

ST. ROMANOS *EPI TĒN SKLEPAN*.
A SAINT PROTECTOR AND HEALER OF HORSES

A St. Romanos associated with horses (τῶν ἀλόγων), enigmatically inscribed *epi tēn sklepan* (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν), is depicted in some thirteenth-century wall-paintings in a small number of churches in the south-eastern Peloponnese, between Monemvasia and Sparta. After the initial publication of these wall-paintings more examples of such images and inscriptions from the same area—but also from Prilep and Manastir in FYROM and from Crete—were made known in an attempt to identify the saint and interpret the enigmatic inscription. In this paper, having first presented the relevant depictions and inscriptions and the corresponding scholarly opinions, we shall attempt an overall interpretation and subsequent identification of this St. Romanos, protector and healer of horses. The images and inscriptions concerned are listed below, grouped by region and in chronological order, according to the date of their discovery and publication.

1) Hermitage in Vourvoura, Arcadia in the Peloponnese (thirteenth-century wall-paintings)¹. The cave, which was converted into a hermit's cell, has depictions of seven saints in its wall-paintings, which, according to their

1. K. A. ROMAIOS, Ἀνασκαφαὶ ἐν Κυνουρίᾳ, *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 1941, 65; P. AMANDRY, Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1942, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 66-67 (1942-1943), 326; A. ΞΥΝΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι τοῦ Ἀσκηταρίου παρὰ τὸ χωρίον τοῦ Βούρβουρα, *Πελοποννησιακά* 3-4 (1958-1959), 87-94, especially 88-89, fig. 4; K. M. SKAWRAN, *The Development of Middle Byzantine Fresco Painting in Greece*, Pretoria 1982, 164 fig. 170. On the revision of the earlier dating of the wall-paintings to the first quarter of the 12th c. and the new date of late 13th c. see N. B. DRANDAKIS, Τὸ Παλιομονάστηρο τῶν Ἁγίων Σαράντα στὴ Λακεδαίμονα καὶ τὸ ἀσκητάριό του, *DChAE* 16 (1991-1992), 134 (= IDEM, *Μάνη καὶ Λακωνία*, ed. H. CONSTANDINIDI, Athens 2009, vol. 3, 710).



Fig. 1a. Hermitage in Vourvoura of Arcadia, Peloponnese.



Fig. 1b. Hermitage in Vourvoura of Arcadia, Peloponnese. The inscription of St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan tōn alogōn* according to the photograph given by Xyngopoulos, op. cit.

inscriptions are St. Nikon, St. Romanos, St. Theodore, St. Demetrios, St. John the Baptist, St. Nicholas and an unidentified saint. St. Romanos is depicted frontally (Fig. 1a, b) as a young man with black hair and a short, black beard, wearing a tunic with sleeves and over that a decorated cloak, fastened at the shoulder. The saint keeps both his hands in front of his chest but it is no longer possible to make out what he was holding. According to the description given by A. Xyngopoulos, who published a photograph (Fig. 1b), the saint's left hand was holding a cross, though the paint surface is abraded at this point.



Fig. 2. Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Ayios Nikolaos near Monemvasia, Peloponnese. St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* (second half of the 13th c.).

To the left of the saint and in perpendicular alignment close to the halo, the same scholar also read the inscription as follows: [Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ] ΡΟ / ΜΑ / Ν / ΟC / κλέπ (της) τ(ων) ἄ / λόγον. Working from the published photograph, we can decipher: Ο [ΑΓΙΟΣ] ΡΟ / ΜΑ / Ν / ΟC / ... / κλεπ... τ (ων) ἄ / λόγον. On the basis of similar inscriptions from monuments in Lakonia, which we shall discuss below, we believe that the aforementioned inscription should be read as: Ο [ΑΓΙΟΣ] ΡΟ / ΜΑ / Ν / ΟC / (ὁ ἐπὶ τὴν) / (σ) κλέπ (αν) τ(ων) ἄ / λόγον.

2) Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Ayios Nikolaos, near Monemvasia, Lakonia (wall-paintings of the second half of the thirteenth century)². A saint is depicted frontally on the west side of the southeast pier; he is a semi-obliterated figure, wearing a cloak decorated with crosses enclosed in squares. The saint, with both hands in front of his chest, appears to be holding some indistinct objects (Fig. 2). In the inscription to left and right of the halo we can clearly read: (left) Ὁ Ἄ (ΓΙΟΣ) / ΡΟ / ΜΑ / ΝΌC and (right) Ο / ΕΠΙ / ΤΗΝ / CΚΛΕΪ / ΠΑΝ.

3) Church of the Virgin Chrysaphitissa, Chrysapha, Lakonia (wall-paintings of 1290)³. A saint is depicted frontally on the northern side of

2. N. B. DRANDAKIS, Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου στὸν Ἅγιο Νικόλαο Μονεμβασίας, *DChAE* 9 (1977-1979), 35-61, especially 40-42 (= IDEM, *Μάνη καὶ Λακωνία*, vol. 3, 220-222). The first person to publish a photograph was G. DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι καὶ ἀνύπαρκτοι τινες ἄγιοι, *ΕΕΒΣ* 50 (1999-2000), 395, pl. 4 fig. 2.

3. N. B. DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσαφίτισσα (1290), *Πρακτικά Α' Τοπικοῦ Συνεδρίου Λακωνικῶν Μελετῶν* (Μολάοι, 5-7 Ἰουνίου 1982), Athens 1982-1983, 385-386 (= IDEM, *Μάνη καὶ Λακωνία*, vol. 3, 351-352). Since then it has also been mentioned by J. P. ALBANI, *Die byzantinischen Wandmalereien*



Fig. 3. Church of the Virgin Chrysaphitissa, in the village of Chrysapha, Lakonia, Peloponnese. St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* (wall-paintings of 1290).

the northwest pier; he is a semi-obliterated figure in a purple cloak who is holding a cross (Fig. 3). According to another reading, he is a military saint with a short beard and moustache, holding a shield in front of his chest. We should exercise caution in assessing such descriptions due to the extremely poor state of preservation of the wall-painting. The faded inscription to the left of the saint and perpendicular to the halo has been read and restored as follows: Ρωμανός ὁ ἐπὶ τὴν Σκλέπαν⁴. Nowadays: ΡΩ / ΜΑ / ΝΌΣ / .../.../ ΤΗΝ ΣΚΛΕΠΑΝ remains legible.

4) Church of the Taxiarchs, Laïna-Goritsa, Lakonia (unpublished wall-paintings of the second half of the thirteenth century). On the West wall in the first register a full-length image of a saint is depicted frontally (Fig. 4) with a discreet beard and brown, shoulder-length, curly hair, wearing expensive clothes, including a white tunic with delicate motifs picked out in gold at the neckline, the shoulders, on the sleeves and at the wrists. Over the tunic he wears a purple cloak, fastened at the front over the chest, leaving his right hand free, in which he holds a blade or small knife with a flattened end, possibly a surgical instrument. The left arm, folded in front of him at waist

der Panagia Chrysaphitissa-Kirche in Chrysapha/Lakonien, Athens 2000, 72, 118; DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι, 395.

4. DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσ αφίτισσα, 385; ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa*, 72, who basically reproduces Drandakis's reading and goes on to describe the saint as a military man with a shield.

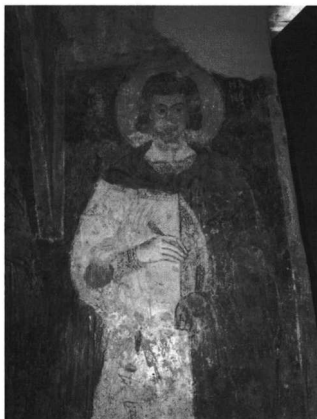


Fig. 4. Church of the Taxiarchs, in the village of Laïna-Goritsa, Lakonia, Peloponnese.
St. Romanos ... *tôn alogôn* (second half of the 13th c.).

level, is covered by the cloak. The inscription reads: (left) *A / Γ I / O (C)* and (right) */.../ MA / NÓ / C /.../.../ τ(ω)ν ἀλόγων*. This is the second time (after the inscription from Vourvoura) that we find a similar, misspelled inscription in lower-case letters with what seems likely to be an enigmatic attribute of St. Romanos' depictions in the Peloponnese. Moreover, this attribute *τ(ω)ν ἀλόγων* (of horses), exactly as in Vourvoura, it is added as an explanation in lower-case letters to the main inscription in capital letters.

5) Monastery of St. Michael the Archangel in Varoş near Prilep, FYROM (wall-paintings of 1270-1280)⁵. The saint depicted on the south wall of the church shows considerable similarities, in respect to facial features and dress, with the Romanos from Laïna. However, unlike St. Romanos from Laïna, this Romanos is depicted bust length and holding a cross (Fig. 5). The inscription reads: (left) *Ο (ΑΓΙΟΣ) / ΡΩ / ΜΑ / ΝΟC* and (right) *Ο Ε / ΠΙ / ΤΗC / ΚΛΕ /*

5. Initial awareness of the image and the inscription, at least in the Greek academic community, emerged in 1981 when Archimandrite Silas Koukias told Prof. Drandakis about it, DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ή Χρυσοφύτισσα, 352. The first scholarly publication with a photograph was by P. KOSTOVSKA, The image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier and his role in the program of the church of St. Nicholas near Prilep, *Balkanoslavica* 28/29 (2001), 163-174 and especially 167-168, 174 (ill. 5). We are most grateful to Mrs Kostovska for responding so readily to our enquiry and sending us a copy of her study.



