



## The Iconography of Physician Saints in Coptic Art

**Nader Alfy Zekry**

[Nader.Alfy@fth.usc.edu.eg](mailto:Nader.Alfy@fth.usc.edu.eg)

**Karim Anwar Yassin**

[Karim.Anwar@fth.usc.edu.eg](mailto:Karim.Anwar@fth.usc.edu.eg)

*Tourism Guidance Department – Faculty of Tourism and Hotels – University of Sadat City – Egypt*

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### ABSTRACT

This research explores the iconography of physician saints in Coptic art, analyzing their significance within the broader context of Christian healing traditions. Focusing on key figures such as Saint Luke, Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saint Cyrus “*Apakir*”, Saint Colluthos “*Abu Kolta*”, and Saint Panteleimon, the study examines how these saints are depicted in various artistic forms, including murals and icons. It emphasizes the symbolic elements associated with each saint, such as the use of medical instruments, the depiction of miraculous healing scenes. By investigation, the research reveals how Coptic art reflects the cultural, social and theological values of early Christian communities in Egypt. Furthermore, it discusses the role of these iconographies in shaping the understanding of medicine and divine intervention, highlighting their enduring influence on both religious practices and artistic expressions. Research obstacle sets on the difference between the Curative saints, who had a healing power after death, and the physician saints, who were originally physicians or practiced medicine profession. Research methodology draws on a two-tiered methodological approach: a complete description of related objects; and analysis data through theoretical frameworks, to realize the importance of physician saints in the field of religious art history, especially Coptic art in Egypt.

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### KEYWORDS

Coptic Art; Physician Saints; Coptic Iconography; Saints Cosmas and Damian; Saint Colluthos.

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## دراسة تصوير القديسين الأطباء في الفن القبطي

كريم أنور ياسين

[Karim.Anwar@fth.usc.edu.eg](mailto:Karim.Anwar@fth.usc.edu.eg)

نادر ألفي ذكري

[Nader.Alfy@fth.usc.edu.eg](mailto:Nader.Alfy@fth.usc.edu.eg)

قسم الإرشاد السياحي، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة مدينة السادات، مصر

### الملخص

يتناول البحث تصوير القديسين الأطباء في الفن القبطي، ويحلل أهميتهم في الإطار الأوسع لتقاليد الشفاء المسيحية. يركز البحث على شخصيات رئيسية مثل: (القديس لوقا - القديسين كوزمان ودميان - القديسين كيروس (اباكير) - القديس كولوثوس (نبا قلته) - والقديس بانتيليمون). يدرس البحث كيفية تصوير هؤلاء القديسين في أشكال فنية مختلفة، بما في ذلك الجداريات والأيقونات. كما يوضح العناصر الرمزية المرتبطة بكل قديس، مثل: (استخدام الأدوات الطبية، وتصوير مشاهد الشفاء المعجزة). من خلال التحقيق، يكشف البحث كيف يعكس الفن القبطي القيم الثقافية والاجتماعية واللاهوتية للمجتمعات المسيحية المبكرة في مصر. علاوة على ذلك، يناقش البحث دور هذه الأيقونات في تشكيل فهم الطب والتدخل الإلهي، مسلطاً الضوء على تأثيرها على كل من الممارسات الدينية والتعبير الفني. تتلخص مشكلة البحث في التفريق بين القديسين الشافيين الذين امتلكوا قوة الشفاء، والقديسين الأطباء الذين كانوا في الأصل أطباء أو مارسوا مهنة الطب. وتعتمد منهجية البحث على نهج منهجي من مستويين: وصف كامل للآثار ذات الصلة؛ وتحليل البيانات من خلال الأطر النظرية، لإدراك أهمية القديسين الأطباء في مجال تاريخ الفن الديني، وخاصة الفن القبطي في مصر.

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### الكلمات الدالة:

الفن القبطي - القديسين الأطباء - التصوير القبطي - القديسين كوزمان ودميان -  
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## Introduction

This research investigates the depictions, descriptions, and interpretations of physician saints in Coptic art, based on the new mural discoveries in Dayr Al-Suryan by Karel C. Innemée<sup>1</sup>, and murals or icons of other sites. Furthermore, it relies on both iconography and hagiography of physician saints to assess their significance within the broader context of Christian healing traditions. Eric Brook states that scholars can rewrite Christian social history by avoiding additions to both iconography and hagiography to reveal the past itself.<sup>2</sup> Because there exist inextricable connections between the iconography and hagiography of saints throughout history.

