups of worshippers incubating at Pergamon need to be fixed to two (or three for that matter) permanent locations from Hellenistic to Roman times. The uncertain date of the *Lex Sacra Hallenstrasse* advises caution. Changes in the number of incubants coming to the sanctuary and new building programs must no doubt have re-located the dormitories at times.

Aelius Aristides, on the other hand, being practically a permanent guest, slept in a number of different places within the sanctuary.<sup>110</sup> It has been suggested that the texts of Aelius Aristides show how incubation during the Imperial period changed, so as to be practised anywhere where the worshipper slept: in a sanctuary or in his/her home.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the case has been made that incubation at

Pergamon might have been performed in any of the public buildings in the sanctuary.<sup>112</sup> These hypotheses do not take into account the very special character of Aristides as a man who believed that he was in almost constant communication with above all Asklepios, both in sanctuaries and at other locations.<sup>113</sup> The overwhelming evidence is that special dormitories were assigned for the large number of incubants at Pergamon.

<sup>110</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 48.9 (= *Or. Sacr.* 2.9), 48.71 (= *Or. Sacr.* 2.71), 48.80 (= *Or. Sacr.* 2.80), 49.7 (= *Or. Sacr.* 3.7).

<sup>111</sup> Lefort 1906, 108.

<sup>112</sup> Aleshire 1989, 30.

<sup>113</sup> See van Straten 1976, 18, on the very personal relationship Aristides had with Asklepios.

## The problem of identifying incubation buildings without accompanying literary evidence

An incubation building has also been identified at the sanctuary of Hathor at Dendara, in a building from the early Ptolemaic period.<sup>114</sup> There is no definite evidence that incubation took place inside this sanctuary (*i.e.* there is no textual evidence on this), or indeed in any other cult centre of Hathor.<sup>115</sup> There exist two dreams of private persons dreaming of Hathor from the time of the New Kingdom (Ramesside),<sup>116</sup> but single dream visions do not prove institutionalized incubation. Furthermore, both dreams have been shown to be of a spontaneous and unexpected character.<sup>117</sup> Szpakowska and others have successfully argued against incubation to have been practised in Egypt before the Late period.<sup>118</sup> We can thus safely say that there is no written evidence for incubation in the cult of Hathor, and hence caution should be taken in interpreting the archaeological evidence from Dendara.

Dunand ascribes the beginning of the practice of therapeutic dreams to the Ptolemaic period, influenced by Greek incubation.<sup>119</sup> Whether incubation in Egypt was a result of an internal development or influence by Greek rites is difficult to say. There are few testimonia as to how Isis and Sarapis helped suppliants before the statement of Diodoros<sup>120</sup> where he writes that Isis showed herself to suppliants in their dreams. In Imperial times, of course, there is good evidence that Sarapis and Isis healed through incubation dreams, especially in Aristides' *Sacred Discourses*. However, it appears certain that the evidence we have on dreams in the cult of Hathor does not refer to incubation. Also, there is no identified architecture for incubation in Egypt to compare with. Even in the healing cult of Imhotep there are no archaeological traces of sanatoria to compare with.<sup>121</sup> Incubation dormitories are notoriously difficult to identify within a sanctuary.

It might be likely that the building at the sanctuary of Hathor at Dendara served curative purposes because of the presence of water. As interesting though the hypothesis may be, it must remain a hypothesis. Also in the case of the so-called *Nekyomanteion* at Ephyra, incubation space has been

conjectured in a building, which was later shown to be a Hellenistic fortress.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Daumas 1957, 51–7. Daumas 1957, 40, 56, tentatively dates the different parts of the building from at least the early Ptolemaic period. Doubts on its identification were raised by Dunand 1991, 244 n. 45. It is to be noted that Daumas makes the point that although incubation is the most likely hypothesis for the rooms surrounding the courtyard, he has no architectural parallels in Egypt (Daumas 1957, 55–6). There are no written sources for the temple of Hathor at Dendara mentioning of incubation, the argument is solely made on the most probable function of the architecture and Hathor being closely connected with Isis (in whose cult incubation is known to have taken place). For the connection between Isis and Hathor at Dendara, see Dunand 1973, vol. 1, 119, 238; Bleeker 1973, 70 and Daumas 1958, 29–37. I do not view this connection as evidence that incubation was also practised in the cult of Hathor. Frankfurter 1998, 162, agrees with the interpretation of Daumas.

<sup>115</sup> On Hathor and personal veneration, see *e.g.* Bleeker 1973, 82–4.

<sup>116</sup> Satzinger 1985, 249–54 (New Kingdom (Ramesside)) and Assmann 1978 (inscribed dreamvision of Hathor from the time of New Kingdom (Ramesside) from Thebes, where Hathor had pointed out the location for a man's tomb to be built). See also Szpakowska 2003a, 145–6, arguing against these two dreams being incubation dreams.

<sup>117</sup> Szpakowska 2003b, 233; Szpakowska 2003a, 145.

<sup>118</sup> Szpakowska 2003a, 144–7, with further references. For an analysis of the 'Opening of the Mouth' ritual (its first complete and illustrated documentation being from the New Kingdom), where it might in fact be argued that the priest performs some sort of incubation, see Szpakowska 2003a, 147–51. As Szpakowska concludes, it is a funeral ritual restricted to a *sem*-priest.

<sup>119</sup> There is a dubious ostrakon from Deir el-Bahari, where a cured person honours Amenotes, in which fragmentary text the word visible has been supplanted (φαίλερω). O. Cairo 9695, published by Guéraud 1927, 121–5. It dates to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The fragmentary state of the text on the ostrakon advises caution on its interpretation.

Also, the presence of dream interpreters in Egyptian sources might point to the practice of incubation in this context. However, caution must be advised, since there is nothing to say that dream interpreters did not also interpret dreams that people had had at home. According to Dunand (1973, vol. 3, 155–6, vol. 1, 169–70), interpretation of dreams was developed especially in Hellenistic times in sanctuaries, but existed also before this, in ancient Egypt, linking the practice to incubation. Cure through dreams, though, was according to Dunand a Ptolemaic innovation (Dunand 1973, vol. 1, 170).

<sup>120</sup> Dunand 1973, vol. 1, 170; Diodorus Siculus *Hist.* 1.25.3, 5.

<sup>121</sup> Wildung 1977, 264.

<sup>122</sup> Rooms for incubation: Dakaris 1962, 88; Dakaris 1963, 52; Dakaris 1976; Dakaris 1996. Whole hypothesis of oracle of the dead at the so-called *nekyomanteion* disproved: Baatz 1979; Wiseman 1998; Baatz 1999.



## Christian incubation

Incubation was also practised in Christianity, mainly in the eastern half of the former Roman empire. It seems that this practice started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and seems to have taken on a more definite shape during the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>123</sup> In Christianity, the same as in Greek religion, dream visions where worshippers got contact with divinities or saints were common, and must be separated from institutionalized incubation.<sup>124</sup> In institutionalized incubation suppliants come to a sanctuary with the main purpose of encountering the martyr/saint/angel in a dream, and by this method get healed or helped in some other way. The priests of the church helped prepare for and promoted this method of healing. They provided sleeping accommodation and often helped in the interpretation and/or writing down of the dream. A substantial number of the reported miracles at certain sites must have been accomplished through dreams.

I have chosen four well documented Christian incubation cults to compare with the pagan evidence: Thekla in Cilicia, Kosmas and Damianos in Constantinople, Kyros and Johannes in Menouthis just outside of Alexandria, Artemios, whose cult was housed in the church of St. John the Baptist in Constantinople, and Demetrios at Thessalonike.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Here non-institutionalized incubation, that is, dream healing as a result of spontaneous dreams in a room not specifically designed for the purpose of sleeping and meeting the saint in a dream, is not included in the investigation. In the miracles of Thekla, of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, it is also apparent that not all suppliants have visions of her in their sleep, some were saved by her in ways more 'regular' as compared to saints' cults of the same time (they pray, and the saint effects a miracle). In 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century Christian incubation cults like Kosmas and Damianos, Kyros and Johannes and Artemios, practically all visitors come to the sanctuary to receive help in a dream, sleeping inside the church or in its forecourt. In fact this gradual development of incubation cults suggest, beside possible pagan reminiscences, a development of incubation within the Early Christian church itself, along with other relic-focused, popular means of healing.

<sup>124</sup> For Early Christian dreams that are not incubation dreams, see e.g. Cox Miller 1994, 148–83, 205–49; Dulaey 1973.

<sup>125</sup> All occurrences of Christian incubation cannot be covered within the scope of this study. Larger cults are investigated to establish a custom for these. It is primarily the intent of going to a church to sleep there and receive a vision of the saint/martyr/angel of the church that distinguishes institutionalized

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incubation cults from the visions of saints common in many cults. Some examples of incubation that are not mentioned in the text are: Therapon (Constantinople, ed. Deubner 1900, 113–34). The relics of St. Therapon, originally a martyr from Cyprus, were translated to Constantinople when the Saracens raided Cyprus. The miracles are dated to 626 AD by Deubner 1900, 118. In the cult of St. Therapon, healings as a result of dream visions took place inside the church. Also in the cult of Isaia, incubation seems to have been practised inside the church of St. Laurentius in Constantinople (Synax.Eccl. CP, 667; *Miracula St. Isaiae* (in Delehaye 1907, 257–65; see also Delehaye 1925, 39–40), where the relics of St. Isaia were housed. The miracles are hard to date, Delehaye writing that we only have the ante quem in the date of the manuscript to the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Delehaye 1925, 40). Further, in the cult of Tychon on Cyprus (Delehaye 1907, 232; cf. *Bibl.SS.* 12, 1969, 471–2, s.v. Ticone) the saint appears as a waking vision and his voice is heard (it is though uncertain if this might be classified as institutionalized incubation).

I can also cite the cult of Michael Anaplou at Hestiae (Janin 1964, map 9), where one incubation miracle is attested to around 440 AD (Sozomenos, *Hist.eccl.* 2.3, 9–13 (Sources Chrétiennes 306, 242–5). Here the patient slept inside the church and got instructions on how to get cured in his dream by a 'divine power' (θεία δύναμις). Also, in the cult of the archangel Michael in Egypt the angel was known to have appeared in the dreams of ill people sleeping in his church: The first of his miracles (not an incubation miracle) is firmly set in Egypt. Miracles where Michael shows himself to suppliants sleeping inside the church are attested to in Amélineau 1888, vol. 1, 73–4, 78, 80, 84, miracles 4, 6 (set in Rome), 7 (also set in Rome) and 10. In miracle 8 (set on Cyprus), the archangel does not appear in a vision, but the suppliants staying in the church over night are cured just the same, by simply being there. In one miracle, 5, the suppliant is so ill that she is lying in bed at home, and her parents bring an image of Michael to her. She receives a vision of the angel in her home at night. It is nowhere mentioned that they slept anywhere apart from the church. Miracle 9 is a waking vision in the middle of a sermon. In miracle 2, Michael appears in a dream in the suppliant's home (they have previously prayed to him). These miracles where the saint/martyr/angel shows himself to suppliants at home, either because they are too ill to come to the church, or because he/she wanted to call them to the church, must be regarded as an extended miracle of the same cult. Amélineau 1888, xlv, dates the different miracles and tales of his edition to between the mid-4<sup>th</sup> to the mid-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, because, as he writes, it is not possible to date them more precisely.