Fig. 5. Monastery of St. Michael the Archangel in Varoş near Prilep.
St. Romanos *epi tēs klepas* (wall-paintings of 1270-1280).

ΠΑΣ⁶. It may be that the letter sigma C was omitted from the word *sklepas* (σκέπας) because it was preceded by the genitive form of the definite article *THC* (i.e. which ends in C). Alternatively we might consider it a dialect form of the word: (σ)κλέπας. The inscription also differs syntactically from the corresponding ones in the Peloponnese: instead of *epi tēn sklepan* (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν) it is rendered using ἐπὶ + gen., i.e. *epi tēs klepas* (ἐπὶ τῆς κλέπας).

6) Church of St. Nicholas in Mariovo in Manastir, FYROM (wall-paintings of 1271). On the south wall of the south aisle of the church there is a full-length saint with a semi-obiterated face depicted to the left of St. Sampson the Inn-Keeper. He wears a tunic with gilded decoration and a cloak which fastens at the front over the breast. Low down on the right-hand side of the figure, now covered with a layer of whitewash, a white animal resembling a horse can just be made out. The inscription to the left of the halo reads: Ο ΑΓΙ(ΟC) ΡΩΜΑΝΟC (Fig. 6)⁷.

6. In accordance with the information received from Silas Koukiaris, Drandakis also reported the inscription as reading ἐπὶ τῆς κλέπας, DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσαφίτισσα, 386. Kostovska followed suit, KOSTOVSKA, 167.

7. KOSTOVSKA, 166-167 and 172-173 ill. 2-3. Kostovska, refers to P. MILJKOVIĆ-PEPEK, *Manastir*, Skopje 1958, 83 and has published a sketch (Fig. 6) which the latter has given her.



Fig. 6. Church of St. Nicholas in Mariovo, Manastir. St. Romanos (wall-paintings of 1271) according a sketch of P. Miljković-Peppek published by Kostovska, op. cit.



Fig. 7. Monastery of St. Nicholas, Varoš near Prilep. St. Romanos (wall-paintings of 1298).

7) Monastery of St. Nicholas in Varoš near Prilep, FYROM (wall-paintings of 1298). In the lower register on the south wall St. Romanos is depicted third after Sts. Prokopios and Menas. Though dressed as a soldier, his physiognomy and facial expression are quite different from the depictions of St. Romanos described above. He has a thick beard and unruly hair; he holds his spear diagonally in front of his chest, while his right hand points downwards, holding a sword which reaches to the ground (Fig. 7)⁸. The fragmentary inscription to the left of the saint reads: *POM (A) / NOC* and (under the halo, near his shoulder) *KA...*, which has been compared with the inscriptions accompanying Romanos

8. G. MILLET – A. FROLOW, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie*, Paris 1964, vol. 3, pl. 29(4); KOSTOVSKA, 163-164. A characteristic detail is seen in the thick strap which passes between his thumb and index finger, drawn tight over the outside of the palm of the left hand, in which he holds his spear.

at Vourvoura and the Church of the Archangel at Prilep and completed as: (C)ΚΛ(ΕΠΑ)⁹. There is probably no need to add the sigma, given that in the neighbouring Monastery of the Archangel we find the inscription rendered as ΚΛΕΠΑΣ. The inscription reads: POM (A) NOC ... ΚΛ(ΕΠΑΣ).

8) Church of the Poreče monastery of the Nativity of the Virgin at Manastirec, FYROM (wall paintings dated to thirteenth century). St Romanos is depicted on the south wall amongst two others warriors saints and identified by an inscription. According to the publication of the monument the inscription reads: ΑΓΙΟΣ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΣ ΟΣ ΚΛΕΠ(Τ)ΟΔΗΟΚΤΗ(Σ), i.e. Saint Romanos as the pursuer of thieves¹⁰. However, a closer reading of the inscription reveals that its correct rendering should run thus: ΑΓΙΟΣ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΣ Ο ΣΚΛΕΠΟΔΗΟΚΤΗ(Σ) = Saint Romanos the *sklepodiōktēs*, i.e. who drives the *sklepa* away.

9) Church of St. John the Baptist, Anoyia Crete (wall-paintings from ca. 1320). A frontal, bust-length image of a saint is depicted in a frame on the south wall to the west of the window. He has grey hair and carries a cross in his right hand and in his left holds three fair-sized, sharp implements, one of which looks like a scythe (Fig. 8). The inscription at the upper right has been read as: ΡΩΜΑΝΟΣ Ο ΚΛΕΠ[Τ]ΟΔΙΟΚΤ(ΗΣ), i.e. the Thief Pursuer¹¹. This image has been compared with the already well-known, fifteenth-century depiction of Romanos in the church of St. George, Apano Symi, in Viannos Crete, though the artists were not using the same model and the Apano Symi version does not give the martyr any identifying epithet (Fig. 9)¹². According to the scholar who published the image from Anoyia, this Romanos, in both cases appearing in churches in cattle-breeding areas, pursued livestock poachers or cattle thieves.

9. KOSTOVSKA, 163, reported the reading ΡΟΜΑΝΟ(C), but this was a typographical error. At around the same time both Kostovska and Albani associated the letters ΚΛ with the word σκλέπα which they restored accordingly in conference papers and published articles, in which they appear to be unaware of each other's work, KOSTOVSKA, 168 and ALBANI, 72 note 322.

10. M. M. MAŠNIĆ, The Poreče monastery of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin at the village of Manastirec in Macedonia. About the architecture, programme and style features of the newly discovered frescos, *Niš i Vizantija Zbornik radova* 2 (2004), 277-294, esp. for St. Romanos, 281-283 fig. 2, 288-290, 293 (in Serbian with Engl. Summary). We owe the reference to Petroula Kostovska, to whom we express our warmest thanks.

11. I. SPATHARAKIS, *Byzantine wall paintings of Crete, vol. II. Mylopotamos Province*, Leiden 2010, 66-68, 73-74, 326, fig. 88.

12. *Ibidem*. On depictions of Romanos in Crete, I. SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, Leiden 2001, 134 (St. John the Baptist, Kritsa), 203, 205 (St. George, Apano Symi).



Fig. 8. Church of St. John the Baptist, Anoyia, Crete. St. Romanos (s)klepodioikt(es) (wall-paintings from ca 1320, photo Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings*, op. cit., fig. 88).



Fig. 9. Church of St. George in Apano Symi, Viannos, Crete. St. Romanos (wall-paintings of 15th c.).

In fact, he believes that the implements held by Romanos in both images are the miscreants' tools of the trade¹³. On the basis of the inscriptions from Lakonia, Prilep, Manastir and Manastirec, there is no need to «complete» the inscription, because it simply reads: ΚΛΕΠΟΔΙΩΚΤ(ΗC) or (C)ΚΛΕΠΟΔΙΩΚΤ(ΗC), i.e. *klepodioikt(ēs)* / (s)*klepodioikt(ēs)*.

These are all the depictions known to date, which are related by inscription to St. Romanos. His identity and the interpretation of the inscriptions have been problematic ever since the images were first published. Thus, when Xyngopoulos first made the depiction known and proposed a reading of the inscription, other scholars took up his suggestion of a «saint as horse-thief» (ἀγίου ὡς κλέπτου τῶν ἀλόγων). Indeed, it was thought to be a local

13. SPATHARAKIS, *Byzantine wall paintings of Crete*, vol. II, 74. In his previous study he had not ruled out the possibility of the saint being a healer, SPATHARAKIS, *Dated* 205. See also, E. CHARITOPOULOS – M. PAPADAKIS – K. TROMBOUKIS, *Απεικονίσεις ιαματικών αγίων και ιατρικών εργαλείων στην εικονογραφία του Κρητικού ύστερου Μεσαίωνα. Παρουσίαση και αξιολόγηση του έργου των αδελφών Φωκά (μέσα 15ου αι.)*, in *Book of Abstracts, 2nd Amphictyony of Societies of History of Medicine and Ethics in Medicine, Hippocratic Medicine, Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow «Asclepieia»*, 30 April - 3 May 2009, Kos-Greece, 63-64.

tradition, revealed for the first time¹⁴. In later years, when N. Drandakis had published another two images, from Ayios Nikolaos, near Monemvasia and from Chrysapha, the saint known as *Romanos epi tēn Sklepan* (with a capital sigma) emerged, in the guise of an unknown saint not initially connected with the one at Vourvoura¹⁵. The inscription *epi tēn Sklepan* for the Romanos in these depictions was only compared with the corresponding inscriptions accompanying St. Romanos in Prilep¹⁶.