Healing and physician saints were considered successors or mediators of Jesus himself, who delivers his healing abilities to his twelve disciples (Mat. 10:1) and provides healing powers to those who are chosen (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Also, according to Paul, whom have gifts of healing, they are among the God's organization of all the church (1 Corinthians 12:28).<sup>3</sup> After, the classification of (Hippolytos Delehaye)<sup>4</sup> for saints' hagiographies, and the hint of (Peter Brown)<sup>5</sup> that the holy healing is the main function of saints for their communities, further, the indication of (Abd el-Aziz Ramadan)<sup>6</sup> that all saints' hagiographies must include evidence for holy healing even that he did not physician during his life; this research will focus on physician saints who studied or practiced medicine profession during their life (such as: St. Luke, St. Cyrus "Apakir", SS. Cosmas and Damian, St. Colluthos "Abu Kolta", and St. Panteleimon). But it will avoid referring to those who had healing power after their death (such as St. Menas, etc).

Thus, research objectives are to examine the depictions of those physician saints in Coptic murals and icons; exploring their accompanied symbolic characteristics such as: using some medical instruments, representation of some miraculous healing scenes; also, investigating how Coptic art reflects the cultural, social and theological values of early Christian communities in Egypt; Furthermore, discussing the role of these iconographies in shaping the realizing of medicine and divine intervention, highlighting their enduring influence on both religious practices and artistic expressions. Research draws on a two-tiered methodological approach: a description, identification and interpretation of related murals and icons; and analysis hagiographic data through theoretical frameworks, to realize the significance of physician saints in the field of religious art history, especially Coptic art in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Innemée, K. C. (2023). "Dayr Al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries", (eds.) Torjesen, K. and Gabra, G., *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia*, pp. 1-77. Retrieved online from: <https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2185/rec/1> (30 December 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Brook, E. (2011). "Writing the Holy Image: The Relationship between Hagiography and Iconography", *The International Journal of the Image* 1 (1): 13-20.

<sup>3</sup> Yassin, K. A. (2021). *Health Care Services in Byzantine Egypt*, (PhD thesis), Faculty of Tourism and Hotels – University of Sadat City, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Delehaye, H. (1907). *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography*, (trs.) Crawford, V. M. London: Longmans-Green, pp. 107-124.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, P. (1971). "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies* 61: 80-101.

<sup>6</sup> رمضان، عبد العزيز. (2006-2007م). "البيزنطيون بين علاج الأطباء ومعجزات القديسين: دراسة في ضوء هيجوجرافيا العصر البيزنطي الباكر"، *حولية التاريخ الإسلامي والوسيط* (5)، يصدرها سيمانر التاريخ الإسلامي والوسيط – جامعة عين شمس، القاهرة: مصر العربية للنشر والتوزيع، ص 33-97.

In previous studies that deal with this issue, the study of Archbishop Damianos of Sinai in 2007<sup>7</sup> comes first, in which he briefly investigates all medical saints (healers or physicians) of the Orthodox Church in Byzantine art, utilizing examples from the Byzantine Empire, illuminating a few from Coptic art in Egypt. He does not deal with evidence from Dayr Al-Suryan, Bawit, Wadi Serga, and others. However, because Byzantine art is different than Coptic art, this study will be useful for comparisons and be valuable for those for whom there are no depictions in Coptic art, such as St. Luke. In the same year of 2007, Jillian Harrold submitted her PhD thesis on the iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian to the University of Warwick, Italy, in which she collected 126 figures of saints; only 4 figures from Egypt have been included as comparative material.<sup>8</sup>

Despite studying healing and medical saints during early Christianity has been thoroughly and extensively addressed, there is a dearth of discussion regarding them in the Egyptian Coptic art. In 2015, Nancy P. Ševčenko investigates the healing miracles of Jesus Christ and the saints, in which she examines healing miracles representations from Istanbul and more around the Mediterranean, among them the monastery of St. Catharine in Sinai, during the late Byzantine period.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, in 2018, there is a very valuable Serbian study submitted by Tatjana Starodubcev. In which, she explores the veneration and depictions of the holy physicians in all medieval eastern Orthodox churches, based on the *Painter's Manual of Dionysios of Fournas* written in 1730 on Mount Athos, with more discussions regarding their festivals, healing shrines, pilgrimage centers, and cults.<sup>10</sup> Although, one could argue that this is the first comprehensive synthetic study of the holy physicians and their cults during the medieval, it missed many representations of them in Coptic art.