There exist other testimonia that refer to occurrences of incubation, or what might seem similar to incubation, in Early Christian times, but the choice here of cults is limited to cults where the practice was established and part of the daily (or nightly, as it were) routines of the cult. The most conspicuous example is the custom retold by an anonymous writer from Piacenza of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (CSEL 39, p. 163 [ed. Geyer]), where ill people supposedly slept in the baths of Elia in Gadera, having visions and becoming healed.

Only Hagia Thekla and the church of Demetrios have been excavated, but the sources on all these cults are so detailed about where the incubants slept, that these milieus can be reconstructed. Even if the veracity of the miracles themselves might be questioned, most of the miracle stories we will investigate, were written by authors well informed of the cults about which they were writing. The milieus described in them would with all probability have been described based on knowledge of the cult and with the intent of having suppliant recognize themselves in the accounts. Hence, if it is stated that people slept in the right aisle of the church, it might be assumed that this was the custom, even if characters and specifics on the cures might be left to literary imagination, more or less so depending upon who composed/wrote down the miracle stories.

The cult of Menas at Abu Mina and the church at Sidi Mahmud in Egypt will also be commented on. Although there is no literary evidence on incubation being practised there, interesting suggestions have been made on possible incubation architecture in the pilgrimage centre of Abu Mina and the church of Sidi Mahmud.

## Hagia Thekla

According to the legend, Thekla followed the apostle Paul on his journeys, dressed as a man. She endured and overcame many dangers for the sake of her faith, and finally died by disappearing into a crevice in a mountain on the same spot where her cult was later established.<sup>126</sup>

Thekla was venerated among other places in the sanctuary of Hagia Thekla near Seleucia on the border between Cilicia and Isauria.<sup>127</sup> An anonymous writer with some authority in the church wrote down the collection of miracles that Thekla was thought to have performed at the site. This was done by the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>128</sup>

The miracle stories give evidence that incubation inside the church of Thekla seems to have been the most common way of experiencing a miracle. In miracle 38, Alypius went to the church (τὸν νεῶν καταλαβών) of Thekla, where Thekla visited him

at night 'in the way she usually does with the ill' (ἐπιφοιτήσασα νύκτωρ αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ ἔθος αὐτῇ πρὸς τοὺς ἀρρώστους ἀεὶ ποιεῖν).

However, most miracles that deal with dream visions are not specific on where the dream vision is experienced, focusing rather on the cure. When the location of a dream vision is named, it is usually said to be somewhere at Hagia Thekla (the exact location not given), or to have been obtained inside the church. In some miracles Thekla visits the home of the ill person. One might say that visits at home is a sort of extended incubation, where it is thought that the martyr leaves his or her abode to make a house call. They exist in most incubation cults.<sup>129</sup>

Let us now have a look at the miracles in question. First, there are miracles that relate to dream visions of Thekla inside the church, but that do not specify where in the church the suplicants slept. In miracle 7, a servant of Thekla had a dream vision of Thekla, urging him to anoint himself with the oil hanging above the martyr's abode in the bema. He woke up and anointed himself with the oil. Although never expressed explicitly, the context shows that there is not a long distance from his couch to the bema, indicating that he is sleeping inside the church. Further, in miracle 17,<sup>130</sup> Leontios, having broken a leg, slept in the church (ἐν τῷ νεῶ) and was cured in his dream by Thekla. In miracle 18, a suppliant was taken to the church of Thekla (εἰς τὸν νεῶν) and was told by Thekla

<sup>126</sup> *Life of S. Thekla*, ed. Dagron 1978, 274–83; Festugière 1971, 23–4. On the martyr, see e.g. *BiblSS* 12 (1969), 176–7, s.v. Tecla, IV and *ODB* 3 (1991), 2003–4, s.v. Thekla.

<sup>127</sup> On her cult in general, see e.g. Kötting 1950, 140–60; Dagron 1978, 55–139.

<sup>128</sup> Dagron 1978, 17–9. The text has on erroneous grounds been attributed to Basilios of Seleukia. See also *ODB*, 3 (1991), 2033–4, s.v. Thekla.

<sup>129</sup> Dreamvisions of Thekla outside Hagia Thekla, to people seemingly sleeping in their own beds or at least not at Hagia Thekla: mir. 12 (Dagron p. 319–20), mir. 14 (Dagron p. 326–9, a waking vision), mir. 29 (in Seleucia, not pertaining to a cure); mir. 41 (the author of the miracle gets cured from an ear infection). These miracles can be compared with miracles of Kosmas and Damianos, nos. 13 and 27.

<sup>130</sup> Dagron 1978, 336–7.



to take dirt from the chancels of Thekla's chamber (θάλαμος) for a cure. The suppliant most probably slept inside the church, since the martyr refers to the chancels as if the suppliant was able to see them. In miracle 31, Thekla appears as a waking vision inside her church, in order to reproach workers for digging a tomb of an official there. This is not an incubation miracle, but it shows how the church itself was seen as Thekla's home, not least by Thekla herself. In miracle 39, Isokasios slept in the church (ἐν τῷ ναῷ) of the martyr, but not the church of Thekla at Hagia Thekla, but one outside of Aigai. It shows, however, that dream visions were given in the cult of Thekla at Aigai inside the church (but whether this was a singular event or a recurring phenomenon is impossible to know).

There is also evidence that the virgins of Thekla, residing within the peribolos area, sometimes slept in the interior of the church, for personal reasons or because it was required of them.<sup>131</sup> In miracle 46, Dionysia renounced her worldly life and went to the church (καταλαβούσῃ τὸν νεῶν) where she also, lying in bed, had a waking vision of Thekla floating between her bed and that of her companion. Thekla then slid down to her resting place (θάλαμος).

In miracle 12, the author of the miracles was cured himself from anthrax by Thekla when seemingly sleeping in his home.<sup>132</sup> In his dream, though, he is sleeping in the atrium of the church when Thekla approaches him. This might have no significance, but it seems probable that suppliants might have slept in the atrium as well as in the church.

In some miracles it is clear that the suppliant has come to the sanctuary, but it is not clear where in the temenos area the dreamvision is given.<sup>133</sup> In miracle 25, many suppliants suffering from an eye disease sleep in the sanctuary, called 'the clinic', referring to the free healings Thekla offered in her church (ἀνοίγει μὲν ἐν τῷ αὐτῆς τεμένει τὸ ἰατρεῖον). One of the suppliants received a dreamvision telling them all to go to the baths of Thekla and be cured.

It is thus clear from the miracles that the pilgrims slept in the church and that Thekla appeared to those seeking help in their sleep, and cured them either instantly or by giving a prescription for a cure. It is stated in miracle 38 that she usually visited those who slept in the church. This

means that incubation inside the church was the most common way of experiencing a miracle. As shown above, the incubants slept in the aisles of the church, as well as in the atrium/forecourt, and the textual evidence seems to indicate that men and women slept apart.<sup>134</sup> There are no miracles indicating that dream visions were experienced anywhere else in the sanctuary than inside the church (naos). There are miracles, though, that show how dream visions were experienced in the sanctuary but not giving any precise location. This might leave the field open for speculation as to where people incubated. However, it seems likely that had there been a special dormitory in the sanctuary, at least one of the miracles would have mentioned it. Instead, whenever a building is specified, it is the naos, the church.

The context of some miracles makes it clear that there were people who stayed at the sanctuary for longer periods of time, but the foremost purpose for this seems to have been to pray and live secluded from society, and not to get healed by incubation.<sup>135</sup>

The site is only partially excavated. Two churches from the 5<sup>th</sup> century dominate the site, the so-called basilica of Thekla (81 x 43 m) and the Cupola Church.<sup>136</sup> They have thus been built after the

<sup>131</sup> Mir. 32 (Dagron 1978, 374–7). For their usual accommodation, see mir. 10 and Dagron 1978, 74. See also mir. 43, where a maiden came to the church and slept there.

<sup>132</sup> In a similar way, in mir. 9, Thekla appears to her priest Menodoros when he is sleeping at home, giving him advice on how to solve a politically difficult situation.

<sup>133</sup> In Mir. 42 Kalliste flees to the martyr (καραφεύγει πρὸς τὴν μάρτυρα) and gets a treatment indicated by the martyr. Nothing is said more specifically on where or how the martyr appears to Kalliste, but a dreamvision might be assumed because Thekla in the account spoke to her in person.

<sup>134</sup> Mir. 33: men and women were separated during the mass.

<sup>135</sup> See e.g. mir. 43 and 46, where the context shows how a group of women lived in celibacy in the sanctuary.

<sup>136</sup> It is not sure whether the Cupola Church had a cupola or not: Hill 1996, 214. Measurements of the 5<sup>th</sup> century basilica: Hill 220. One of the churches was founded in 476, but it is not clear which one. However, we do know that they were founded at similar times. Hill 1996, 212–3. Hill, following Hellenkemper, believes that it was the Cupola Church that was founded by Zeno 476 AD. Herzfeld & Guyer 1930, 32, believe that the Thekla-basilica was built somewhat before the Cupola Church, in the 460s or early 470s, as a result of local patronage.