Consequently, in a special study of the depiction of St. Romanos in the Monastery of St. Nicholas in Varos near Prilep, Xyngopoulos' reading of the Vourvoura inscription as «horse thief» became accepted. At this stage only the Vourvoura inscription was related both to the inscriptions *epi tēs klepas* accompanying the two examples of St. Romanos in the churches of Prilep and to the presence of a horse in the depiction of St. Romanos at Manastir, since the other Peloponnesian inscriptions associated with St. Romanos were not taken into account. The inscription *epi tēs klepas* was translated as «by or near or beside the loot» and a St. Romanos was being proposed both as a military saint, a «horse thief» and a «pursuer of thieves»¹⁷. A collaborative project on the saints of the Peloponnese first looked at all the currently known depictions of St. Romanos along with their inscriptions (with a simple cross-reference to the monuments in Prilep) and, because it was not possible to identify St. Romanos or interpret the inscriptions, concluded that it was a local tradition and a local saint¹⁸. Finally, up to now the relevant Cretan depictions of St. Romanos have never been compared or looked at in conjunction with all the others.

14. ΧΥΝΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι, 89-89. This reading and interpretation was to be adopted by almost all those who referred to the monument, e.g. SKAWRAN, *The Development*, 164 fig. 170, repeats Xyngopoulos's description, translating as: «St. Romanus the Horse-Thief» and publishing a photograph. Likewise, KOSTOVSKA, *The image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier*, 167.

15. DRANDAKIS, Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου, 42; DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσοφτίτισσα, 385-386.

16. DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσοφτίτισσα, 385-386; ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa* 72.

17. KOSTOVSKA, *The image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier*, 167-168. ΜΑΣΝΙĆ, op. cit., 289-290.

18. A. LAMBROPOULOU – I. ANAGNOSTAKIS – V. KONTI – A. PANOPOULOU, Μνήμη καὶ λήθη τῆς λατρείας τῶν ἁγίων τῆς Πελοποννήσου (9ος-15ος αἰώνας), *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου: Οἱ ἥρωες τῆς ὀρθόδοξης ἐκκλησίας. Οἱ νέοι ἅγιοι, 8ος-16ος αἰώνας*, Athens 2004, 281-282. See also I. ANAGNOSTAKIS, Από τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς μοναχῆς Ευφροσύνης στὸν Βίο τῶν σοφῶν τοῦ Μεγάλου Σπηλαίου: Ἡ ἱστορία μιᾶς κατασκευῆς, in V. KONTI (ed.), *Ο Μοναχισμός στὴν Πελοπόννησο 4ος -15ος αἰ.*, Athens 2004, 165.

This is the state of research to date on the subject. Having presented only those depictions of St. Romanos which we think are characterized mainly by the similarities in their inscriptions, we shall attempt to interpret the inscriptions and reveal the identity of the saint. That is to say we shall attempt to answer the question: Who is the martyr or military saint Romanos who is given the enigmatic soubriquet *epi tēn sklepan/epi tēs klepas* (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν/ἐπὶ τῆς κλέπας) or *sklepodiōktēs* (σκεποδιώκτης) and what did he have to do with horses?

We believe that the word (s)klepa (σκλέπα) which is mentioned in the inscriptions accompanying St. Romanos in collocation with the elucidatory complement «of the horses» (τῶν ἀλόγων) has nothing to do with stealing or thieves but rather refers to a virulent equine disease. The word *sklepa* (σκλέπα) is not included in any of the well known dictionaries of the Greek language, but is mentioned as a horse ailment in two recensions of the *Hippiatrica*: recension D in a thirteenth-century manuscript (C= Cantabrigiensis Coll. Emm. 251) and recension RV in a fourteenth-century manuscript (V= Lugdunensis or Leidensis Vossianus gr. Q 50)¹⁹. According to its editor, there are three instances in ms. V (*Excerpta Lugdunensia*) where some set phrases or incantations are suggested, which should be spoken in the horse's ear to cure it of this disease: (61.) *Περὶ σκλέπας. Ὅφειλεις ὥρα μεσσονυκτίου λέγε(ιν) εἰς τὸ ὠτίον τοῦ ἵππου...* (On the *sklepa*. At midnight you should say in the horse's ear ...), (105.) *Περὶ σκλέπας...* (On the *sklepa*), (106.) *Ἄλλον εἰς σκλέπας...* (Another [remedy] for the *sklepa*)²⁰. Consequently the phrases *epi tēn sklepan* of horses (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν τῶν ἀλόγων) or *epi tēn sklepan/epi tēs klepas* (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν/ἐπὶ τῆς κλέπας) and the word *sklepodiōktēs* (σκεποδιώκτης) used in the inscriptions must refer to this particular ailment. Thus, the saint depicted was a protector of horses, who cured them of this disease, i.e. the saint who «drove away» the *sklepa* (διώκει τὴν σκλέπαν), a verb associated with the purging of illness and demons and with prevention and cure. It should also be noted that though the words *sklepa* and *sklepaditza* (the diminutive of *sklepa*) are not included

19. A. McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia of Horse Medicine. The Sources, Compilation, and Transmission of the Hippiatrica*, Oxford 2007, 18-19, 38-48. See also the previous outline for all known hippiatric texts A.-M. DOYEN-HIGUET, *The Hippiatrica and Byzantine Veterinary Medicine*, DOP 38 (1984), 111-120; IDEM, *L'Épitomé de la collection d'hippiatrie grecque: Histoire du texte, édition critique, traduction et notes*, Louvain 2006, vol. 1.

20. *Hippiatrica, Excerpta Lugdunensia*, ed. K. HOPPE – E. ODER, *Corpus hippiatricorum Graecorum*, Leipzig 1927, vol. 2 (repr. Stuttgart 1971), 272-313.

in the dictionaries, they are nevertheless well known in a variety of forms in Modern Greek dialects (e.g. Pontic or Tsakonika) and in the glossaries of local idioms (σκλέπα, σκλεπάτσιν) meaning epidemic, corruption or uncleanness (particularly associated with the head) or a suppurating wound²¹.

But what exactly is *sklepa*? It is clarified in ms. C (*Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia*), in the very title of the sub-section «On the fistulas or growths which occur in animals and which the barbarians called *sklepaditzas* (=Περὶ συρίγγων ἧτοι φυμάτων τῶν ἐν τῷ ζῳῳ γινομένων, ἅπερ οἱ βάρβαροι σκλεπαδίτζας ὀνομάζουσιν)»²². In addition to the very important information this gives us about the name used by the barbarians for the disease, i.e. *sklepaditza* (σκλεπαδίτζα), the text goes on to describe the disease in detail and how to cure it. Thus, the fistulas mentioned at the beginning of the section were called *syringes* (σύριγγες), because they resembled the hollow reeds which went by this name in Greek and took the form of long tubiform ulcers which occur in animals. Whenever any part of the animal's body begins to produce abscesses, it creates a concealed fistula; the eyes begin to hurt and the ears are damaged. If these abscesses are in the head, or indeed on any other part of the body, they can be treated by cauterizing the fistula using a hot iron or cauterant, which cauterizes the live tissue. Thus, the fistula is lanced and surgically removed, using a sharp instrument or an ear probe made of tin or lead to explore the fistula²³. As we know from other sources, the cauterizing

21. A. PAPADOPOULOS, *Ἱστορικὸν λεξικὸν τῆς ποντικῆς διαλέκτου*, vol. 1, Athens 1958, 290. D. I. OIKONOMIDES, *Γραμματικὴ τῆς ἑλληνικῆς διαλέκτου τοῦ Πόντου*, Athens 1958, 123, 201, 213, 396; TH. P. KOSTAKES, *Λεξικὸ τῆς τσακωνικῆς διαλέκτου*, vol. 3, Athens 1987, 156. On the Peloponnesian dialects in Arcadia and Messenia see the online websites: <http://arcadia.ceid.upatras.gr/arkadia/culture/glossari/18.htm> and http://www.akobitika_nea.byethost13.com/AkobosPeriodiko/Teuxos16/TopikesLexeis.pdf and <http://www.yousouroum.gr/forum/showthread.php?t=8266>. *Sklepas* is an old Albanian surname and like the Vlach *skliopou/skliopa* (σκληόπου-σκληόπα), it means lame from the Latin *scloppus*<*clorpus*<*claudius*, K. NIKOLAΪDES, *Λεξικὸν τῆς Κουτσοβλαχικῆς γλώσσης*, Athens 1909, 485; K. MΠΙΡΕΣ, *Ἀρβανίτες οἱ Δωριεῖς τοῦ νεότερου Ἑλληνισμοῦ: Ἱστορία τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀρβανιτῶν*, Athens 1960, 201.

22. *Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia*, ed. HOPPE – ODER, *Corpus hippiatricorum Graecorum*, vol. 2 Leipzig 1927 (repr. Stuttgart 1971), ch. 100 §8, p. 244. And see commentary in S. LAZARIS, *Art et science vétérinaire à Byzance. Formes et fonction de l'image hippiatrice*, Brepols publishers, Turnhout 2010, 202 note 153.