### **Saint Luke the Evangelist**

Chronologically, St. Luke the Evangelist comes first in discussion. The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke (his feast is in 18<sup>th</sup> October) was the writer of the third Gospel and the Acts of the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> Originally, he was a Greek physician of Antioch and the companion and the physician of St. Paul, who described Luke as "*The Beloved Physician*" Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρός ὁ ἀγαπητός (Colossians 4:14).<sup>12</sup> Adolf Harnack refers that a man who reads Saint Luke's Gospel; can conclude that he was a physician by

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<sup>7</sup> Damianos of Sinai, (2007). "The Medical Saints of the Orthodox Church in Byzantine Art", in: Grunbart, M., Kislinger, E., Muthesius, A., and Stathakopoulos, D. Ch. (eds.), *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453), Proceedings of the International Conference (Cambridge, 8–10 September 2001)*, Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 41-50.

<sup>8</sup> Harrold, J. (2007). *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Italy*, University of Warwick: Department of History of Art.

<sup>9</sup> Ševčenko, N. P. (2015), *Healing Miracles of Christ and the Saints. Life Is Short, Art Long: The Art of Healing in Byzantium*, Pera Museum Publication 73: 27-40.

<sup>10</sup> Starodubcev, T. (2018). Свети лекари. Поштовање и представљање у источнохришћанском свету средњег века (Holy Physicians. Cult and Representation in the Eastern Orthodox Medieval World), Belgrade: National Library of Serbia.

<sup>11</sup> Khoury, B. D. (2008). *A Cloud of Witnesses: Saints and Martyrs from the Holy Land*. Author House, p. 106.

<sup>12</sup> Harnack, A. (1907). *Luke the Physician: The Author of The Third Gospel and The Acts of The Apostles*, trans. by: Wilkinson, J. R., ed. by: Morrison, W. D., Williams & Norgate, p. 3.

profession through using many scientific medical terms in the Greek language.<sup>13</sup> However, William K. Hobart lists more than 400 medical words in the Gospel of Luke that are mentioned in the writings of Hippocrates and Galen<sup>14</sup>, there is a debate about "Luke the physician" in the history of research.<sup>15</sup> Thus, there is new point of view that suggests St. Luke was somewhat knowledgeable about classical medicine, by Annette Weissenrieder.<sup>16</sup> Maybe this controversy has been kept in Copts' minds. So, St. Luke as a physician is not depicted in any ancient Coptic icons or paintings.

On the northern wall in the first khurus of Dayr Al-Suryan (Layer 2, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD), there is a mural painting represents St. Luke and St. Barnabas the apostles (**Fig. 1**). To the left, Luke is recognized by an inscription O AFI[.] AOYKAC, wearing a dark red garment or a cloak, holding the bible book with a sign of a cross, while the details of the facial features are not clear or in light observation.<sup>17</sup> Maybe, in this painting, the artist wants to focus on Saint Luke as one of the Holy writers of the New Testament rather than as a physician. Among the popular themes of St. Luke's depictions in the history of art are: the holy evangelist or the ideal painter of the Virgin Mary and the child, rather than as a physician. It is believed that it is not common to depict him as physician because he is already known. The earliest known depiction of St. Luke as a physician is found in catacombs of Commodilla in Rome (**Fig. 2**).<sup>18</sup> This crypt fresco scene of 7<sup>th</sup> century represents St. Luke stands bearing his weight on his left leg<sup>19</sup>, holding a scroll in his right hand and a pouch "small bag" in his left hand with four medical instruments sticking out it.<sup>20</sup> According to Archbishop Damianos of Sinai, it serves as a model for representations of doctors in ancient traditional art.<sup>21</sup> In comparison between the two examples: in Dayr Al-Suryan, St. Luke depicted as a mature man with a light black beard; while in Rome, he is depicted as an aged man with a light white beard. Note that the depiction of Rome is earlier than of Dayr Al-Suryan in Egypt. Later, there is an icon of St. Luke in Saint Menas Church, Fum Al Khalig, 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, by Youhanna al-Armani (**Fig. 3**). It depicts Saint Luke standing in a reverential, formal frontal pose, wearing a long, golden-yellow robe with a brown cloak over it. A golden halo surrounds his head, a traditional symbol of

<sup>13</sup> Harnack, A. *Luke the Physician*, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Hobart, W. K. (1882). *The Medical Language of St. Luke: A Proof from Internal Evidence that "The Gospel According to St. Luke" and "The Acts of the Apostles" Were Written by the Same Person, and that the Writer was a Medical Man*. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Company.