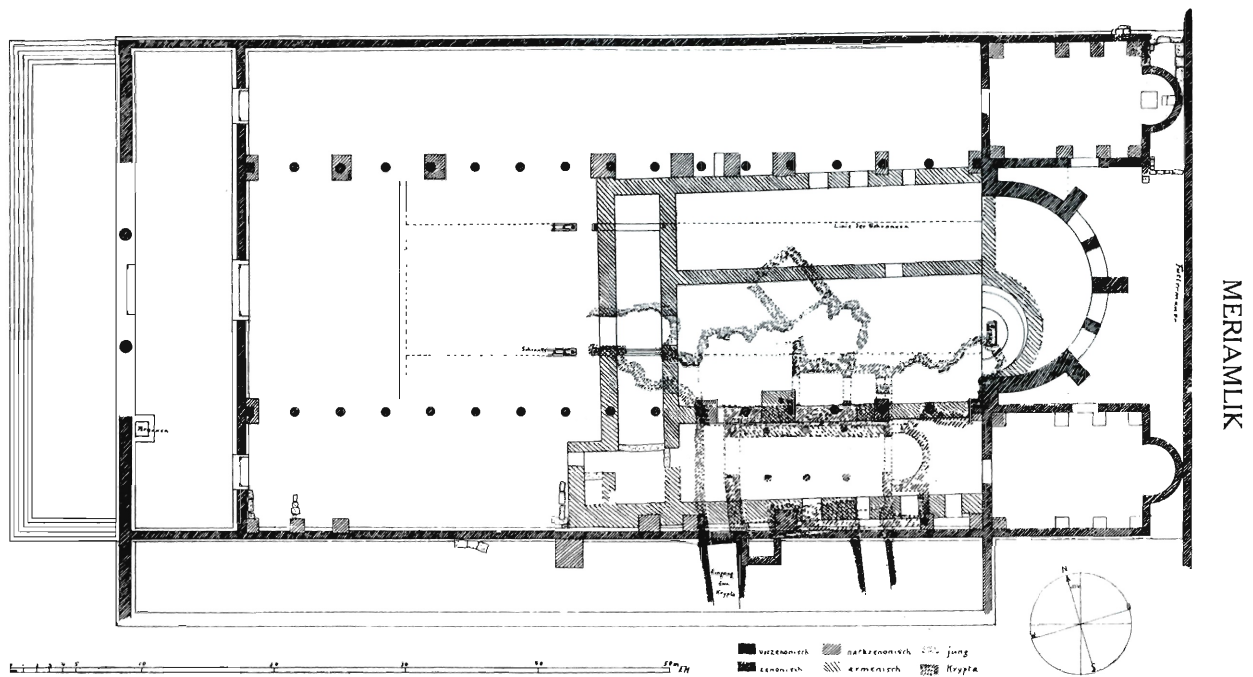


Fig. 5. The basilica of Thekla at Meriamlik. After Herzfeld & Guyer 1930, fig. 7.

composition of the miracle collection.<sup>137</sup> Perhaps the church where the miracles took place and the one Egeria mentions in the 380s can be archaeologically identified all the same: a small 4<sup>th</sup> century church may have laid beneath the large basilica of Thekla from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, having been built over.<sup>138</sup> Further, beneath the large 5<sup>th</sup> century Thekla basilica and the smaller 4<sup>th</sup> century basilica within it, a rock-cut lower church, probably from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, has also been excavated. This cave church also functioned as the crypt for both the 4<sup>th</sup> century church and the larger 5<sup>th</sup> century church (Fig. 5).<sup>139</sup> Thus, we have three churches on the same location. In Hill's reconstruction of the smaller 4<sup>th</sup> century church the narthex has two stories and the aisles have galleries. Further an entrance to the crypt/rock-cut church is reconstructed from the atrium/court of the 4<sup>th</sup> century church. A bath that is mentioned in the miracle stories<sup>140</sup> as being situated somewhere inside the sanctuary (temenos) may, according to Hill, have been housed in the tower-like construction in the south part of the narthex of the 4<sup>th</sup> century church.<sup>141</sup> It seems highly unlikely, though, that a bath should have

been housed within the church (there being no parallels for this). It would seem more probable that the bath was located within the temenos area, within the walls surrounding the church and adjacent buildings. A holy spring was also placed on the site, the water of which cured disease.<sup>142</sup> Miracle 36 mentions a cave to the east, in front of the

<sup>137</sup> Dagron 1978, 17–9.

<sup>138</sup> Herzfeld & Guyer 1930, 7–8, fig. 7 (p. 9) do not draw the 4<sup>th</sup> century church on fig. 7, but conjecture that it may have had its apsis above and along the same lines as the apsis of the cave-church. Hill 1996, 210–2, 218 is of the opinion that the 4<sup>th</sup> century church is the same as the Armenian church on Herzfeld & Guyer 1930, fig. 7 (p. 9), having been identified as Armenian due to a stratigraphical misunderstanding of Guyers (the correct stratigraphical relationship in fact recorded by Herzfeld on fig. 7). Dagron 1978, 63, believes that the 4<sup>th</sup> century church is to be searched for elsewhere on the site.

<sup>139</sup> Hill 1996, 214–7. Possible entrance from 4<sup>th</sup> century basilica into cave church: Hill 1996, 220.

<sup>140</sup> Mir. 12; Mir. 25. The text is most easily interpreted as that there was a fountain/source in the atrium.

<sup>141</sup> Hill 1996, 220.

<sup>142</sup> Mir. 36: an epidemic among cattle was cured by water from a holy spring that Thekla had let spring forth from the cave.

church, where it was believed that Thekla spent much of her time, and where suppliants would go and pray.<sup>143</sup>

Hill hypothesizes that ancient parts of the temenos wall and the rock-cut church indicate that the church might have been built on the site of a pagan sanctuary.<sup>144</sup> More indications would be needed—even if the remains of walls are older than the date of the churches on the site, these older buildings need not have come from a pagan sanctuary. The oracle of Sarpedon has been mentioned as a possible predecessor to Thekla and incubation in the area.<sup>145</sup> The only source supporting dream-oracles ever existing in the cult of Sarpedon is Tertullian *De anima* 46. Even though the question of direct continuity is an interesting one, Tertullian cannot be expected to be the most reliable source in this context. According to the commentary of Waszink,<sup>146</sup> Tertullian has copied large parts of his list of dream-oracles from e.g. Origen's *Contra Celsum*, Philo's *De legatione ad Gaium*, or Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis*. In other words he does not base his naming of dream oracles on first hand, or even second hand knowledge of existing dream oracles, but rather literary topoi (that admittedly must have a source somewhere). Many gods/heroes showed themselves in dreams, and this does not prove that incubation took place within the cult of Sarpedon.

In miracles 11, 18 and 40, the hero Sarpedon is mentioned. In miracle 40, a suppliant in fact believed that Sarpedon had sent him to Hagia Thekla to be cured with the help of the holy oil above the shrine of Thekla. We do not know very much about how Sarpedon affected his healings, and nothing explicit is said about incubation. Miracle 11 in the miracles of Thekla tells of a woman who went to Sarpedon to heal her grandson, but according to the story the oracle as usual could not help, either he kept quiet altogether, or he sent the helpseeker away with some worthless riddle.<sup>147</sup> Instead Thekla appeared, giving a prescription on how to heal the boy. Does the oracle given by Sarpedon not sound more like another type of oracle, where the voice of the god is somehow heard/made known and which interpreted through the priests might take the form of a riddle? Nothing is said about Sarpe-

don showing himself in a vision. This story gives evidence for the competition between two cults that obviously both healed through 'oracles'.

Also, the large gap in time between the testimony of Tertullian and the miracles of Thekla do not argue well for a direct overtake of incubation at Sarpedon into the cult of Thekla. Thekla was a flourishing pilgrim centre in the time of Egeria (4<sup>th</sup> century), but she, visiting the site, says nothing of dream apparitions of the saint.<sup>148</sup> Incubation at Hagia Thekla is not as systematized as for instance in the cult of Kyros and Johannes at Menouthis. Not all suppliants that come to the church of Thekla expect to see her in a dream,<sup>149</sup> but many see her or get cured in other miraculous ways, much as at

<sup>143</sup> Dagron 1978, 67–8, 388–9.

<sup>144</sup> Hill 1996, 213 (reused Doric columns in the cave church/crypt and foundations of a temenos-wall consisting of large friction-bonded ashlar, possibly pre-Christian).

<sup>145</sup> Cox Miller 1994, 117; Nissen 2001, 124.

<sup>146</sup> Tertullianus, *De anima*, ed., J.H. Waszink, Amsterdam 1947, 497.

<sup>147</sup> Ed. and translation by Dagron 1978, mir. 11, p. 313: 'lui non plus sut indiquer le moyen de guérir, soit qu'il se fût tout à fait tu, soit que (comme c'est son habitude) il eût trompé la femme et l'eût renvoyée sans profit après avoir proféré une énigme, une fable, ou n'avoir pas du tout ouvert la bouche.'

<sup>148</sup> Egeria, *Itineraria* 23.2–7, ed. Maraval p. 226–31.

<sup>149</sup> There are miracles that do not deal with dreamvisions at all (for prayer alone producing a miracle, see miracles 20, 23, 24). The power of the holy oil is often emphasized, the cure not always being experienced directly in the dream: often Thekla gives advice on what to do in order to get well (see miracles 7 and 40 on the holy oil hanging above the martyr's shrine).

Thekla also saved seafarers from storms at sea, see e.g. miracle 15. In the same spirit she also saved pilgrims from highwaymen, see miracles 16 and 28. Thekla also appears in a waking vision in miracle 19, saving Bassiane from drowning in one of the cisterns at her sanctuary. Likewise she appears in a waking vision to grave diggers inside her church in miracle 31, preventing them from digging a grave inside her church. Further, miracle 33 is a nightly dreamvision within the pilgrimage centre, but it is a punishing miracle where Thekla appears to a lascivious young man in his dream. He is at Hagia Thekla with many others celebrating the festival of the martyr. It is not stated where he slept, but considering the great number of people having come for the festival they no doubt stayed all over the temenos area. The church is less probable, since the man had not come for the sake of obtaining a cure or favour, but rather to celebrate. Thus the dream is not an incubation dream in the strict sense.

any Early Christian church with relics<sup>150</sup> (cf. e.g. St. Stefanos<sup>151</sup>). A development on the site beginning with ordinary miracles obtained through closeness to the shrine of Thekla might have developed into dream visions and institutionalized incubation as a focus for healing.

## Kosmas and Damianos in Constantinople

Kosmas and Damianos were two very popular martyr saints. According to one of the legends, they were two brothers and doctors who did not charge their patients, and suffered martyrdom under Diocletian.<sup>152</sup> The two brothers had no less than six churches named after them in Constantinople.<sup>153</sup> In one of these churches the suppliant could incubate, meeting the saints in their dreams. This church was built during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and became famous when emperor Justinian (527–565) incubated there and was cured.<sup>154</sup>

The miracle stories from this church had been taken down and were known in the time of Sofronios, bishop of Jerusalem 560–638.<sup>155</sup> Miracle stories appear to have been read aloud in the church, then to be edited in collections.<sup>156</sup> In these dreams, Kosmas and Damianos acted as physicians and performed surgery on their patients, or simply gave instructions on a proper cure.

From the miracles it is made clear that there were many people sleeping in the church for the sake of experiencing dream visions and obtain cures. Incubation was hence not an isolated event, but the standard way of obtaining a cure in the cult/church.