23. *Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia*, chap. 100 § 8, pp. 243-244: Περὶ σύριγγος. (8.) Περὶ συρίγγων ἧτοι φυμάτων τῶν ἐν τῷ ζῳῳ γινομένων, ἅπερ οἱ βάρβαροι σκλεπαδίτζας ὀνομάζουσιν. Ἐὰν τὸ μέρος ἐκεῖνο ἐπαναστήματα ποιῇν ἀρχῇται, ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ὀγκων τὸ σῶμα φρίττει καὶ συριγγοῦται ἀσυμφρανίως, τότε

instrument had a specific name in Greek: *syriggotomon* (συριγγότομον) or a knife for cutting fistulas or *syriggiakos kautēr* (συριγγιακὸς καυτήρ) a cautery for fistulas, implements which we believe can be identified with those found in the excavations at Corinth (ninth–twelfth centuries) and with the cauterizing instrument which Romanos holds at Laïna (Fig. 4)²⁴.

Having interpreted the inscription associated with St. Romanos, let us attempt to answer the question regarding which of the Saints Romanos known to us could be the saintly protector of horses who cured them of the *sklepa* or fistulas. All previous researchers have considered that images of St. Romanos (with the obvious exception of the deacon and hymnographer Romanos the Melode) and in particular those labelled *epi tēn sklepan* —a character unknown at least to hagiography— are difficult to identify with any of the saints known to go by that name mentioned in the sources²⁵. And it is certainly a tricky business, as the various Romanoses in the *Encomia* and in the *Synaxaries* are attributed many common characteristics and moreover several martyrs of this name are mentioned in large companies of Christians²⁶. The failure to come up with an identity in addition to the enigmatic inscription have led

καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καταβαρεῖται καὶ τὰ ὦτα ἔχει κεχλασμένα· χρηὶ τοίνυν οὕτω θεραπεύειν· εἰ ἐν οἰωδῆποτε τόπω τὰ ἐπαναστήματα δεχθῇ, ταῦτα παρעوبθὺ μέχρι τῆς ζωῆς σαρκὸς ἐπίκαιε, ὥστε τὰ συρίγγια τοῦ καυτήρος αἰσθέσθαι. ἥτις σύριγξ οὕτως ἐστίν, ὡσεὶ κολοκύνθη χλωρά, καὶ ὀθενδηποτοῦν μῆλωτιδα ἢ σπάθην μῆλης ἐμβάλων, δι' αὐτοῦ παρέρχεται καὶ πόνου τὸ ζῶον οὐκ αἰσθάνεται. τέμνε, ἵνα ἄχρη τῆς ζωῆς <καυ>τηριακῷ ὀργάνῳ τὸν αὐτὸν τόπον περιτέμνης. See the comments by LAZARIS, *Art et science*, 202 note 153.

24. For the *syriggotomon*, PAULUS AEGINETA, *Epitomae medicae*, ed. J. L. HEIBERG, vol. 2 [*Corpus medicorum Graecorum* 9.2], Leipzig 1924, VI 52 § 1.14, VI 72 § 1.10–12, VI 78 § 2.18 and 4.9; for *syriggiakon kautēra*, LEON MEDICUS, *Conspectus medicinae*, ed. F. Z. ERMERINS, *Anecdota medica Graeca*, Leiden 1840 (repr. Amsterdam 1963), 3, 22.4. On the relevant Byzantine finds in Corinth, Palestine, Syria and Egypt, see L. J. BLIQUEZ, Two lists of Greek surgical instruments and the state of surgery in Byzantine times, *DOP* 38 (1984), 187–204, esp. 188–190, 200, 203 and fig. 4, 7, 10. See also M. G. PARANI, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)*, Leiden–Boston 2003, 204–205.

25. XYNGOPOULOS, Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι, 88; DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι, 398; ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa*, 72; LAMBROPOULOU et als, Μνήμη καὶ λήθη, 282 note 77.

26. BHG N. Auct. 1600y–1602; H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (hereafter *Synaxarium CP*), Brussels 1902, 95–96 (1 October, deacon Romanos Melodos), 235–236 (18 November, two martyrs Romanos of Antioch or of Caesarea), 431 (29 January, martyr Romanos), 453–454 (9 February, Saint Romanos), 543 (16 March, martyrs Romanos and Menignos *en Pariō*), 717 (30 May, martyr Romanos *en Nikomēdeia*). For the «dédoublement» of St. Romanos see H. DELEHAYE, S. Romain martyr d'Antioche, *AnBoll* 50 (1932), 241–283, esp. 280–283 (= *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. DELEHAYE, BHG N. Auct. 1600y).

to the opinion that the Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* who holds a cross is perhaps some local martyr Romanos from Lakonia²⁷. Yet this hypothesis cannot be sustained when a Romanos labelled *epi tēs klepas* is also found in the second half of the thirteenth century in the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Prilep and another, inscribed *sklepodiōktēs* (σκληποδιώκτης) in Manastirec and in Crete. Although the idea about a local saint has justifiably been questioned, the association between the depiction of Romanos in the Chrysaphitissa and the military saint Romanos from St. Nicholas in Prilep has led to the following argument: the military saint, who is St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan*, was not a saint of the Orthodox tradition, since he is not mentioned in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* (which commemorates many saints named Romanos), but rather the Roman Romanus Ostiarius, the only military saint and martyr by that name, according, to the Latin tradition²⁸. More or less the same line was taken, though in this instance with reservations, in a special study of the military saint Romanos from St. Nicholas in Prilep in which the depiction of Romanos next to other military saints at Vourvoura was used as supporting evidence²⁹. It has been proposed that the Romanos in St. Nicholas, Prilep, could be the homonymous Western military saint and martyr and that it could be the very first depiction of Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* as a soldier, for reasons which remain obscure, unless it «had a very special significance for the patron of the church and his family» (1298)³⁰. We consider that looking for a Western

27. There is the hypothesis of a local tradition in XYNGOPOULOS, Αἱ τοιχογραφίαι, 88-89, 93. DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ἡ Χρυσσαφίτισσα, 385-386, though he thinks we are dealing with a local saint, refers to evidence for the existence of a similar depiction in the Monastery of the Archangel in Prilep. DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι, 395, repeats the mention of a martyr, while LAMBROPOULOU et als, Μνήμη καὶ λήθη, 282, and ANAGNOSTAKIS, Από την εικόνα της μοναχῆς Ευφροσύνης, 165 repeat the notion of a local saint or martyr.

28. According to Albani, who cites Millet-Frolow, the military saint Romanos from St. Nicholas in Prilep resembles the one in the Chrysaphitissa. Indeed she envisions him with a shield, ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa-Kirche*, 72, 118; LAMBROPOULOU et als, Μνήμη καὶ λήθη, 282, n. 72 rejects Albani's comparison with the depictions of Romanos in the Prilep churches.

29. KOSTOVSKA, The image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier, 163-174. MAŠNIĆ, 289-290.

30. KOSTOVSKA, 165, 168-169. For other depictions of St. Romanos as a soldier, albeit they need double-checking at first hand, S. N. MADERAKES, Μιά ἐκκλησία στὴν ἐπαρχία Σελίνου: Ὁ Χριστὸς στὰ Πλεμειανὰ, *Πεπραγμένα του Ε' Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου* (Ἅγιος Νικόλαος, 25 Σεπτ.-1 Οκτ. 1981), Herakleion Creta 1985, vol. 2, 280; DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι, 398. In the church of St. Nicholas at Elenes, Amari, a St. Romanos is depicted among military saints, G. GEROLA, *Τοπογραφικὸς Κατάλογος τῶν τοιχογραφημένων ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς Κρήτης* (transl. K. E. LASSITHIOTAKIS), Herakleion 1961, 63 no. 363.

military saint and martyr does not solve the problem, as we know very well that changes in individual features in depictions of saints creep in gradually and in some cases, they are given military features³¹. Yet exploring this problem should be the subject of another study. Nevertheless, in attempting to make an preliminary study of the relevant depictions of Romanos we have reached certain conclusions ultimately connected with the cult of the specific saint and his persona as a protector of horses³².

Though Byzantine scholars continue to consider Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* and the military saint Romanos a rare example of an unidentified, non-existent or Western saint³³, we believe that the saint should be identified with the martyr Romanos of Antioch celebrated on 18 November. The Antiochene Romanos suffered the ordeal of having his tongue cut out and was executed in Antioch under Maximian or Diocletian. According to tradition, his relics were translated by St. Helena to the church dedicated to him in an area near the walls in Constantinople, close to the well-known Romanos Gate. An inscription found recently on the lintel above the entrance of the so-called fourth minor gate in the land walls of Constantinople informs us that this is the gateway which led to [the church of] St. Romanos (+ΠΟΡΤΑ ΜΕΧ ΕΙΣΦΕΡΟΥΣΑ + ΕΠΙ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΡΩΜΑΝΟΝ +) thus establishing the exact position of the gate and confirming the evidence of the sources as to the presence there of the martyr's church³⁴.

From a simple survey of the martyr's cult, it is evident that over the course of time both cult and image varied. From an early stage, the martyr was

31. On St. Demetrios, T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *Ιστορίες και ιστορήσεις βυζαντινών παλληκαριών*, DChAE 20 (1999), 213-230. On Demetrios, Niketas and many other military saints, C. WALTER, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Aldershot, Ashgate 2003, 77-79, 231-233, 270-290.