<sup>15</sup> For more discussion about the question about "Luke the physician" in the history of research, see: Weissenrieder, A. (2003). *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke: Insights of Ancient Medical Texts*. Germany: Mohr Siebeck, pp. 331-335.

<sup>16</sup> Weissenrieder, A. *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke*, 335.

<sup>17</sup> Innemée, K. C. *Dayr Al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> Morey, C. R. (1940). [Review of *Roma Sotterranea Cristiana I: Il Cimitero di Commodilla o dei Martiri Felice ed Adauto Presso la Via Ostiense*, by P. B. Bagatti]. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 44 (1): 176–176. <https://doi.org/10.2307/499617>

<sup>19</sup> Raimond Marle demonstrates that this fresco scene of Luke is different in attitude, because of the common attitude to stand bearing the weight on the right leg. Marle, R. (2013). *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*. Vol. I, Netherlands: Springer Netherlands, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> Paton, J. M. (1904). Archaeological News: Notes on Recent Excavations and Discoveries; other News, *American Journal of Archaeology: The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America* (3). United States: Macmillan Company, p. 395.

<sup>21</sup> Damianos of Sinai. *The Medical Saints of the Orthodox*, 42.

holiness in Christian art. He holds a quill or writing instrument, indicating that he is one of the Gospel writers. He holds a book, representing the Gospel he wrote (the Gospel of Luke). At the top, the saint's name is written in Coptic and Arabic. Pillars appear behind the saint, perhaps symbolizing the church. Next to the saint's feet is an image of a bull, his traditional symbol among the four evangelists in Christian art.<sup>22</sup>

### Saints Cosmas and Damian

The patron saints of medicine and physicians, Cosmas and Damian, may have been twin brothers who were born in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>23</sup> Although the study of SS. Cosmas and Damian is exhaustively addressed, there is still a debate concerning their origins, lives, shrines and cults.<sup>24</sup> In Hagiography, there are three pairs of saints called Cosmas and Damian: (1) those from Arabia who had their heads cut off by Diocletian (284-305 AD) along with their younger brothers Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepis, honored on (Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>); (2) those from Rome who were stoned to death under Carinus (283-284 AD) honored on (July 1<sup>st</sup>); (3) and those from Asia Minor were sons of Theodote who died peacefully honored on (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>).<sup>25</sup> Despite this diversity and separation in stories, research accepts some scholars' approval to identify them as one pair of saints, not three pairs. This triplication as a result of an ancient ecclesiastical tradition of the evolution of the legends comes in *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, in which the author wants to give value to every cult center of the saints.<sup>26</sup>

Although generally accepted in early iconography art that there are no sufficient differences to identify exactly which one of the three pairs of saints is portrayed<sup>27</sup>, it is thought that in Coptic art, there are no distinctions ever throughout ages. In Coptic Iconography art, holy physician saints Cosmas and Damian appear many times, such as: Dayr Al-Suryan in Wadi el-Natron, Wadi Sarga, monastery of Apollo at Baouit, monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, and many minor art monuments across ages.

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<sup>22</sup> Atalla, N. S. (1998), *Coptic icons II*, Cairo: Lehnert & Landrock, 104;

شفيق، ممدوح. (2008)، الأيقونات القبطية بكنائس دير مارمينا الأثري بغم الخليج، القاهرة: كنيسة مارمينا العجائبي بغم الخليج، ص 145.

<sup>23</sup> However it is not clear in Hagiography that they were twin brothers. There are some scholars accept that they are twin brothers, such as: Harrold, J. *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Italy*; Jović, N. J., and Theologou, M. (2015). The Miracle of the Black Leg: Eastern Neglect of Western Addition to the Hagiography of Saints Cosmas And Damian, *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, 13 (2): 329-344.

<sup>24</sup> For more about comparison between different sources of saints' origins, lives, shrines and cults, see: Booth, P. (2011). "Orthodox and Heretic in the Early Byzantine Cult(s) of Saints Cosmas and Damian", in: *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 114-128.

<sup>25</sup> Delehay, H. (1954). *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris, Bruxellis and Bollandianos, 791.

<sup>26</sup> Harrold, J. *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Italy*, 38-44; Damianos of Sinai. *The Medical Saints of the Orthodox*, 42; Jović, N. J., and Theologou, M. *The Miracle of the Black Leg*, 330.