In, e.g., miracles 1 and 12 the saints made their rounds among the many suppliants sleeping in the church and its atrium. In miracle 17, a man came to the saints' house and did not dare to sleep inside (probably because he was a member of the exakionites, considered a non-orthodox group), but lay down his litter near the outer narthex (οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν ἔσωθεν τοῦ ἐνδόξου καὶ περιφανοῦς τῶν ἀγίων τούτων οἴκου ἑαυτὸν ἀνακλιναι, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τῷ ἔξω νάρθηκι). This passage strongly indicates that it was considered as most advantageous to sleep inside the church itself. The saints themselves confirm this

when they comment that the man has been there for some time, but that it is best to let him sleep outside and first and foremost cure the orthodox suppliants.

Are there any passages that relate more precisely where in the church the incubants slept? Firstly, there are some passages specifying a place inside the church itself. A place which was popular to sleep in seems to have been the so-called *thusiasterion*. The most fitting translation of Lampe equals the word with the altar-precinct, which is also the translation of Festugière (*bema*).<sup>157</sup> In miracle 7, a mute

<sup>150</sup> For the cult of relics in the Early Christian church, see e.g. Saxer 1980, 231–79.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. e.g. the miracles of St. Stefanus, in Aug. *De civ. Dei* 22.8.11–23, 17 miracles noted down 426–7 AD (the shrine of Stefanus was built in Hippo in 425, see comment by W. Green in the Loeb edition 1962, 239). Faith and prayer seem to be the most important ingredients in a cure. Among several miracles, a brother and a sister get cured from a shaking disease by falling down beside the martyr's grave, as in sleep, to rise fully cured. It is not said that they dreamt or that they met the martyr in any way, only that after a short moment of unconsciousness they are cured. See Kötting 1950, 259–66 on the cult in general.

<sup>152</sup> On the martyrs, see e.g. *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, 4 (1992), 539–40, s.v. Kosmas und Damian; *BiblSS* 4 (1964), 223–5, s.v. Cosma e Damiano; *ODB* 2 (1991), 1151, s.v. Kosmas and Damianos. On the sources on these saints, see e.g. Deubner 1907, 40–52. See also Frey 1979, 49–50, 64–6.

<sup>153</sup> Festugière 1971, 86–7, identifying the church, where incubations took place as the so-called *Cosmidion*. We do not know exactly where the church was situated (see Janin 1964, 294–300, esp. 296–9). Procopius writes that the church of Kosmas and Damianos in Constantinople was located on the Golden Horn (Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 1.6). Magdalino 1996, in the map at the back of the book, places *Cosmidion* on the northern part of the Golden Horn, outside of the walls, close to Theotokos of Blancherinae. On the cult in general, see e.g. Kötting 1950, 213–20.

<sup>154</sup> Festugière 1971, 87.

<sup>155</sup> The collection was written during different time periods, mir. 33–48 seem to be of a later date, but mir. 1–26 were surely edited in the time of Sofronios. The 6<sup>th</sup> series, mir. 39–48 are excluded from this investigation due to the fact that they were written by an author living during the Latin empire 1204–1261. See Festugière 1971, 85–6, 191, n. 1. I have excluded Medieval incubation miracles because this paper concerns primarily pagan and Early Christian incubation architecture, how to identify it, and to investigate likenesses and differences in the two occurrences as far as their architecture is concerned.

<sup>156</sup> See Prologue 3 of the miracles, at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> series (ed. Deubner p. 179 (518)).

<sup>157</sup> Lampe s.v. *θυσιαστήριον*, B; Festugière 1971, 151, n. 4.

and dumb woman prays intently at the *thusiasterion*, not leaving the holy, glorious and spiritual *thusiasterion*: μὴ ἀφισταμένη τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου καὶ νοεροῦ θυσιαστηρίου. In miracle 21, a man has his ordinary residence in the katechoumenion in the atrium, but in the night he goes to sleep next to the *thusiasterion*, πρὸς τῷ ἁγίῳ θυσιαστηρίῳ. It seems that the martyrs' abode was imagined to lie inside or beneath the bema, as is shown in the following text of miracle 21 where the saints came out and returned into the *thusiasterion*.

Miracle 34 (though of a later date) shows how people slept in one of the aisles of the church, close to the relics, as specified in the miracle. A lawyer came to the house (*oikos*) of the saints, slept there and got a vision to seek out a butcher sleeping in the right aisle, near the coffin of the holy relics (ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ στοᾷ πλησίον τῆς σοροῦ τῶν ἁγίων λειψάνων). This shows that a lot of people slept there, since the lawyer needed help from a guide to identify the man. Probably it was a popular place to sleep in because it was considered extra beneficial to come close to the relics. This is stated explicitly in the miracles of Artemios (see below), and there is no reason, considering the wonderworking power of relics in many other churches, to assume it was not the case here.

Possibly incubation was also performed in the narthex. Miracle 17 tells of a suppliant who did not dare enter the church, and put his litter near the outer narthex. He obviously did not dare to enter the church proper, the nave. Since people slept inside the church, in the nave and aisle as well as just outside of it, in the atrium, it is probable that they also slept in the narthex.<sup>158</sup> It is to be noted that it is possible that the church has two narthekes, since it is specified in miracle 17 that the suppliant slept near the outer narthex. Two narthekes was not an uncommon feature in Early Byzantine churches, see e.g. the Hagia Sofia.

In miracle 35, a man slept between the two doors of the diakonikon, in all probability inside the church, possibly outside the NW corner of the diakonikon.<sup>159</sup> Further, one Christian is reported to have slept in the small baptistery of the church, and he in fact slept there every Friday.<sup>160</sup>

Secondly, the miracle stories give evidence that

the incubants slept also in the atrium in front of the church. There are miracles where it is specified that the suppliants slept in the so-called katechoumenion. The word literally means a place in the church reserved for the catechumens.<sup>161</sup> According to Festugière it was probably the porticoes of the atrium.<sup>162</sup> In miracle 12, a woman named Martha comes to the atrium (αὐλή) of the church, receiving private accommodation in the left portico of the katechoumenion specified as 'in the open', 'ἐν τῷ ἀριστερῷ ἐμβόλῳ τοῦ κατηχουμένου τοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐξάερῳ'. Here, the katechoumenion seems clearly to be in the atrium. However, in miracle 3, a man descends from the katechoumenion, where he has his bed (κατελθὼν τοίνυν οὗτος ἐν ἐνὶ μεσημβρινῷ ἐκ τοῦ κατηχουμένου, ἔνθα ἔλαχεν αὐτὸν παραμένειν), which indicates rather the upper gallery of the church itself. In miracles 31 of Artemios, the katechoumenion is translated by Crisafulli and Nesbitt as 'the upper gallery'. This translation became prevalent after the time when there were any catechumens in the congregations, that is, when the custom was introduced to baptize infants and all worshippers were allowed equal access to the church.

Both miracles 3 and 12 were edited during the time of Sofronios, but of course there might have been swift changes in regulations on what area was to be allotted the catechumens. Another possibility, though, might be that both areas, the atrium and the upper gallery, were called the katechoumenion, pointing to its function as a place for the catechumens and further imbued with a somewhat lesser degree of sanctity as compared with the naos. In miracle 21 a man has his ordinary residence in the katechoumenion, but in the night he goes to sleep near the *thusiasterion*, the bema, inside the church (see above). It appears thus that

<sup>158</sup> Cf. mir. 10 (a pagan prays in the narthex but seemingly does not incubate).

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Lampe s.v. διακόνικος B1.

<sup>160</sup> An incubant and his friend sleeping in the baptistery, every Friday: mir. 10.

<sup>161</sup> Lampe s.v. κατηχουμένιον.

<sup>162</sup> See the discussion in Festugière 1971, 103 n. 13. Du Cange, however, sees it as an upper gallery inside the church.

the katechoumenion was used both for spending the day, as in miracle 21, as well as for incubating at night, as in miracle 12. It seems to have been an area reserved for those who had traveled a long way or were too ill to come and sleep just for the night in the church and leave their beds and give room for other functions of the church at day. The preference for sleeping inside the church shows that closeness to the bema probably was considered more efficient, at least by some, than sleeping in the katechoumenion.

There should be no doubt, however, that the atrium of the church complex was part of the 'home', *oikos*, of the martyrs.<sup>163</sup> In miracle 12, mentioned above, the woman Martha slept in her private accommodation in the katechoumenion. At night she saw the saints giving a tablet to another woman sleeping close to her in the katechoumenion, indicating that there were indeed many suppliants there. In this miracle we can also see that there were guardians that keep the order among all the suppliants, helping Martha from being accosted by a possessed woman.<sup>164</sup>

It cannot be said with any certainty whether men and women slept in separate locations. In miracle 25, a man stayed in the sanctuary together with his wife for some time. From the story it is not clear if the married couple slept side by side. In miracle 26, though, it is clear that an ill man slept near a woman of high rank. In miracle 24, a mute woman and a lame man slept close to each other. Miracle 24 is, however, an apparent legend, since it occurs also in other collections of incubation miracles.<sup>165</sup> Hence it need not have any bearing on the conditions at the church of Kosmas and Damianos.

Sometimes it seems that beds were furnished in the adjoining hospital<sup>166</sup> and also here the saints appeared to the ill.<sup>167</sup> An efficient ingredient in cures that reoccurs many times is the *kerote*, a mixture of wax and holy oil.<sup>168</sup> Another cure that was, however, not recommended by the saints was to try the baths as a relief and cure for ailments.<sup>169</sup> There is also evidence that cured suppliants set up ex-voto tablets that probably related the miracle cure.<sup>170</sup>

Kosmas and Damianos could also show them-

selves to suffering Christians in their homes, either exhorting them to come to the church<sup>171</sup> or curing them in their homes<sup>172</sup>. This is a type of 'extended incubation', where the power of the saints cure

<sup>163</sup> The most common term for the church complex is *oikos*, the home of the saints, e.g. Mir. 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, 19, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 37. Mir. 4 and 19 use the word *σκηνή*, the saints' place. In miracle 19 we also find 'sanctuary' (*ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ*), The word *naos* is also used (mir. 36, 38). When it is later in the miracle specified where in the church complex the suppliants sleep, there seems to be no difference if they slept in the church itself or in the atrium. In mir. 7 first the suppliant is said to come to τὸν πάνσεπτον οἶκον αὐτῶν, and later on the place where the suppliant spends her time is specified as the *θυσιαστήριον*, as shown above probably the bema of the church. Likewise, in mir. 10, a pagan comes to the saints' house (τοῦτον τῶν ἁγίων ... οἶκον), and later it is specified that he slept in the baptistery. In mir. 21 and 23 where the suppliants slept in the katechoumenion (and in mir. 21, later the *thusiasterion*), the general words are that they came to the house /home of the saints (τὸν ... οἶκον). Interestingly enough when in mir. 12 it is specified that the suppliant slept in the atrium (τὴν αὐλήν), more specifically in the katechoumenion in the left portico of the atrium, the general opening phrase is that she arrived to the admirable clinic of the saints (τῷ θαυμαστῷ ἰατρείῳ τῶν ἐνδόξων ἁγίων Κοσμά καὶ Δαμιανοῦ). *Iatreion*, which might also denote the curing effects of a church (cf. Lampe s.v.) is also used to denote the church complex in mir. 33, 35 and 36. I do not think that the word *iatreion* has lesser importance than *oikos*, and the atrium was no doubt considered as much the home of the saints as the church itself, since they came there on their visits as well, although the church itself seems to be considered more filled with sanctity (see discussion on mir 17 above). No doubt the author varied his text, using *iatreion* as a way of emphasizing that this was a church where cures were obtained.