32. This study of the cult of the martyr Romanos in Byzantium and his relationship with horses will be published shortly.

33. DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ή Χρυσοφτίτισσα, 385; DEMETROCALLES, Σπάνιοι, 398; KOSTOVSKA, The Image of St. Romanos as a Soldier, 165, 168; ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa-Kirche*, 72; LAMBROPOULOU et als, Μνήμη καὶ λήθη, 282. SPATHARAKIS (*Byzantine wall paintings of Crete*, vol. II, 73-74) does not relate the Cretan depictions to all the others and simply mentions the martyrs called Romanos who are commemorated on 18 November and 18 January respectively.

34. N. ASUTAY, Die Entdeckung des Romanos-Tores an den Landmauern von Konstantinopel, BZ 96 (2003), 1-4; N. ASUTAY-EFFENBERGER, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel-Istanbul: historisch-topographische und baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Berlin 2007, 87-93.

confused, at least by name, and subsequently overlapped with other Romanoses, above all St. Romanos the Melode³⁵. As regards his image, the depictions of the martyr Romanos or of Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* and the military saint Romanos constitute a specific group which, despite the differences between them, have distinct similarities on account of their related inscriptions or the individual iconographic features they share. It is easy to distinguish this group from the images of Romanos the deacon and Melode, who is usually placed next to the protomartyr Stephen the Deacon near the *prothesis*. In many instances, indeed, the martyr Romanos with no specific inscription or as Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* co-exist with Romanos the Melode in the painted programme of the same church, though naturally depicted in different places³⁶. He is present as the martyr Romanos, holding a cross, in numerous monuments and it is undoubtedly Romanos of Antioch as he is depicted, usually bust-length or in a medallion, together with the martyr Platon, with whom he shares a feast day on 18 November³⁷. Probably, one of the earliest depictions of Romanos of Antioch, and this long before he was given the attributes of the *epi tēn sklepan* or of the military Romanos, exists in St. Nicholas Kasnitzes in Kastoria (twelfth century), where Romanos of Antioch is depicted (surely not fortuitously) between two other martyrs connected with horses, the martyrs Floros and Lavros, all three in medallions³⁸. Moreover we think that

35. DELEHAYE, S. Romain martyr d'Antioche, 270-283.

36. For example, see DRANDAKIS, Παναγία ή Χρυσάφιτιστα, 363 (Romanos Melodos), 385-386 (Romanos *epi tēn sklepan*); ALBANI, *Chrysaphitissa-Kirche*, 32 και 49-50 (Romanos Melodos), 72 and 118 (Romanos *epi tēn sklepan*); in St. Nicholas near Prilep, see KOSTOVSKA, The Image of St. Romanos as a Soldier, 168 note 36; I. SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, Leiden 2001, 134-135 (Romanos Melodos and Romanos Martyr in St. John the Baptist, Kritsa, Crete), 202-205 (Romanos Melodos and Romanos martyr or medical saint in St. George, Apano Symi, Viannos, Crete).

37. *Synaxarium CP*, 235-236; E. TSIGARIDAS, Τα ψηφιδωτά και οι βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Παράδοση-Ιστορία-Τέχνη*, vol. 1, Agion Oros 1996, 236, pl. 194; M. ACHEIMASTOU-POTAMIANOU, *Η Βλαχέρνα της Άρτας, Τοιχογραφίες*, Athens 2009, 72, 103 pl. 72, 115, 150; on the depictions of the martyrs Romanos and Platon in Saint George in Staro Nagoricino and Dečani, MILLET-FROLOW, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie* (see above, note 8), 73. 3, 112.4, KOSTOVSKA, The Image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier, 164.

38. S. PELEKANIDES – M. CHATZIDAKIS, *Καστοριά*, Athens 1984, fig. 52 nos 49, 51 (St. Nicholas Kasnitzes), in which Kostovska (no. 50) reads *Romanos (Ρωμανός)*, KOSTOVSKA, The image of Saint Romanos as a Soldier, 165 note 19; but KOSTOVSKA, 165-166, confuses the martyr Lavros with the martyr Lavrentios (9 August), while Lavros and his twin brother Floros are celebrated on

the martyr Romanos depicted in Crete in the fifteenth century, holding in both hands implements alluding to making an incision, excising, piercing and nailing (Fig. 9) belongs to this group³⁹. This is an image which, though has features related to the healer Romanos *epi tēn sklepan*, nevertheless follows another model and ultimately differs in what it aims to achieve, as it does not give the saint's epithet and basically emphasizes the martyrdom since it is the instruments of this ordeal and especially the knife used to cut out the tongue, which are foregrounded.

Thus, we think that St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* (associated with horses) or *epi tēs klepas*, as well as some depictions of martyrs with the same name holding a cross or instruments of their passion or medical instruments as healers, are all likely to be connected with the martyr Romanos of Antioch who is celebrated on 18 November⁴⁰. It is not only the depictions of Romanos with various other martyrs whose feast days or cult point exclusively to Romanos of Antioch but also some special characteristics revealed in his Life which match details in the depictions of him as a martyr and explain his status as a protector and healer in particular of fistulas (i.e. *epi tēn sklepan*) which have led us to this identification. These characteristics are the determining factors in the identification and are mentioned in almost all the texts relating to his martyrdom.

In both recensions of the *Martyrion* of St. Romanos by an anonymous author and in the encomium or *Laudatio* attributed to St. John Chrysostom as well as in the long poem by Prudentius dedicated to him (which to some extent presupposes the existence of the other two texts), the martyr is presented as referring repeatedly to the body and to doctors and how they perform surgery, recommending instead faith in Christ as the Christian version of healing⁴¹.

18 August. On the relationship between the cult of Romanos and Lavros and Floros, see the forthcoming article on this subject.

39. See above note 12.

40. BHG N. Auct. 1600y-1602; *Synaxarium CP*, 235-236 (18 November, martyr Romanos of Antioch or of Caesarea). D. ROMANO, *Studio sui documenti relativi al martirio di S. Romano*, Palermo 1960. For the Syriac text see also E. CAROTENUTO, Eusebius of Caesarea on Romanos of Antioch: A Note on Eusebius, *De Martyribus Palaestinae* (Syriac Translation) 7, 7-9, 9, *The Classical Journal* 98, no 4 (Apr.-May 2003), 389-396.

41. *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. DELEHAYE (BHG N. Auct. 1600y), § 10, p. 256, § 12-13, p. 258; *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. F. HALKIN, *Hagiographica inedita decem*, Turnhout 1989, 48-52

Indeed, he asks how torture differs from surgery, «are doctors' hands gentler, when Hippocrates' cruel butchery is going on?» and notes how he fancies «that the surgeons are putting the grim knife to my ribs»⁴². The involvement of a surgeon who performs a surgical intervention both on Romanos's own head and on various animals, in other words the cutting out of the tongue, in our opinion, facilitates the subsequent association of this act to the cauterizing and surgical operations performed by the veterinarians on the fistulas associated with the *sklepa*. According to his *Martyrion*, Romanos's tongue was cut out by a specialist, in fact a Christian, who was forced to perform this operation, though he kept the tongue as a piece of sacred evidence and a holy relic. The description of this operation is given in some detail, especially as regards the doctor's attempts to explain the inexplicable, i.e. how despite having had his tongue cut out, Romanos continued to speak. The doctor, who is accused of not doing his job properly as a surgeon («He applied a useless, ineffectual, blunt-edged knife», Prudentius v. 971), publicly invokes other successful interventions on animals and condemned men, in order to demonstrate that the case of Romanos was exceptional and miraculous⁴³. Romanos has to be finished off by strangulation in prison.

§13-15; I. CHRYSOSTOMOS, In Sanctum Romanum, PG 50, § 3 col. 610; [I. CHRYSOSTOMOS], In Romanum martyrem, PG 50, col. 616-617.

42. PRUDENTIUS, *Peristephanon*, X v. 497-500, ed. and transl. H. J. THOMSON – D. LITT, Loeb 1949, 263. On the body and Hippocrates in the work of Prudentius see O. TEMKI, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, London 1991, 16-17. See also M. J. ROBERTS, *Poetry and the Cult of the Martyrs. The Liber Peristephanon of Prudentius*, Michigan 1993, 9, 55, 62-68, 123-125; J. R. BALLENGE, *The Wound and the Witness. The Rhetoric of Torture*, New York 2009, 91-126.

43. *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. DELEHAYE (BHG N. Auct. 1600y) § 12-13, p. 258; *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. HALKIN, § 14-15, pp. 50-52; I. CHRYSOSTOMOS, In Sanctum Romanum, PG 50, § 3-4 col. 610-611; [I. CHRYSOSTOMOS], In Romanum martyrem, PG 50, col. 613-617; PRUDENTIUS, *Peristephanon*, X v. 886-1110, 287-297. On the role of the doctor in Romanos's martyrdom and the various versions of his experiments on animals and convicts, DELEHAYE, S. Romain martyr d'Antioche, 271-273. See also on the miracle of tongueless speech and the illogical possibilities of language, BALLENGE, *The Wound and the Witness*, 123-124. Also, C. HAHN, Speaking without tongues: the martyr Romanus and Augustine's theory of language in illustrations of Ben Burgerbibliothek Codex 264, in R. BLUMENFELD-KOSINSKI – T. SZELL (eds.), *Images of Sainthood in medieval Europe*, New York-London 1991, 161-180. On the cutting out of the tongues of Sts. Gordius and Christina, who also continue to speak, F. HALKIN, Un second saint Gordius?, *AnBoll* 79 (1961), 5-15 especially 6-7, 14 (= IDEM, *Martyrs Grecs Ile-VIIIe s.*, London 1974, VII).