<sup>27</sup> Starodubcev, T. *Свети лекари (Holy Physicians)*, 291; Damianos of Sinai. *The Medical Saints of the Orthodox*, 42.

To the right of the apse of the Virgin Mary and the child in (Chapel 28) in the monastery of Apollo at Bawit, there is a fresco wall painting of Saints Cosmas and Damian back to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century CE (**Figs. 4, 5**). Their names are inscribed in Coptic, as follows: [ⲟⲁⲓⲓ]ⲟⲥ[ⲕ]ⲟⲥⲙⲁ, [ⲟⲁⲓⲓⲟⲥ]ⲁⲙⲓⲁⲛⲛⲉ. St. Cosmas is dressed in a long white tunic and a red cloak, while St. Damian wears a yellow garment. The two saints hold a rolled-up volume tied. Jean Clédat refers to their conventional; however, the two heads are quite vivid and characteristic.<sup>28</sup> Jillian Harrold states that both saints are of a similar age with short dark hair and beards.<sup>29</sup> Maybe, it is an indication to them as twin brothers. Also, saints Cosmas and Damian are depicted on the western rock face of the narthex of Dier Abou Hennis at Mallawi.<sup>30</sup> The scene is partly visible while only some small parts appeared and their names (**Fig. 6**).<sup>31</sup> Additionally, there is a contemporary wall painting in the so-called *Daniel villa*, 2 miles north of Wadi Sarga, Assyut, depicting saints Cosmas and Damian and between them their three young brothers and the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace (**Fig. 7**). This wall painting is now in display in the British Museum, Gallery 66, EA 73139 (**Fig. 8**).<sup>32</sup> This scene commemorates the two un-mercenary physicians (ⲁⲛⲁⲣⲓⲥⲓⲁⲛⲓⲟⲥ) saints Cosmas and Damian and their brothers Leontios, Euprepios and Anthimos. The two big former figures on the left and right are Cosmas and Damian, while their brothers are represented in a smaller scale in the middle, above them the three Children in the fiery furnace. All of them are in the attitude of *orantes*. There are three bust figures represented beneath St. Damian's right arm, perhaps representing the dedicators of the painting, but it is not very clear whether they have hoods or haloes.<sup>33</sup> All of them share the same dress of a tunic and a cloak over their shoulders, which takes the shape of a rectangle on the back and a triangle in front. Their names are inscribed above them. Cosmas and Damian are depicted with a beard, moustache, and dark hair.<sup>34</sup> Everyone carries a bag, probably for their medical instruments and tools. It is notable

<sup>28</sup> Clédat, J. (1904). *Le Monastère et La Nécropole de Baouît*, MIFAO 12, p. 157.

<sup>29</sup> Harrold, J. *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian*, 105.

<sup>30</sup> Clédat, J. (1902). "Notes archéologiques et philologiques", *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (2):49-67.

<sup>31</sup> Van Loon, G. J. M., & Delattre, A. (2004). "La fries des saints de l'église rupestre de Deir Abou Hennis", *Eastern Christian Art* (1):89-112; Van Loon, G. J. M. (2016). "...that the mountain of the holy wilderness may be inhabited...": *Saint John the Baptist in Infancy scenes in the narthex of the Quarry Church of Dayr Abū Hinnis*, in: *Aegyptus et Nubia Christiana*, edited by A. Łajtar, A. Obluski, I. Zych, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, pp. 257-279.

<sup>32</sup> O'Connell, E. R. (2014). R. Campbell Thompson's 1913/14 excavation of Wadi Sarga and other sites, *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* (21): 121–92; O'Connell, E. R. (2016). Wadi Sarga at the British Museum: Sources for Study (with Annotated Bibliography), in (eds) by: Paola Buzi, Alberto Camplani and Federico Contardi, *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times II*, Peeters, 1547-1564.

<sup>33</sup> For more description in detail of the scene and more discussion, see: Dalton, O. M. (1916). A Coptic Wall-Painting from Wadi Sarga. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 3 (1): 35-37. This scene is dedicated by the monks Hourkene and Mena for the sixty martyrs of Asyut. For more, see: *Wadi Sarga: Coptic and Greek Texts from the Excavations Undertaken by the Byzantine Research Account*. (1922). Ed. by W. E. Crum and H. I. Bell, with an introduction by R. Campbell Thompson. (*Coptica*, III). Haunia: Gylndendal and Nordisk Forlag.