<sup>164</sup> Another example is mir. 23 where a man comes to the church and installs himself in the katechoumenion, receiving a dreamvision on his third day. It is not said explicitly that he slept in the katechoumenion, but it seems likely given the absence of any other named location.

<sup>165</sup> Those of Kyros and Johannes (mir. 30) and St. Menas (mir. 5). On the miracle of Menas, see further below. See also Delehay 1927, 147.

<sup>166</sup> On the hospital, see Kötting 1950, 217.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. mir. 30. Mir. 30 seems not to have been edited during the time of Sofronios, wherefore this custom cannot be said to apply to Early Christian times.

<sup>168</sup> E.g. mir. 1, 13, 16, 27, 30, 33. See also Féstugière 1971, 100 n. 5.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. mir. 14, 33.

<sup>170</sup> Mir. 3.

<sup>171</sup> Mir. 30, 32 (with a doctor as an intermediary), 36.

<sup>172</sup> Mir. 13, 27.



their followers who are for one or another reason not able to come to the church, or exhort the ones who can to come to the church.

A minority of the miracles consists of waking visions outside of the church of Kosmas and Damianos, exhorting the suppliant to return to the church,<sup>173</sup> or helping with monetary problems of the suppliant.<sup>174</sup> The waking visions seem, though, to be of secondary importance to the dream visions, since one out of two of them has the purpose to have the suppliant continue to incubate in the church. We see here a more institutionalized incubation cult than that of Thekla: the majority of miracles concern incubation, and there seems to be a much clearer focus on the dream vision as the means of obtaining the miracle than in the miracles of Thekla. People came to the church of Kosmas and Damian to see the saints in their dreams, whereas in the cult of Thekla other means of obtaining a miracle were reported.

Suppliants seem often to have stayed in the church for some time. In the first miracle of the collection, a man stays in the church for a couple of days, not being visited by the saints and losing hope. He was not the only one staying for some time, one suppliant in miracle 33 even stayed for seven months.<sup>175</sup>

On a general note, one gets the impression that the church was very popular for people to come to and incubate in, and that the priests must have made room for the suppliants wherever it was possible. Many must have stayed in the atrium, and stayed there for a long time, as many miracles bear witness. Also the presence of guardians to keep the peace indicates a large gathering of suppliants. Furthermore, the fact that the man in miracle 10 had a place to sleep in every Friday in the small baptistery, shows how popular the church was – one had to book one's place in advance, and not just take any place available. No doubt the best place was near the bema, the imagined abode of the martyrs, as shown by miracles 17 and 21.

## Kyros and Johannes in Menouthis

Kyros and Johannes were according to legend martyred in Alexandria under Diocletian, at least one of them was a doctor.<sup>176</sup> Their cult in Menouthis outside of Alexandria is the only case where it can be shown that a pagan incubation cult more or less influenced the rise of a Christian incubation cult at the same location.<sup>177</sup> An earlier cult of Isis was replaced by the cult of Kyros and Johannes, in whose cult incubation came to be a part. Sofronios, bishop of Jerusalem, wrote in 610 the miracle stories from this cult.<sup>178</sup> Sofronios was himself cured from an eye disease in the sanctuary.

Today, the site of Menouthis lies under water, outside of the cape Abuqir (named after Abba Kyros), a suburb to modern Alexandria.<sup>179</sup> In the miracle stories of Kyros and Johannes the incubants slept in the church itself.<sup>180</sup> Some miracles specify in which parts of the church suppliants slept, *e.g.* in the nave and even near the bema it-

<sup>173</sup> Mir. 1.

<sup>174</sup> Mir. 18.

<sup>175</sup> Miracles where suppliants explicitly stayed for a time longer than one night: mir. 1 (a couple of days, at first without result); mir. 3 (some time); 11 (three visits); 12 (for a longer time residing in the atrium); mir. 14 (several days); 21 (many days); 23 (longer than 3 days); 30 ('pretty long time' χρόνον ἱκανόν); 33 (seven months); 38 (a couple of days). In most cases it is however implied that the suppliants stay longer than one night, no specific period of time being mentioned. Further the fact that suppliants had their own bed assigned to them indicates that they stayed in the church for longer than one night, *cf.* mir. 10, 12, 29, 30, 33, 34.

<sup>176</sup> On the martyrs, see *e.g.* *BiblSS* 4 (1964), 2–3, s.v. *Ciro e Giovanni*; *ODB* 2 (1991), 1164, s.v. *Kyros and John*. (See also the PG 87, colls. 3379–3422.)

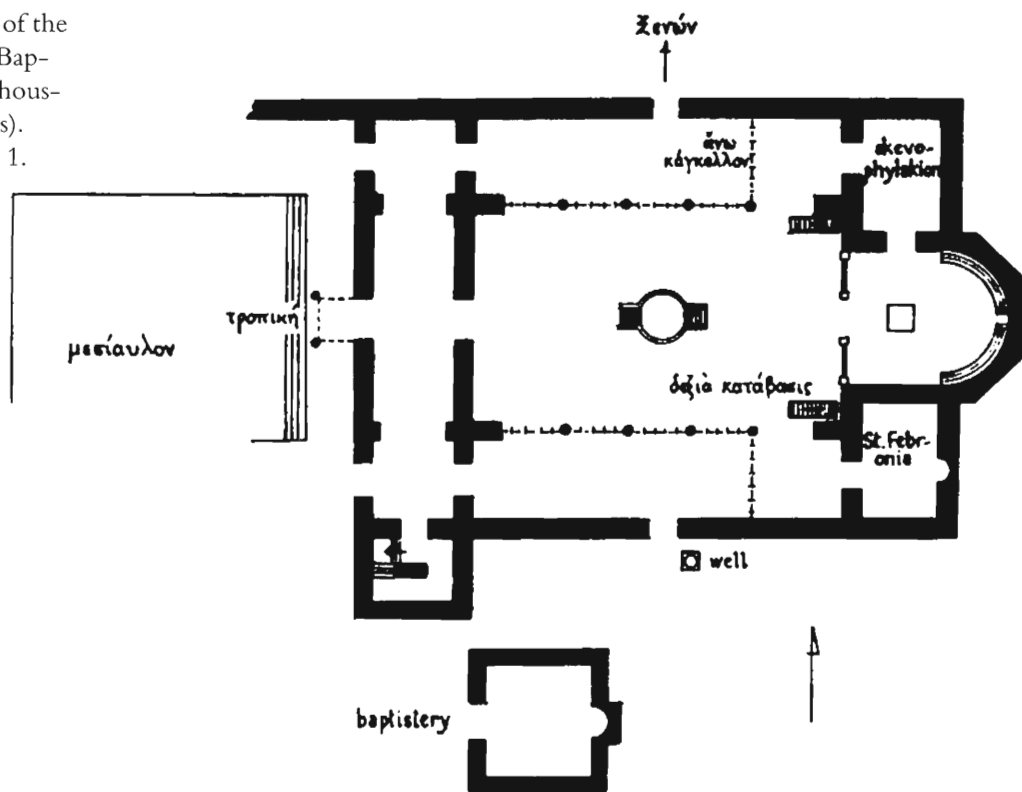
<sup>177</sup> On the cult in general, see *e.g.* Herzog 1939; Kötting 1950, 201–11; Festugière 1971, 217–9; Fernandez Marcos 1975, 13–22. There is an extensive literature on this cult, see *e.g.* Frankfurter 1998, 162–5 with further references.

<sup>178</sup> Sansterre 1991, 69.

<sup>179</sup> E. Goddio is making underwater surveys in the area, but so far there are no publications.

<sup>180</sup> This is shown in the mir. 9 = PG vol. 87, 3445A; mir. 10 = PG vol. 87, 3449B; mir. 27 = PG vol. 87, 3500A8; mir. 34 = PG 87, 3540B.

Fig. 6. Reconstruction of the church of St. John the Baptist in Constantinople (housing the cult of Artemios). After Mango 1979, fig. 1.



self.<sup>181</sup> There are indications that people also slept near the grave of the martyrs.<sup>182</sup> It is also said in the miracle stories that the crypt where the relics were placed was open to visitors at fixed hours of the day, and that crowds gathered there at those times.<sup>183</sup> This suggests that a sleeping couch near the crypt would have been considered desirable.

It was also possible to sleep outside the church, within the peribolos (enclosed precinct), but the suppliant in the relevant miracle later moved into the church itself, suggesting this was the preferred location for sleeping.<sup>184</sup> Also, there is evidence that suppliants slept outside the gates of the church.<sup>185</sup> There is one miracle that has led to some discussion on the location of where to incubate. In miracle 67, a man slept inside the basilica, but was later transferred to a place where he could hear birds.<sup>186</sup> Delehaye states that miracle 67 shows how the incubants slept in a gallery outside of the church, but connected with it.<sup>187</sup> However, might not the bird simply have flown into the church? In the miracle the bird is sent by a demon, aggravating the suppliant and making him move his bed. If he had been

moved outside of the church, where he was to be cured, the text would no doubt have mentioned this. In a Mediterranean climate, it would not be unusual to have open doors and windows, inviting birds to fly into buildings.

The doctor saints came to the patients in their sleep, either curing straight away or giving a pre-

<sup>181</sup> Mir. 37 = PG vol. 87, 3564D7f.; mir. 38 = PG vol. 87, 3565 D7. See Festugière 1971, 220–1 for a discussion on how to identify the different locations in the church as retold in the miracles.

<sup>182</sup> Mir. 24 = PG vol. 87, 3492 B9; mir. 42 = PG vol. 87, 3585 A11.

<sup>183</sup> Mir. 36 = PG vol. 87, 3553 B13–14.