According to the texts quoted above, the doctor, when accused of not having cut Romanos's tongue out properly and not managing to deprive him of the power of speech (οὐ κατὰ λόγον τὴν γλώτταν), is obliged to explain himself by saying that he had indeed cut it off at the roots in such a way as to deprive the victim of the power of speech (κατὰ λόγον καὶ ρίζης ἔτεμον)⁴⁴. Similarly in the *Homily* of John Chrysostom on Romanos the martyr (which is not thought to be a genuine Chrysostomian work but is in his style) after the cutting out of the tongue and just before the saint is strangled, at his indictment where beasts were being slaughtered for the pagan blood sacrifice, he is said to have articulated his last «tongueless» speech (*logon*), a speech that sounds like a prayer or incantation [to be] used in time of epidemics affecting animals: *My Seignior, the Seignior of all, Christ, dwells in the sky and drives the world like a charioteer (And you the demon) stop persecuting the ChurchYour hands are full of impure blood and as is your sword by from killing dumb animal (aloga) victims; Spare the guiltless cattle, ... spare the silent animals, (aloga, meaning also horses)*⁴⁵.

This *Homily* seems to have been very popular, indeed the above extract was used during the Iconoclast Controversy in 815 by the patriarch Nicephorus, while the Chrysostomian *Laudatio* to the martyr was read out on his feast day (18 November) in the Monastery of the Virgin Evergetis⁴⁶. Perhaps it was this

44. *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. DELEHAYE (BHG N. Auct. 1600y), § 13, p. 258; *Martyrium sancti Romani*, ed. HALKIN, § 14.687-691, p. 51.

45. ὁ ἐμὸς Δεσπότης, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ τῶν ὄλων Δεσπότης, Χριστὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκεῖ, καὶ κόσμον ἡνιοχεῖ... Παῦσαι κατὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὰ ὄπλα κινῶν· ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ ποιμνιον, καὶ ὁ (30) ποιμαίνων ἐν οὐρανῷ· ἐπὶ γῆς αἱ κληματίδες, καὶ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἡ ἄμπελος· ἂν δὲ ἐκτέμης τὰς κληματίδας, πολυπλασιάζεις τὴν ἄμπελον. Λύθρου γέμουσιν αἱ χεῖρές σου, τὸ ξίφος τὸ σὸν ἀπὸ θυμάτων ἐστὶν ἀλόγων· φείσαι τῶν ἀναιτίων θρεμμάτων, καὶ ἡμῖν τοῖς (35) ἐλέγχουσιν ἔπαφες τὸν σίδηρον φείσαι τῶν σιωπώντων ἀλόγων.... [I. CHRYSOSTOMOS]. In *Romanum martyrem*, PG 50, col. 616, and see commentaries, DELEHAYE, S. Romain martyr d'Antioche, 276-277. For the use of *Despotes* in *Hippiatrica* see McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 288. For the tongueless speech of Romanus, BALLENGE, *The Wound and the Witness*, 123-124. In a contrasting case mules acquire a voice and speak, just like Balaam's ass (*Septuaginta*, Numeri, 22. 28-30), *The Life of Saint Zotikos*, ed. M. AUBINEAU, *Zōtikos de Constantinople, nourricier des pauvres et serviteur des lépreux*, *AnBoll* 93 (1975), 67-108; T. S. MILLER, *The legend of saint Zotikos according to Constantine Akropolites*, *AnBoll* 112 (1994), 339-376, which includes the characteristic: λόγον ἐξ ἀλόγων ἀκούσαντες (§ 15.1).

46. NICEPHORUS PATRIARCH, *Refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815*, ed. J. FEATHERSTONE, *Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815* [Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 33], Turnhout 1997, § 143.1-9; P. J. ALEXANDER, *The Iconoclastic*

Homily and more specifically the mention to dumb animals including horses, «spare aloga» (φείσai τῶν ἄλόγων), that sowed the seed which from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries produced the relationship between the martyr and horses. Does it actually mark the «birth» of St. Romanos as protector of dumb animals (= ἄλόγων ζώων) and especially horses? Did the mentioned surgical interventions involving excision of live tissue on animals facilitate the attribution to the saint of the character of a healer *epi tēn sklepan*? Despite the contribution the *Homily* and some parts of the *Martyrion* are likely to have made into shaping the relationship between the martyr Romanos and the treatment of horses, we think that things were much simpler than that or even accidental and that the emphasis should be instead placed on popular belief and devotion, processes that normally remain unrecorded. Most probably, it was an epidemic and the attribution of the healing powers of the martyr to horses that led to the creation of the healer saint Romanos.

The historical evidence for epidemics affecting dumb animals (ἄλογα ζῶα), such as cattle and horses, in Byzantium, the way in which the diseases are described and the saintly protectors who are mentioned (e.g. Modestos, Mamas, Blaise) might give us more evidence on the subject. Let us take a few examples in chronological order. An early testimony in the sixth to seventh century to a saintly protector of horses from epidemics is found in the *Life* of Theodore of Sykeon and certainly the deadly events referred to (ἀλόγοις θανατικόν) were the result of the so-called Justinianic plague, which lasted two centuries⁴⁷. The Saracen Soldanos is presented by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as advising Italian nobles on animal diseases and probably equine diseases in Italy in the ninth century⁴⁸. In the tenth century, under Romanos I and Romanos II (grandfather and grandson), there was an outbreak of the terrible, deadly *krav(r)a* (κράβ(ρ)α) which decimated the animal population and especially cattle⁴⁹. It should be noted that both Patriarch Theophylact

Council of St. Sophia (815) and Its Definition (Horos), *DOP* 7 (1953), 42 and 44; R. JORDAN, *The Synaxarion of the monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis* (September to February), vol. 6.5, Belfast 2000.

47. *The Life of Theodoros of Sykeon*, ed. A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Vie de Théodore de Sykeon*, vol. 1, Brussels 1970, § 160, pp. 120, 136-138. On the subject of the Life of Theodore of Sykeon and of the Justinianic plague see the articles by Kaplan and Stathakopoulos in this volume.

48. CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. GY. MORAVCSIK – R. J. H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967, 29. 128, p. 130.

49. JOHN SCYLITZES, *Historical Synopsis*, ed. I. THURN, Berlin-New York 1973, 251-252. In Slavic popular beliefs Kravesmurt (from «krava», a cow and «smurt», death) was an evil spirit, which

(933-956) and his father Romanos I Lekapenos (920-944) the Elder had been particularly interested in horses. For example, in the interests of philanthropy and catering for the needs of his subjects, Romanos, as indeed was the case with many other emperors, saw to it that a *xenodocheion es ta Mavrianou*, in other words a hostel (with stables) was provided for those who lived outside Constantinople but were obliged to stay in the city on legal business. It is said, in fact, that he provided free food both for the visitors and their horses⁵⁰. The case of patriarch Theophylact with his large stables near Hagia Sophia and its 2.000 horses is more typical. Skylitzes (and Cedrenos, who relies on him) lists the luxury foods that Theophylact chose for his horses, which almost amounts to a prescription worthy of inclusion in the *Hippiatrica*⁵¹. It is noteworthy that in the manuscript we find the mention of the *sklepaditza* there are also two recipes by patriarch Theophylact and, moreover, this is the manuscript of all the published manuscripts of the *Hippiatrica* in which horses are also referred to (in four instances) using the word *aloga* (ἄλογα) rather than *hippoi*⁵². In addition to this, Skylitzes mentions that Theophylact once left the service of the Passion in Hagia Sophia on the Thursday of Easter week when he heard that a favourite mare had foaled and went to visit it. As soon as he «was satisfied with this dumb show/equine sight» (τοῦ ἀλόγου θεάματος ἐμφορηθείς, i.e. another play on words using *alagon* in both its senses) he returned to the church. Indeed, his very death (in 944) is connected with horses: he died while

spreads murrain and other deadly diseases among cattle. It often appears as a black cow and mingles with the herds to accomplish its infernal task. Though the word seems likely to have a Slavic etymology, the corresponding Ancient Greek derivation should also be noted, SOUDA, *Lexicon*, ed. A. ADLER, Leipzig 1935, K 2352: Κραῦρα: νόσος περὶ τὰς ὕς γινομένη. τρία δέ ἐστι πάθη· βράγχη, κραῦρα, διάρροια. See also KOUKOULES, *BBP* 6, 34, 319.

50. THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, *Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838, 430.6-13; J. JANIN, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. lière partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Occidental*, III. *Les églises et les monastères*, Paris 1953, 573.

51. THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 449.10-16, 444.17; SCYLITZES, *Historical Synopsis*, 242.47-243.76. See McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 278 note 121, who refers only to GEORGE KEDRENOS, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1938, vol. 2, 332-334.