<sup>34</sup> بهي الدين، دعاء محمد. (2014). تصوير الأشخاص المتضرعة Orans، حولية الاتحاد العام للأثاريين العرب "دراسات في آثار الوطن العربي" 17 (1): 1018-1140.

that the shape of the bag is unique and different, and not represented in any other site. It seems to be trapezoidal with a triangle cover with a floral decoration over it. Maybe it is made out of leather or woven.

Furthermore, on the right of the southern wall in the first khurus of Dayr Al-Suryan (Layer 2, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD), there is a mural painting that depicts saints Cosmas and Damian standing (**Fig. 9**). Their names flanking their heads, in Greek, state: (O AΓΙOC KOC[.....] AMI[...]<sup>35</sup>). Damian is clothed in a grey tunic (Greek, *chiton*) with a brown pallium (Greek, *himation*), while Cosmas is wearing a yellow-brown tunic with a grey pallium. They are holding a spatula, a scalpel, or a spoon in their right hands. While, in their left hands, there is an item that is not easily identifiable; an angular central part connects the two cylinders that make up this structure with two intertwining black lines appearing. K. Innemée refers that it most likely depicts a portable medicine chest, which is a characteristic of doctor-saints.<sup>36</sup> Researchers note that there is an inscription of a building on the medical case of St. Cosmas, maybe for Jerusalem or an important building. St. Cosmas is depicted on a box with a lid from Panopolis at Akhmim, 6<sup>th</sup> cen. CE, National Museums in Berlin, 6113 (**Fig. 10**), which was probably used as a medical chest for doctors.<sup>37</sup>

The triptych icons, a new motivation in iconography, appeared through three examples of icons at St. Catharine's Monastery at Mount Sinai. The first example is an icon of St. Damian back to the seventh century (**Fig. 11**). This panel was originally the right wing of a triptych, while Weitzmann states that the left wing is thought to have a depiction of St. Cosmas. St. Damian, represented with dark hair and beard, wears a long purple tunic and brown mantle that was covered by gold striation, most of which is now lost. In his covered left and free right hands, he holds an instrument roll tied with purple strings. Weitzmann identifies it as a tubular instrument box.<sup>38</sup> The second example is also a triptych icon of St. Cosmas (8<sup>th</sup> cen., or perhaps later) (**Fig. 12**), probably was paired with a depiction of St. Damian on the right. Here, Cosmas is youthful with dark hair and beard and he wears a long dark mantle over a white tunic. He holds a scalpel in his right hand, a jewelled codex in his left arm and a roll in his left hand.<sup>39</sup> Another right wing of the triptych icon dates to the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and depicts Saint Damian on the back side, while in front there are the representations of baptism and Anastasis (**Fig. 13**). Saint Damian wears a mantle similar to the physician-saints' and a long tunic. He is holding a surgeon's box with a carrying strap in his veiled hand; the top of the box ends in two cylinders. The shape of this specific box is very different from the examples found on other Sinai icons.<sup>40</sup> It

<sup>35</sup> The text in complete writes: (O Aγίος Κοσμάς και Δαμιανός) by the researches.

<sup>36</sup> Innemée, K. C. *Dayr Al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, 17.

<sup>37</sup> الفن القبطي في مصر: 2000 عام من المسيحية، (2008)، القاهرة: الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، ص 155.

<sup>38</sup> Weitzmann, K. (1976). *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons. Volume I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century*, New York and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 44; Harrold, J. *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian*, 104.

<sup>39</sup> Weitzmann, K. *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons I*, 77; Harrold, J. *Saintly Doctors: The Early Iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian*, 104-105.

<sup>40</sup> Beldekos, D., Karamanou, M., Poulakou-Rebelakou, E., Ploumpidis, D., & Androutsos, G. (2015). The Medical Vestment and Surgical Instruments of Saint Cosmas and Damian on Sinai Icons From the Seventh to the Eighteenth Century. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 54 (6): 2020–2032.