<sup>184</sup> Outside the church, in the peribolos, and then inside: mir. 14 = PG vol. 87, 3468 A8–10. Outside the gates of the church: mir. 24 = PG vol. 87, 3492 B10–11; mir. 69 = PG vol. 87, 3661 C11.

<sup>185</sup> Mir. 24 = PG vol. 87, 3492 B10–11; mir. 69 = PG vol. 87, 3661 C11.

<sup>186</sup> In mir. 67 = PG vol. 87, 3653 A15, the man appears to be sleeping inside the basilica. In mir. 67 = PG vol. 87, 3653 B13 and C, he and other ill persons are moved to a place where they might hear birds.

<sup>187</sup> Delehaye 1925, 24.

scription for what to do in order to be healed.<sup>188</sup> The latter was the most common. It also happened that the patient stayed for many years.<sup>189</sup> The miracle stories also tell of cured patients who hung up some token of their cure in the church.<sup>190</sup> There is also evidence that they inscribed the stories about their cures on the outer walls of the church.<sup>191</sup> It also occurred that the patients bathed or even got the instruction to bathe in the bathhouse adjacent to the church.<sup>192</sup> There was also a well/source in the area whose water by itself, or in combination with other remedies, cured disease.<sup>193</sup>

## Artemios in Constantinople

The last example of a saint who healed in dreams is the martyr Artemios, whose cult was housed in the church of St. John the Baptist in the district of Oxeia in Constantinople (on the hill where Süleymaniye Camii is situated today).<sup>194</sup> It has not been more exactly located or excavated. Artemios was a devoted Christian who in 360 was appointed dux of Egypt. In one version of his *passio* he was executed under Julian, killed with a sword, after his body was crushed by stone slabs.<sup>195</sup> Some time during the 5<sup>th</sup> century he received the reputation of healing powers, and it may have been at this time that his relics were transported to Constantinople.<sup>196</sup> There it became his speciality to cure hernias, and especially swollen and ill testicles. The miracle stories were collected and noted down in 658–668.<sup>197</sup>

Cyril Mango has made a reconstruction of the church based on the text in the miracle stories (Fig. 6).<sup>198</sup> Most incubants seem to have slept in the left aisle of the church, within an area especially marked off for this purpose.<sup>199</sup> From the miracles it is understood that the incubants were locked in for the night by a lattice work, either to protect them from thieves operating in the area, or in order to keep the incubants from moving about freely in the church at night.<sup>200</sup> Crisafulli and Nesbitt's reconstruction has some small differences to that made by Mango.<sup>201</sup> They think that the gratings surrounding the sleepers ran along the northern aisle all the way to the sacristy, since a man in miracle 32, who had been cured at night, lay down in front of the door

to the sacristy, thanking the martyr. They do not believe that the south aisle was furnished with gratings. On the question why the gratings were set up around the incubants, Crisafulli and Nesbitt believe that they were there rather for the protection of the incubants from thieves coming in at night, and not that it had to do with the priests not wanting the incubants to walk around freely in the church. In miracle 30 it is written that the church used to have ten guards, but that the church had not had sufficient means to replace these as they died from old age one after the other. Theodoros, who had been cured in the church, offered to become a guard.

However, other places in the church are also reported to have been used as incubation dormitories. A rich lady received lodgings, possibly in a special room, in the upper gallery of the church.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Mir. 2 = PG 87, 3429B; mir. 9 = PG 87, 3448A-B; mir. 16 = PG 87, 3473A (by touch); mir. 27 = PG 87, 3500A; mir. 34 = 3540B; mir. 61 = 3637C (by touch); mir. 69 = 3661D-3664A (by touch); see Festugière 1971, 223. For more on the cures, see Festugière 1971, 223–32 and Fernandez Marcos 1975, 87–152.

<sup>189</sup> Mir. 69 = PG vol. 87, 3661 D2 (8 years, seeking a cure for blindness); mir. 48 = PG vol. 87, 3601 B12–14 (2 years).

<sup>190</sup> Mir. 19 = PG vol. 87, 3480 B15–C2; mir. 28 = PG vol. 87, 3505 D14ff.; mir. 48 = PG vol. 87, 3604 B14–C4.

<sup>191</sup> Mir. 69 = PG vol. 87, 3664 A8–11 (healing inscription on the wall in front of the church door, inside the narthex).

<sup>192</sup> Mir. 9 = PG 87, 3445C (bathes—but nothing on instruction); mir. 52 = PG 87, 3617B5 (instruction to bathe), Festugière 1971, 223–4.

<sup>193</sup> E.g. Mir. 2 = PG 87, 3429B8; Mir. 13 = PG 87, 3465A–B (leprosy); Mir. 20 = PG 87, 3481B (dropsy); Mir. 64 = PG 87, 3645C (deaf-muteness).

<sup>194</sup> Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 8.

<sup>195</sup> On the martyr, see e.g. *BiblSS* 23 (1962), 488–9, s.v. Artemio; *OBD* 1 (1991), 194–5. See also Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 1–4.

<sup>196</sup> Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 4.

<sup>197</sup> Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 7. See also Rydén 1987 on the cult of Artemios.

<sup>198</sup> Mango 1979.

<sup>199</sup> This is made clear from the mir. 6 (ἐν τῷ εὐωνύμῳ ἐμβόλῳ), 15 (εἰς τὸν ἀριστερὸν ἐμβόλον) and 32 (ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ στύλῳ τοῦ ἀριστεροῦ ἐμβόλου).

<sup>200</sup> Mir. 17 and 25.

<sup>201</sup> Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 9–19; Mango 1979.

<sup>202</sup> The upper gallery (probably in a special room there): the rich lady Sergia, mir. 31 (commented on by Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997, 14).

Two monks who did not find any available beds anywhere else in the church slept in the baptistery (which suggests that the baptistery was a second choice).<sup>203</sup> In miracle 17 an actor tried to get permission to sleep in the crypt, but did not get it. Instead he lay down to sleep as close as possible, by the right staircase leading down to the crypt. His companion, on the other hand, who was a member of the senate, got permission to sleep in the crypt. To sleep in the crypt, as close as one could get to the relics, was thus a special privilege. It was thought that the martyr resided there, going up from the crypt into the church at night to perform the acts of healing.<sup>204</sup>

As in the other healing cults, also in the cult of Artemios, suppliants could stay and incubate for a longer time.<sup>205</sup>

## Demetrios in Thessalonike

Incubation also existed in the cult of St. Demetrios at Thessalonike. Demetrios appears in early lists of martyrs as Demetrios of Sirmium, but was firmly connected with Thessalonike by the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Early on, the legend rose that he was a military leader.<sup>206</sup> His cult was of great importance, as demonstrated by his basilica in Thessalonike.<sup>207</sup> The church itself was built in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, an impressive cross-transept basilica that is c. 55 m long. The relics lie under the altar of the basilica.<sup>208</sup>

The miracle collection preserved today was probably redacted in its different parts at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, in the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries and in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, giving an ante quem for the events of the miracles.<sup>209</sup> Events in the miracles are recorded from the late 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

From the context of the miracles it appears clearly that suppliants slept inside the church itself. In miracle 1.20–23, a bed had been prepared for the lame Marianos on the floor, where he received the curing dreamvision. He got up and walked to the ciborium, after which he went out of the church. Likewise, in miracle 3.39–42 a large number of people struck with the plague had fled to the church of Demetrios, and he made nightly rounds visiting and curing the ill. In miracle 4.47

a possessed soldier was made to enter the church against his will, and laid down on the bed prepared for him. Miracle 7 is not the ordinary incubation miracle, but the martyr appears to a priest in his church to stop him from putting out the candles lit as offerings. There is also evidence that some suppliants stayed and slept for a longer time in the church before they were cured.<sup>210</sup>

The saint also appeared to followers in their homes urging them to come to the church. In miracle 1.16, Demetrios appears in disguise in the dream of Marianos sleeping at home, urging him to come to the church of Demetrios and sleep there.

There are also examples of ordinary dream visions, where Demetrios shows himself to worshippers unexpectedly, without previous preparation, and in their homes.<sup>211</sup> Demetrios helped the population against fires, famines or Slavic invasions. He can also appear in waking visions, helping against the attacks of the Slavs, or affecting his miracles in

<sup>203</sup> Mir. 37.

<sup>204</sup> Mir. 32: ἐν τῷ ὑπνῶ μου τὸν ἅγιον Ἀρτέμιον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγίας αὐτοῦ σοροῦ ἀνερχόμενον καὶ ἐξελθόντα τὰ κάγκελλα τοῦ σκευοφυλακίου καὶ ἐλθόντα ἕως ἐμοῦ (in the translation of Crisafulli & Nesbitt: “I saw St. Artemios coming up from his holy coffin and proceeding beyond the railing of the sacristy and approaching me”).

<sup>205</sup> Mir. 5 (three months), 13 (15 days), 24 (15 days), 35 (two years), 45 (two days).

<sup>206</sup> On the martyr, see e.g. *BiblSS* 4 (1964), 556–64, s.v. Demetrio di Tessalonica; *ODB* 1 (1991), 605–6, s.v. Demetrios of Thessalonike.

<sup>207</sup> On the cult in general, see e.g. *BiblSS* 4 (1964), 557–60, s.v. Demetrio di Tessalonica; Kötting 1950, 222–7, Bakirtzis 1995. On the basilica, see e.g. Janin 1975, 365–72.

<sup>208</sup> Lemerle 1981 (vol. 2), 208.

<sup>209</sup> Lemerle 1979 (vol. 1), 13–5; Lemerle 1981 (vol. 2), 43–73 with a summary 79–80 (events recorded in the miracles of the late 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries). See also Speck 1994.

<sup>210</sup> Mir. 3.42–44.

<sup>211</sup> In the way of an ordinary dreamvision, Demetrios appeared in miracle 6.56 to a priest in order to hinder the melting down of a throne in the church. There are many other examples of Demetrios appearing to followers in dreamvisions outside of the church, helping to prevent wars or famine. E.g. miracle 8.70, where a man gets a message that Demetrios will help fight a famine. Likewise, in mir. 10.86–92 a man understands through a dream that Demetrios will prevent a civil war. In mir. 14, 15 and II:2 he also showed himself in a dream to the important people of the city, helping in wars against the Slavs (not incubations dreams).

other ways.<sup>212</sup> Thus, incubation in the church of St. Demetrios for the sake of healing was one aspect of the cult, but no less important was the protection he offered against the Slavs. This is a trait similar to the cult of Thekla, a martyr who did not only focus on incubations, but also saved her people from invasions.