52. *Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia*, ch. 44, § 1.1: ἀσθενούντος ἀλόγου; chap. 56 § 8.2: πάθη τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων; ch. 108, § 3.1: Ἄλλως χάριν ἀλόγων εὐφύια; ch. 108 § 4.8: τὴν φάτνην καὶ τὰ ἄλογα. For Theophylact's recipes, *Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia*, ch. 21§ 5, p. 158, ch. 80 § 22, p. 221; McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 12-13, 38, 278. On the use of seal fat in Theophylact's recipe, see W. M. JOHNSON – D. M. LAVIGNE, *Monk Seals in Antiquity. The Mediterranean Monk Seal (Monachus monachus) in Ancient History and Literature*, Leiden 1999, 76.

undergoing treatment for an accident he had had two years earlier when galloping along the sea walls of Constantinople on one of his horses⁵³. Could it perhaps have been this «horse-mad» (ἵππομανής) patriarch who, on account of his father's name, promoted the martyr Romanos as a saintly healer and protector of his beloved horses from ailments such as fistulas? Though this is an attractive hypothesis, there is no artistic or other evidence for another three centuries, until the thirteenth century, when the first depictions of St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* appear.

In the eleventh century the *Life of Lazaros of Galesion* records the intervention of St. George in finding a horse (a miracle frequently performed by other saints)⁵⁴, while the great losses of life among Norman horses and riders mentioned by Anna Komnene as resulting from a lack of food and fodder for the animals during the siege of Dyrrachium coincided with an outbreak of dysentery⁵⁵. Probably from as early as the twelfth century, but certainly in the thirteenth century, the Monastery of the Virgin Forviotissa at Asinou in Cyprus, which contains a good deal of artistic and epigraphic evidence for the Virgin Forviotissa, i.e. the Virgin of the Herds, was considered a centre for breeding horses and hunting dogs⁵⁶. A dedicatory inscription in the church, next to a wall-painting of an equestrian St. George, refers to the donor Nikephoros, son of Kallias, as *hippōn akestēr* (τοῦ Καλλιά, ἵππων ἀκεστήρ), which has been interpreted as meaning a tamer or healer of horses, though the family name has also been read as «kalligas» (καλλιγᾶς) i.e. a farrier⁵⁷.

Staying in the thirteenth century, the period to which almost all the depictions of Romanos *epi tēn sklepan* are dated, we think that the general information presented on horses by George and Constantine Akropolites is

53. SCYLITZES, *Historical Synopsis*, 243.

54. For St. George and the horses, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, vol. 3, Brussels 1910, 551. On the finding and training of horses by other saints, see for example *The Life of Theodoros of Sykeon*, 79-80, § 99; V. LAURENT, *La vita retractata et les miracles posthumes de saint Pierre d'Atroa* [Subsidia hagiographica 31 (1958)], 163-165, §110.

55. ANNA KOMNENE, *Alexiad*, ed. D. R. REINSCH – A. KAMBYLIS, Berlin 2001, vol. 1, ch. 13 § 2, 4, p. 389.

56. S. FRIGERIO-ZENIOU, Μονή τῶν Φορβίων ἃ Asinou de Chypre, in A. D. LAZARIDIS – V. BARRAS – T. BIRCHLER (eds.), *BOYKOΛEIA. Mélanges offerts à Bertrand Bouvier*, Geneva 1997, 191-199.

57. FRIGERIO-ZENIOU, Μονή τῶν Φορβίων, 191-199; A. WEYL CARR, Correlative spaces: art, identity, and appropriation in Lusignan Cyprus, *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 14/15 Minneapolis, 1998/1999, 64-65, 79 note 36 (= IDEM, *Cyprus and the Devotional Arts of Byzantium in the Era of Crusades*, Ashgate 2005, VI); McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 290-291.

of particular interest for the subject at hand. In 1255, according to George Akropolites, whose observations indicate some medical knowledge, a «dysentery epidemic» (νόσημα ἐδρικὸν ἐπιδήμιον) struck the army of Theodore II Laskaris somewhere between Vodena and Prilep, while in Macedonia (= Thrace) near to Didymoteichon, the Scyths (= Cumans) were said to have decimated the Byzantine horses by wounding them with arrows and the Byzantine general only just managed to escape on his swift steed named Goldenfoot (Χρυσοπόδης)⁵⁸. Subsequently, in 1259, once again according to George Akropolites, the stately and high spirited horses of the knights (ὑψαύχες ἵπποις καὶ ἀγερῶχοις ἐποχοῦμενοι) took part in the Battle of Pelagonia and a great army came from the Frankish race and from the Roman inhabitants of Achaia and the Peloponnese... most from the race of Lakonians⁵⁹. Consequently, in the second half of the thirteenth century there are reports of contacts between Pelagonia and the Peloponnese: i.e. knights on high-stepping and stately horses, Peloponnesian and especially Lakonian warriors from the Tsakonia region did battle from Kastoria to Prilep. The inhabitants of Lakonia, and more especially of Tsakonia, were famous warriors, who were particularly devoted to horses and revered equestrian saints. They were repeatedly used as soldiers and sailors, especially under Michael VIII Palaiologos in his various military campaigns⁶⁰. It is interesting to note that there are a lot of churches dedicated to equestrian saints in Lakonia and Tsakonia, such as those of St. George and the martyr Nicetas; in particular the extraordinary conceit of a thirteenth-century depiction of six equestrian saints in the cave church of the Virgin and St. Nicetas in Vrontama, Lakonia (Fig. 10) is worthy of note⁶¹. Therefore, we can deduce that the contacts the

58. GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *The History*, ed. A. HEISENBERG, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, vol. 1. Leipzig 1903 (repr. 1978 corr. P. WIRTH), 117.23-27, § 59, 126.5-11, § 61. See also R. J. MACRIDES, *George Akropolites, The History. Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, New York 2007, 42, 291, 301.

59. AKROPOLITES, *The History*, 168.8-16, § 81, and in two other instances he notes: ἐφ' ἵπποις ὑψαύχες ἐποχεῖσθαι (§ 13.24), ὑψαύχες ἵπποις ἐποχοῦμενοι (§ 71.27). We are using the translation by MACRIDES, *George Akropolites*, 360-362.

60. On the Lakonians mentioned and their identification with the Tsakonians, MACRIDES, *George Akropolites*, 362, with the relevant bibliography. We are using the term Pelagonia in its wider, Late Byzantine sense, i.e. meaning the area between Kastoria and Prilep.

61. On the martyr Nicetas, BHG 1339-1340b, BHG N. Auct. 1339. WALTER, *The warrior saints*, 231-233. On the painting at Vrontama, N. DRANDAKIS, Το Παλιομονάστηρο του Βρονταμά,



Fig. 10. Cave church of the Virgin and St. Nicetas in Vrontama, Lakonia, Peloponnese. Six equestrian saints (13th c.). Photo by 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.

Tsakonians had with the Pelagonia area probably continued even after the Peloponnese was reconquered by the Byzantines. It seems likely that through these military and other (e.g. cultural) contacts the cult of *Romanos epi tēn sklepan* became entrenched in these two areas (to date we only know of them and Crete).

Moreover, we have the even more interesting evidence of George Akropolites' son, Constantine (1250-1321/5). Constantine was the main exponent of the new Palaiologan attitude to saints with its increased religiosity and pragmatic approach to miracles⁶². In his correspondence (dated after 1270) Constantine Akropolites repeatedly refers, as his father had done, to horses

Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον 43 (1988), 159-195, especially 174-177 (= IDEM, *Μάνη καὶ Λακωνία*, vol. 3, 561- 632). On horses in Lakonia and the Frankish Morea, S. GERSTEL, Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea, in A. E. LAIOU – R. MOTTAEDEH (eds.), *The crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world*, Washington D.C. 2001, 263-285, especially 275-279. See also the map and the appendix with the equestrian saints in Laconia, GERSTEL, Art and Identity, 281-285, which obviously does not include the depictions of *Romanos*. Photo by 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, *Συντήρηση Ζωγραφικῆς Μνημείων. Χρονικόν*, Sparta 2005, fig. 2. We would like to thank the Director 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities Mrs Kalliopi Diamanti for her kind permission to photograph the monuments of Fig. 2, Fig. 3. Photos without reference to the origin are from our personal archives or Internet.