is notable that its shape is similar to that of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the first khurus of Dayr Al-Suryan at Wadi el-Natron (**Fig. 9**). Another 12th-century Sinai icon depicts Saints Cosmas, Theodote, Damian, and Panteleimon (**Fig. 14**). The mother saint is placed between her sons, carrying the martyr's cross in her right hand. Her left hand is positioned before her breast, palm facing outward. The healing saints are dressed in ornate clothes. Their mantles are augmented with an *epitrachelion*, giving them a more ecclesiastical appearance. All three holy physicians carry a delicate scalpel or hook in their right hand, ornamented with a flat knob that gives the distinctive surgical tool the appearance of a large nail. In their left hand, Cosmas and Damian carry surgical boxes and Panteleimon a jeweled medical box with a domed lid.<sup>41</sup> St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai has numerous additional icons and artifacts pertaining to Saints Cosmas and Damian from various periods. Due to the establishment of a monastic settlement named after Cosmas and Damian close to St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery was rich in items related to them. But it now disappeared, and all its objects have been transferred to its nearby monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai. The monastery of SS. Cosmas and Damian, called also (*Deir Fukarra*), is located at the site no. 33 in Wadi Tala'a flows into Wadi Et-Tlah around Mount Sinai.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, later during the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE, there are two icons depicting saints Cosmas and Damian, their mother and their younger brothers. The first is an icon from the Hanging Church at Old Cairo depicted by Youhanna al-Armani (**Fig. 15**).<sup>43</sup> It represents the mother Theodota holding the martyrdom cross in the middle, and on her right, the two younger brothers Anthimus and Leontius hold also the cross. While, on her left the depictions of Cosmas, Damian and the youngest brother Euprepus as a child. It is notable that Cosmas is represented older than Damian while they have almost the same features. They hold a medicine box in their left hand and a spoon for stirring in their right one. The colors are vivid and bright with an Arabic inscription in the bottom referring to the dedication. The second is an icon from the church of Saint Barbara in Old Cairo depicted by Ibrahim al-Nasikh (**Fig. 16**).<sup>44</sup> It represents Theodota in the far left while all her sons are beside. It is notable that there is a difference in size between the brothers, while Cosmas is the biggest one, his youngest brother Euprepus is the smallest. Cosmas holds a thing in his hands, identified in the inscription in Arabic beside his shoulder as a medicine box. Damian holds a book in his left hand, inscribed over it in Arabic a medicine book.

The most famous holy physicians are Saints Cosmas and Damian. So, they have the title of "*Patrons of medicine and Doctors*" through ages.<sup>45</sup> But they are not the only

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<sup>41</sup> Beldekis, D., *et al.* The Medical Vestment and Surgical Instruments of Saint Cosmas and Damian on Sinai Icons, 2027-2028.

<sup>42</sup> For more about the monastery of SS. Cosmas and Damian around Mount Sinai, see: Dahari, U. (2000), "Monastic Settlements in South Sinai in the Byzantine Period: The Archaeological Remains". *IAA Reports—Monograph Series of the Israel Antiquities Authority* 67, p. 68.

<sup>43</sup> Atalla, N. S., *Coptic icons* II.

<sup>44</sup> Atalla, N. S., *Coptic icons* II, 116.

<sup>45</sup> Matthews, L. G. (1968). SS. Cosmas and Damian— Patron Saints of Medicine and Pharmacy Their Cult in England. *Medical History* 12 (3): 281–288.

pair of saints known as holy physicians in Coptic Art. Saints Cyrus (*AbaKir*) and John (*Youhanna*) were also known as holy physicians.

### **Saints Cyrus (*AbaKir*) and John (*Youhanna*)**

SS. Cyrus and John shared the epithet *anargyroi* (ἀναργυριοί) with SS. Cosmas and Damian, which literally (silverless ones), that is doctors who cured patients without fees.<sup>46</sup> Cyrus and John surnamed *thaumatourgoi anargyroi* (Wonderworking Unmercenaries).<sup>47</sup> The healing shrine of SS. Cyrus and John was in Menouthis (modern Abo Qir) in Alexandria, known as pilgrimage center.<sup>48</sup> They were born in Alexandria (?).<sup>49</sup> Cyrus was a doctor who studied medicine in the ancient Alexandrian university, while John was a soldier.<sup>50</sup> According to Sophronius, SS. Cyrus and John were martyrs in Egypt during the persecution of Diocletian, Cyrus being a doctor or monk and John a soldier.<sup>51</sup> The Greek *Vita et Miracula* records that Cyrus practiced the art of medicine and had a workshop (*ergasterion*).<sup>52</sup> Their main feast is celebrated on 31 January, while the feast of the translation of their relics is held on 28 June.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Montserrat, D. (2005), 'Carrying on the work of the earlier firm': doctors, medicine and Christianity in the Thaumata of Sophronius of Jerusalem, in: Health in Antiquity, ed. Helen King, London and New York: Routledge, p.232; Yassin, K. A. *Health Care Services in Byzantine Egypt*, 124.