## Abu Mina – archaeological evidence for Christian incubation?

Menas was an Egyptian soldier, presumed to have been martyred in Phrygia under Diocletian (295/6 AD).<sup>213</sup> The sanctuary and pilgrimage centre Abu Mina is well documented to have been a healing sanctuary of great importance, starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>214</sup> In the sanctuary of Menas outside of Alexandria, Abu Mina, there have been attempts to conjecture incubation practises. The main church, a cross-transept basilica, was finished in c. 490 AD.<sup>215</sup> Adjoined to its narthex a tetraconch was constructed over the third-century hypogaeum, believed to be the saint's burial place. It has been speculated already since Kaufmann that cures at Abu Mina were also affected through incubation.<sup>216</sup> There is no conclusive literary evidence pointing to the practice of incubation at Abu Mina.<sup>217</sup> There is one written miracle, miracle 5 of the 13 preserved Greek miracles of St. Menas, that attest to incubation in the church of St. Menas. This miracle, however, the story of the mute woman and lame man who sleep near each other in the church, is a story that also reappears in the miracles of Kosmas and Damianos, no doubt being a tale that circulated at that time.<sup>218</sup>

Another miracle, in the Nubian version of the vita of St. Menas, tells of how the only daughter of the ruler of Constantinople suffered from a skin disease.<sup>219</sup> Her father heard that a shepherd was curing his sheep from scab by rubbing them with dust mixed with water from a spring near the grave of St. Menas. The daughter traveled to this place, and on advice from the shepherd mixed dust with water and rubbed her body with this. Then she slept in the place, and in her dream Menas appeared to her, telling her to dig in the ground where she was sleeping in order to find his body. When this was

<sup>212</sup> There are many examples of other types of miracles. In mir. 8, the martyr helps to fight a famine. In miracle 11 Demetrios punishes a blasphemous eparch with a disease. In mir. 12, 13, 14, 15, II:1, II:2 and II:4 Demetrios helped the people of Thessalonike fight off attacks from the Slavs. In mir. 13 and 14 he is seen by many people as a soldier. In mir. II:1.188 and II:4.260 he is seen as Demetrios with his white chlamys driving the Slavs back. Also, in mir. II:5.298, Demetrios shows himself in a waking vision to a naval commander, telling him when to set sail for Thessalonike. Further, the martyr showed himself to man in mir. II:3.227, comforting him that the burnt down church of Demetrios will be reconstructed.

<sup>213</sup> On the martyr, see e.g. *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 5, 1247–9, s.v. Menas, with further refs.

<sup>214</sup> In general see e.g. Delehay 1925, 46–9; Kötting 1950, 189–201; Drescher 1946; MacCoull 1991. See also Papaconstantinou 2001, 146–54 with an extensive bibliography.

<sup>215</sup> A good summary of the excavations since Kaufmann 1910 is found in Grossmann 1981, 125ff. See also discussion in Krautheimer 1986, 110–1 and n. 29. Of the latest publications volume 1 has so far been printed (Grossman 1989). For a very short up to date summary, see *The Coptic encyclopedia* vol. 1 (1991), 24–9, s.v. Abu Mina.

<sup>216</sup> Kaufmann 1910, 117. He presents the 5<sup>th</sup> miracle of the Greek collection as evidence for incubation (see discussion on this below).

<sup>217</sup> There are 13 miracles of St. Menas in the *Greek collection*, 17 miracles in total in the *Coptic collection* and 19 in the *Ethiopian* (Devos 1959, 451). The Greek version of the miracles is attributed to Timotheos of Alexandria.

For the *Greek* version of the miracles, see N. Pomjalovskij, *Zitie prepodobnago Paisija Velikago i Timofeja patriarcha Aleksandrijskago podvestvovanie o cudesach Sv. Velikomucenika Miny*, St. Petersburg 1900 (translated into Russian, non vidi); *Acta SS Novembris* 2,2 (Brussels 1931), edited by Delehay; Delehay 1925, 46–9 (a short summary of the 13 miracles in Greek).

For the collection of miracles of St. Menas in *Coptic*, see: *Apa Mena* = Drescher 1946 (17 miracles). The three MSS Drescher uses for his edition are dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century/892/3 (Drescher 1946, xxxiv–xxxv).

For the collection of miracles in *Ethiopian*, see: Budge 1909, Griffith 1913.

For particular miracles see Devos 1959 (one miracle, (continuance of mir. 7 in the Greek collection, no. 10 of the Coptic collection and no. 9 in the Ethiopian collection); Devos 1960a (continuance of mir. 7 in the Greek collection, no. 10 of the Coptic collection and no. 9 in the Ethiopian collection, a new passage); Devos 1960b (mir. 4 in the Greek collection, no. 8 in the Coptic collection, no. 5 in the Ethiopian collection.)

<sup>218</sup> Menas Greek mir 5. Cf. Kosmas and Damianos mir. 24 recited as such in the miracles of Kyros and Johannes mir. 30 (PG 87, 3520C). See also Delehay 1925, 48–9, Delehay 1927, 147. Kaufmann 1910, 117, though, believes this miracle to be attributed to the cult of St. Menas.

<sup>219</sup> Budge 1909, 42–3.

done, the body of St. Menas was found, and the king built a church over the body. Is this evidence for incubation having been practised at Abu Mina? The healings are affected by holy dust mixed with water, not by Menas operating or giving advice on what to do in the princess' sleep. The reason Menas shows himself is to reveal the location of his body, in the style of ordinary dream visions. The whole miracle ends a story of the martyrdom of St. Menas, explaining how his body was found and the pilgrimage centre came to be built.

A third miracle, this time the first miracle of the Coptic version,<sup>220</sup> tells of how a man traveled to Abu Mina in order to fulfill a neglected vow. First, Menas appears to him when he slumbers and urges him to come to the shrine. Then, when the man had entered the area, he stayed for some days and slept there, and Menas appeared to him in a dream. It is not clear where in the area he slept, and no other miracle in the Coptic collection tells of a dream vision of Menas. As Menas otherwise shows himself in waking visions,<sup>221</sup> it would seem that the fact that Menas chose to reveal himself in a dream in miracle 1 is to be considered as a 'normal' vision of a martyr in a dream, and not as an effect of a planned effort on behalf of the suppliant to go to the sanctuary, sleep there, and meet the martyr in a dream.

Excavators led by P. Grossmann have identified a building at Abu Mina as a combined sanatorium and incubation building.<sup>222</sup> The building in question is the so-called Hemicycle and the argument for its identification as sanatorium and incubation building is the fact that it was located close to the martyr's tomb, and that it resembles the room arrangement of the temple of Hathor at Dendara.

Grossmann argues that it is unlikely that the help-seekers would sleep in the church itself at Abu Mina, the sanctuary being so large and offering ample room for the ritual elsewhere. At sites like Sidi Mahmud in Maryut, Egypt, and the church of Kyros and Johannes at Menouthis, he argues, the church itself was the only area available for incubation. As shown above, nothing can be proven with regard to incubation in the cult of Hathor at Dendara. The sanctuary of St. Menas was famous—it seems improbable that nothing is known of institutionalized incubation at such a well known healing sanctuary, had it been

practised. The other contemporary incubation cults were proud of their work, and Abu Mina, being of such a grand scale, might be expected to propagate its successful healings in some ways that would reveal the nature of the healing. And, why sleep in a Hemicycle when you could, like in the other cults, sleep in the church itself and so come as close as possible to the martyr? Xenodochia have already been identified at Abu Mina.<sup>223</sup> In an earlier study, Grossman identified the hemicycle as a xenodochium area for distinguished people, wishing to stay as close to the martyr's shrine as possible. This identification fits better with what is known of incubation in other Early Christian churches.<sup>224</sup> In other Christian incubation cults, the incubants always sleep in the church, and the incubation beds themselves are of a temporary, rough nature, and the area itself seems crowded, with people sleeping next to one another, at best with men separated from women.<sup>225</sup> Incubation at Abu Mina is an interesting question but it is difficult to make a case for its existence.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Drescher 1946, 111.

<sup>221</sup> Menas shows himself in waking visions in mir. 2 (Drescher 1946, 112) and 16 (Drescher 1946, 121) of the Coptic version (not at Abu Mina), as well as mir. 15 (Drescher 1946, 118) of the Coptic version (at Abu Mina).

<sup>222</sup> See Grossmann & Hölzle 1995, 401–5; Grossman 2002, 214, 235–41 (esp. 236–7) (the so-called Hemicycle). See also Grossmann 1989, 77, and Grossmann 2002, 237 for what he identifies as the early incubation chamber, before the so-called Hemicycle was built.

<sup>223</sup> For this, see Mulder 1993, 158.

<sup>224</sup> In the earlier publication Grossmann *et al.* 1984, 137, the closeness of the Hemicycle to the church itself caused Grossmann to conjecture that the building had something to do with the cult, possibly to lodge pilgrims who had come to the grave of Menas in search for healing. Room 6 has been identified as a wash-room (Grossmann & Hölzle 1995, 402).

<sup>225</sup> As has been shown in the above investigation. The example from the cult of Artemios, where a bed could be reserved for special weekdays may be an exception.

<sup>226</sup> MacCoull follows the later interpretation of Grossmann, writing that incubation was prevalent in Early Christian Egypt (MacCoull 1991, 126–7). She refers to the incubation cult of Kyros and Johannes at Menouthis, the supposed incubation at the cult of Menas, and numerous unmentioned testimonia concerning dreamvisions Christians had had of saints. Dreams were, both in pagan and Christian times, an important way of obtaining contact with the divine. Institutionalized incubation, however, is something other than spontaneous contact with a saint or angel (or pagan divinity) in a dream. It pre-



## Sidi Mahmud

In 1982 to 1986 the biapsidal church at Sidi Mahmud in Maryut, Egypt, was found and excavated.<sup>227</sup> Also at Sidi Mahmud Grossman has identified benches with 'neck-supports' as evidence for incubation being practised in the church.<sup>228</sup> Claiming that an incubation area exists on the basis of the archaeological evidence and without any support from literary sources that incubation was practised on the site has also occurred in the pagan examples, as shown above. Interpretations of this kind must be made with great caution. The identified 'neck-supports', even if they are safely identified as neck-supports, may also be taken as evidence that ill people lay down in the church, hoping for a cure. It does not necessarily mean that they slept through the night in the church nor that they had contact with a saint in their dreams while lying within the church<sup>229</sup> even though it is a highly interesting hypothesis. As has been demonstrated by the literary evidence above on Early Christian incubation, it was practised inside the churches, and as close to the martyr's tombs as possible. It must be noted, though, that saints' cults at this time demonstrated a wide variety of ritual, and that institutionalized incubation, as we find it in *e.g.* the cult of Artemios, is rare. The benches at Sidi Mahmud might also have served some other ritual including enabling the ill suppliants to lie close to the venerated tomb. They might have been cured, apart from the power of their prayer of course, by lying close to the focus of veneration in the church. Even if some patients had dream visions when lying in the church, meeting with a martyr/saint/angel in a dream may not have been the expected way of obtaining a cure when the suppliants approached the church. There are many possibilities to be explored, and the presence of benches with head-supports need not be taken as evidence of institutionalized incubation.