62. ST. EFTHYMIADIS, Late Byzantine Collections of Miracles and their Implications, in E. KOUNTOURA-GALAKE (ed.), *Οι ήρωες της ορθόδοξης εκκλησίας. Οι νέοι άγιοι 8ος-16ος αι.*, Athens 2004, 239-250; ANAGNOSTAKIS, Από την εικόνα της μοναχής Ευφροσύνης, 153-171.

and their ailments. In one of his letters he mentions an ill-tempered horse, not at all «stately and high spirited» (ἵππος, οὐκ οἶδ' εἴτ' ἀγέρωχος καὶ ὑψαύχην), in other words quite different from those described by his father. This horse kicked him in the foot, which already suffered from gout, and he criticizes the doctors' remedies as ineffectual, so that his only hope is in God⁶³. In another letter he refers to a frequent ailment of Paristrian' horses, i.e. horses from the Danube region (τὸ τοῖς παριστρίοις ἵπποις ἐπισυμβαίνειν εἰωθὸς νόσημα), an ailment which, as he explains, took its name from the nomads who once lived in this region and which spread to horses from «Macedonia» (i.e. Thrace) and Greece⁶⁴. It is likely that when Akropolites uses the word «Paristrian» (παρίστριος) to refer to the horses' ailment he is alluding to what the *Souda* Lexikon but above all the *Hippiatrica* tells us about Apsyrtus (whose name is related in all the Byzantine lexica to the homonymous Scythian tribe), a veterinarian in the early fourth century of our era: Apsyrtus describes the Paristrian/Danubian horses' ailments and gives the names of herbs and remedies from the Sarmatian nomads, which he had learnt for himself in this region⁶⁵. In one case Apsyrtus refers to an intractable disease, the nasal polyps endemic to the Sarmatian region (τὸ δὲ νόσημα τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς κατὰ Σαρματιάν μάλιστα ἐπιπολάζει τοποῖς)⁶⁶. Thus, we believe that Akropolites was making a cryptic reference to his knowledge of the *Hippiatrica*. Moreover, his reference to the Macedonian horses indirectly confirms, what Anna Komnene had told us in the twelfth, i.e. that horses were bred for the army in Thrace and in

63. CONSTANTINE AKROPOLITES, *Letters*, ed. R. ROMANO, *Costantino Acropolita, Epistole*, Naples 1991, no 24, see also no 191. The same event in IDEM, Ἐγκώμιον ἀγίας Θεοδοσίας, PG 140, 932; see also M. HINTERBERGER, Η αυτοβιογραφική αφήγηση στις διηγήσεις θαυμάτων, in *Οι ήρωες της ορθόδοξης εκκλησίας*, op.cit., 256-257. A similar story, though in this instance concerning the diseased foot of his horse, is told by MICHAEL GABRAS, ed. G. FATOUROS, *Die Briefe des Michael Gabras <ca. 1290-nach 1350>*, Vienna 1973, nos 216, 334; see also «request for the purchase of a horse» nos 282 and 357. On Constantine Akropolites, D. M. NICOL, *Constantine Akropolites: A Prosopographical Note*, DOP 19 (1965), 249-253.

64. AKROPOLITES, *Letters*, no 132: τὸ τοῖς παριστρίοις ἵπποις ἐπισυμβαίνειν εἰωθὸς νόσημα, ὅθεν καὶ τὴν κλήσιν ἔσχεν ἐκ τῶν τῶς ἐκέισε σκηνοῦντων ὀνομασθέν, καὶ Μακεδόσιν ἐνσκήψαν ἵπποις καὶ Ἑλλήσιν ἐκ μεταβατικῶν ἀμεταβάτους πλείστους ὅτι πεποίηκε· τούτοις καὶ αὐτὸς συναριθμηθεὶς ἐκ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας μετετέθην ὥσπερὶ πρὸς τὴν χεῖρονα!

65. SOUDA, *Lexicon*, A 4739; *Hippiatrica Berolinensia*, ed. K. HOPPE – E. ODER, *Corpus hippiatricorum Graecorum*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1924, 1 § 1.1, 21 § 2, 21 § 4. For Apsyrtus see McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 122-155.

66. *Hippiatrica Berolinensia*, ch. 21 § 1-4, p. 102; McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 154.

Macedonia. The people charged with this task saw to it that these horses were fattened up and made strong, i.e. they took special care of the horses, which would mean preventing diseases⁶⁷. However, in addition to the cryptic and allegorical use of knowledge concerning horse medicine, and over and above the classicizing rhetoric of the form of expression⁶⁸, the horse ailment mentioned by Akropolites, which afflicted horses from Macedonia/Thrace to Greece, corresponds with the artistic evidence from the thirteenth century for the incidence of fistulas (*sklepa*) in horses in the partly reconquered Peloponnese after the battle of Pelagonia and in Pelagonia itself.

We do not know to what extent St. Romanos helped to cure these diseases, but Akropolites who criticizes the doctors' remedies as ineffectual was possibly right as regards the advice of the various horse doctors, to judge from the ms. V of the *Hippiatrica* (the one which in three instances gives remedies for the fistulas and *sklepas*). This manuscript deals in a detached, ironic or playful way with the suggested treatments for horses: if the treatment does not work « ... the horse croaks, so boil up *kolyva* to remember it» (ψοφᾷ. καὶ βράσαι του κόλυβα νὰ τὸ μνημονεύσεις), or «when blood comes out of a horse's nostrils, it dies speedily ... it croaks and eats its dung with garlic. You will only trouble yourself. Collect the blood and make sausages» (Ὅταν αἷμα ἐξέρχεται διὰ τῶν ρινῶν τοῦ ἵππου... ταχέως διαφωνεῖ, τουτέστιν ψοφᾷ, καὶ φά τὴν γαβαλήναν του μετὰ σκόρδον... διαφωνεῖ καὶ μόνον κοπιᾷ. μάζοξαι τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ποιῆσαι λουκάνικα)⁶⁹.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Byzantines lampooned the serious-sounding incantations and the quack medicine of some popular

67. ANNA KOMNENE, *Alexiad*, vol. 1, 14, 8, 1. On the breeding of horses in Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace, see A. E. LAIOU – C. MORRISON, *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge-New York 2007, 97, 171. On the supply and use of horses in the Fourth Crusade, T. G. KOJIAS, *Military Aspects of the Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders*, in A. LAIOU (ed.), *Urbs capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences; La IVe Croisade et ses conséquences*, Paris 2005, 123-138.

68. For example we might cite Michael Psellos, who refers metaphorically to chariot horses and the sick body of the emperor, as well as the example of Nicetas Choniates who describes the Scythian horses of the Danube, MICHAEL PSELLOS, *Chronographia*, ed. S. IMPELLIZZERI, Milan 1984, vol. 2, VII § 58, ch. 4 section 58; NIKETAS CHONIATES, *History*, ed. J. VAN DIETEN, *Nicetae Choniatae historia*, vol. 1, Berlin 1975, 93-94.

69. *Hippiatrica, Excerpta Lugdunensia*, 51, pp. 286-287, 56, p. 288. For the translation and commentaries see McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia*, 286-287.



Fig. 11. The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. Icon of Sts Floros and Lavros (15th c.).

remedies. Moreover, some of the scholars who copied the *Hippiatrica* allowed earlier scathing marginal notes to be incorporated into the text. Alongside these views, which characterize the negative attitude towards ordinary physicians and the ridiculing of their prescriptions, popular cults continued to exist or were being created with healer saints who were ultimately adopted by the Church, at least in the iconography we know of. It is precisely in this category that we should classify the case of St. Romanos *epi tēn sklepan tōn alogōn* (ἐπὶ τὴν σκλέπαν τῶν ἀλόγων). Most probably as a result of some intervention with a miraculous cure attributed to the martyr Romanos in an epidemic among horses, Romanos *epi tēn sklepan tōn alogōn* was born. It is highly likely that this was a cult which was limited to a certain period, i.e. the thirteenth century, and did not extend beyond the restricted boundaries of some very specific areas (the south of the Peloponnese around Mistra and Monemvasia, Prilep and later Crete). Thus Romanos continues to be depicted,

e.g. in Crete in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries⁷⁰, either as a simple martyr holding a cross or with the instruments of his martyrdom, where instead of the lance for the fistulas (συριγγοτόμον) we believe he holds the knife with which his tongue was cut out (Fig. 9). The differences between the images of the martyr Romanos in Kastoria (in the twelfth-century St. Nicholas Kasnitzes), in Laïna or Prilep (thirteenth century) and in Crete (St. George, Apano Symi, 1453), but also between Byzantine depictions of Sts. Floros and Lavros⁷¹ and their Russian icons (Fig. 11), are indisputable evidence for the variations in the attribution of different properties to the same saints. In this instance these depictions are connected either by inscriptions or iconographically with special instruments and horses, emphasizing a characteristic attributed to these martyrs. This characteristic may eventually prevail, though not permanently and universally, but depending on the needs of the congregation from age to age and place to place.

70. I. SPATHARAKIS, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete*, 134 (St. John the Baptist, Kritsa), 203, 205 (St. George, Apano Symi).

71. I. VARDAAKE, *Οἱ τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου στὴν Κλένια τῆς Κορινθίας*, *Diptycha* 4 (1986-1987), 101, 119-120; SH. E. J. GERSTEL, *The Byzantine Village Church: Observations on its Location and Agricultural Aspects of its Program*, in J. LEFORT – C. MORRISSON – P.-J. SODINI (eds.), *Les Villages dans l'Empire byzantin (IVe-XVe siècle)*, Paris 2005, 170. [Post Note of Ilias Anagnostakis. Our study being under print, I came across an article which despite its weaknesses construes the correct meaning of the word sklepa, P. G. CHARALAMPAKIS, *Περὶ ἀγνώστου ἁγίου Ρωμανοῦ, Βυζαντιακά*, 28 (2009), 275-293].