## To sum up

As for the first aim of this paper, is incubation architecture identifiable if there is no literary evidence to point out a certain building? As far as our brief sur-

vey can show it seems very difficult to identify an incubation area by looking only at the architecture. As we have seen, no identification of an incubation building/room has been undisputed even when there is literary evidence that confirms the ritual on site. It seems, though, that the identification of the stoa at Epidauros is certain, especially in the light of recent excavations. Closeness to the temple and the need for seclusion, as pointed out by Armipis, seem to be very useful criteria when trying to identify incubation dormitories. But even there, temporary fences leave no trace. As many scholars have pointed out, water seems to have played an important role in these large healing sanctuaries. A connection between the incubation building and water structures for purification before incubation, on the other hand, seems more difficult to use as a criterion, since water was used for so many other purposes, *e.g.* sanitary and curative. Neither can its use close to the dormitory in connection with rituals before sleeping be proven. The only way of identifying an incubation building seems to be, as has been done by various scholars, to discuss each site separately and carefully weigh arguments of cultic and practical nature in the context of the different prerequisites and habits of each cult.

As shown by Riethmüller, there is no special architectural form for dormitories. In Epidauros, Athens and Oropos, stoas were most probably used

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supposes that the helpseeker came to the church (or pagan sanctuary) with the specific intent of obtaining contact and a cure in his or her dream. Hence it could be said that some of the suppliants coming to Abu Mina indeed met with the saint in his or her dream (as happened on a spontaneous basis in many churches). There is, however, nothing to prove that suppliants came with the intent of sleeping in the church or at any other place at Abu Mina, meeting Menas in their dream and obtain a cure, as was the custom in the cult of Kyros and Johannes at Menouthis.

<sup>227</sup> Grossmann & Khorshid 1994.

<sup>228</sup> Grossmann 2002, 221–4. Grossmann & Khorshid 1994: Here, in the earlier publication on p. 87, he instead suggests that rooms along the outer northern wall of the church might have served as incubation rooms, and not the benches within the church. The benches are noted, as well as some headrests (p. 81), but they are generally identified as 'sitting benches' (p. 84).

<sup>229</sup> Grossmann 2002, 222, for the tomb of a presumed holy man. Cf. also Grossmann & Khorshid 1994, 86.

for the major part of the cult's existence, but in Pergamon many different buildings seem to have been used as dormitories: an irregular building, many times rebuilt, as well as, possibly, the Lower Circular building and the lower storey of the Roman south stoa.<sup>230</sup>

It is very difficult to identify an incubation area archaeologically without any support from literary sources that incubation was practised on the site or was a general feature of that particular cult. This applies to both pagan and Early Christian incubation. The temple of Hathor at Dendara might on account of the presence of water have served for curative purposes, but there is nothing in the building or cult that speaks of incubation. The so-called Hemicycle at Abu Mina might also have been used solely for accommodating important, resident pilgrims enjoying long-term visits. The permanent benches inside the church of Sidi Mahmoud are interesting, since they may have served to accommodate the sick who were staying inside for a longer time, hoping for a miracle. If the miracle was accomplished through dreams, or if lying in the presence of the relics in combination with for example prayer was the method, is difficult to say. Did people come to Sidi Mahmoud to lie near the object of veneration in the church and thus receive a cure, or did they come with the specific intent of meeting a saint in a dream? Without the accompanying literary evidence, we cannot tell.

As opposed to pagan incubation, where incubation was normally performed in a special building, suppliants in Early Christian incubation slept in different places in the church, wherever there was room, and preferably as close to the relics as possible. There seems to have been a belief that the martyr(s) came up from their shrine to perform healings (or, in the case of Thekla, although she is not buried in the church, she resides there and very clearly sees it as her home).

Why did the pagan sanctuaries have a special incubation building whereas the Christians slept inside the churches? There is nothing in the construction or layout of Greek temples that makes it impossible to incubate in them. However, this does not seem, as far as the evidence goes, to have been the case.<sup>231</sup> Why this is so is difficult to say. People

prayed in temples, so why would they not sleep in them?

Even if the temple was not a 'house of the god' open only to the priests, some that we know of had restricted opening times and were not open to all worshippers, as were the Christian churches.<sup>232</sup> Much of the pagan worship, such as sacrifice, took place in front of the temple, at the altar. The temple was not the only focus of worship, and this seems also to apply to incubation rituals. Also, practical reasons must have played a part. Not everybody coming to an incubation sanctuary wanted to incubate, some came for sacrifice or prayer by the god's statue, wherefore the need for space and seclusion of incubants from these other worshippers, and the practicalities of bedding and tidying up, may have made it more practical to have a special building for the rite. Maybe incubation was such an important and popular additional rite in, above all, the cult of Asklepios that its purpose was best served and its importance best acknowledged in the construction of a special building to serve its needs.

In Christianity, worship took place inside the church, which is why this was the most natural place for incubation. The practical aspect of having people sleep inside the churches seems not to have bothered or disturbed other believers who came solely for mass or prayer. Often we see, though, that attempts have been made to allot certain areas of the churches to the incubants, such as the katechoumenion in the church of Kosmas and Damianos at Constantinople, or the left aisle of the church of St. John Prodromos for incubation in the cult of Artemios.

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<sup>230</sup> For more architectural forms, see e.g. Armpis and Riethmüller. In the cult of Asklepios at Beroia (only testified by an inscription), an enkoimeterion with an exedra was used. See Woodward 1911–12, 144 no. 3 (128 BC).

<sup>231</sup> With the exception of the Asklepieion at Athens in late antiquity.

<sup>232</sup> Corbett 1970: as far as the evidence goes, some temples had restrictions concerning opening hours and as to which visitors were allowed to enter. All the same, not only priests were allowed to come into the temples. To pray in front of the god's statue in the temple seems to have been considered more effective, hence the suppliants' desire to enter the temples. Evidence also suggests that rituals were performed in some temples.

Armpis emphasizes the placing of the pagan incubation buildings as close to the temple as possible, to get as close as possible to 'The Holy'. This is an important point. It was a general view that the temple was the house of the god, which one temporarily visited when sacrifices were made at the altar in front of the temple.<sup>233</sup> The statue of the god was thought to be imbued with 'holiness', which is made clear by miracle stories where miracles were affected through gods' statues.<sup>234</sup> On a general level, this is a point of likeness with Christianity, where the closeness to the relics is very important. In Christianity the closeness to the tangible evidence of the holy seems more important than in pagan incubation. The importance of closeness to the relics shows itself in the desire to sleep as close to the relics as possible, *i.e.* in the church itself, and preferably in the crypt.<sup>235</sup> The holy oil from the lamps near the martyr's relics is another attestation of this, since the oil gets its healing powers as an intermediary of the relics.<sup>236</sup>

Further, looking at the textual evidence on incubation, it seems that pagan incubation is connected with the rituals of pagan religion (purification, pre-sacrifice, sacrifice, prayer, payment for a cure), and that Christian incubation is connected with the rituals of Christian religion (mass, eucharist, prayer). Thus it is not surprising to find that incubation architecture, and also incubation rituals, take separate forms in pagan religions and in Early Christianity.

A last point that might shed some light on the difference in incubation areas is the fact that incubation was the very central rite of the cult of Asklepios, whereas it never had the same importance in Christianity. In Christianity, incubation seems to have been an expression of popular religiosity, and not a result of official sanction, at least on any higher level.<sup>237</sup> The Early Christian incubation cults seem to have been established as a result of accidental circumstances,<sup>238</sup> as *one* expression among many of how Christian miracles were empowered by relics. Early Christian incubation seems to have had a short and intense period of popularity, then to fall into oblivion.<sup>239</sup> Given this circumstance, there was neither time nor inclination to develop a special architecture for this purpose. The miracle stories attest to the popularity of the incubation

cults, and they might try also to legitimize these and to introduce them into a main stream of Christian service.<sup>240</sup> Consequently, it was not expedient to build special incubation-rooms at Christian church complexes.

<sup>233</sup> Price 1999, 57–8.

<sup>234</sup> On healing statues, Athenagoras, *Pro Christianis* 26. The fact that certain people were not allowed inside the temples might also show that the temple was seen as the most holy site within the sanctuary. See Corbett 1970.

<sup>235</sup> This might be illustrated by mir. 32 of Artemios. An incubant slept in the north aisle and saw Artemios approaching from 'his coffin', that is, up from the crypt. Further in mir. 17 a relative of an employee at the church receives the honour or privilege of being allowed to sleep in the crypt itself. Riethmüller 1996, 107 has discussed the issue of the fictive bones of Asklepios, meaning that these, symbolically buried in the Tholos at Epidauros, emanated an iatromantic power. McCauley 1999, 94, makes a comparison between the cult of relics in Christianity and the special significance that the bones of heroes could have in pagan religions. McCauley draws the conclusion that even if the bones of heroes could have some divine power, there was no cult of heroes' bones and the differences between relics and hero-bones outweigh the likenesses. See also Pfister 1912, 618–26.

<sup>236</sup> Saxer 1980, 267.

<sup>237</sup> Maraval 1981, 393, states that the miracles of Saints Kyros and Johannes show a popular religiosity, more centered on the saints than on Christ.

<sup>238</sup> It is still difficult to see any direct continuity at any other site than Menouthis. See comments made on Thekla and Sarpedon above. One would expect that among so many incubation cults in antiquity there would have been evidence of local continuities if continuity from pagan incubation were indeed the foremost driving power of the rise of Early Christian incubation.

<sup>239</sup> I am writing here about institutionalized dream healing. See Déroche 1993, 116, for the suggestion that healing martyr's cults of a more colourful character were 'sterilized' by the iconoclasm. Modern incubation, sleeping in churches today, is an interesting occurrence, but it does not have the same regularized and institutionalized character as pagan and Early Christian incubation (see *e.g.* Blum & Blum 1970, 62–3).

<sup>240</sup> See Déroche 1993, 101, 108, who proposes that one of the motives in writing the miracula of St. Artemios was to defend the cult against possible accusations of unorthodoxy, this being a concern directed towards many saint's cults (not particularly incubation cults). Even so, martyrs showing themselves and interacting so directly with suppliants sleeping in their churches must have stood out even among the very colourful saints' cults.

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