<sup>47</sup> Balestri, G. (1908). Sts. Cyrus and John. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* IV. New York: Robert Appleton Company.

<sup>48</sup> The healing shrine of the martyrs SS. Cyrus and John at Menouthis (modern Abo Qir) was about 12 miles east of Alexandria. It apparently reached an apogee of international fame during the sixth and seventh centuries AD. Dominic Montserrat said that the shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis has left behind practically nothing artefactual or archaeological. The cult of saints Cyrus and John had a little impact on the Coptic sources, while the accounts of their shrine and its pilgrims are well preserved in Greek; in the various works of the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius (633/634-638 AD). Menouthis is a cult center for Isis during the Roman period. The patriarch Cyril of Alexandria replaced the cult of Isis with the cult of SS Cyrus and John in the fourth century AD, while their worship was completed during the fifth century and gained its peak during the sixth and seventh century AD. For more about the pilgrimage to the cult center of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis during the seventh century AD, see: Montserrat, D., (1998), *Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity*, in: Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt, (ed.) by David Frankfurter, Leiden-Boston-Koln: Brill, pp. 257-280.

<sup>49</sup> There is a debate concerning the origins of the saints. According to the Arabic *Synaxarium*, compiled by the thirteenth-century Copt, Michael, bishop of Athrib and Malig, both saints Cyrus and John were Alexandrians. Others relate that Cyrus was a native of Alexandria and John was from the Syrian city of Edessa. This debate because there is no information about them before the fifth century. But it is clear that one of them was a doctor (St. Cyrus). For more, see: Yassin, K. A., *Health Care Services in Byzantine Egypt*, 170.

<sup>50</sup> For more about the Greek text of the miracles of SS. Cyrus and John and its translation into Latin, see: Neil, B. (2006), The miracles of Saints Cyrus and John: the Greek text and its transmission, *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, (2): 183-193. For more about the cult of saints Cyrus and John, see, Lampada, D. (2015), *The Cult of Martyrs and Politics of Sainthood in Patriarch Cyril's Alexandria*, in: Saints and the City, Band 3, FAU University Press, 53-72; Bricault, L. (2014), *Isis, Sarapis, Cyrus and John: Between Healing Gods and Thaumaturgical Saints*, in: The Alexandrian Tradition, Luis Arturo Guichard, Juan Luis García Alonso & María Paz de Hoz (eds.), Bern: Peter Lang AG, 97-114.

<sup>51</sup> Montserrat, D., *Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis*, 261.

<sup>52</sup> Neil, B., *The miracles of Saints Cyrus and John*, 184.

<sup>53</sup> Damianos of Sinai. *The Medical Saints of the Orthodox*, 44.

On the iconography of SS. Cyrus and John in the Coptic art, there are few examples survived from early periods. T. Starodubcev states that John is the less significant of the two saints, making them an unequal couple. It appears that at first, only Cyrus was celebrated.<sup>54</sup> On the example of the first khurus of Dayr Al-Suryan (Layer 2, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD), the left part of the northern wall, Saints Pistentius and Cyrus (*Apakir*) are portrayed (**Fig. 17**). Their names are inscribed beside their heads in Greek; the name of Saint Cyrus (*Apakir*) reads O ΑΓΙΟC ΑΠΑΚ[.]. On his left hand, Saint Cyrus holds a portable medicine chest, and a scalpel in his right hand, like that of saints Cosmas and Damian in the opposite wall of the first khurus.<sup>55</sup> St. Cyrus (*Apakir*) is depicted as an aged man with white hair and a long thick beard, wearing a reddish-brown garment and a gray tunic over it, which is folded around his left hand. T. Starodubcev indicates that his thick beard becomes thinner over periods. He is depicted in monastic clothes in rare representations. In certain examples of couples, John is depicted as a young guy. In earlier depictions, his dark hair is cut short, whereas in younger ones, it hangs around his neck. He is beardless in the early specimens, but grows a small beard later on. He is wearing a dress and a cloak. He occasionally bears the insignia of the medical art in his hands, but generally carries a martyr's cross in his right hand.<sup>56</sup>

Later, from the church of St. Cyrus (*Apakir*) and John at Old Cairo, there are two icons depicting the two saints together. The first icon dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, depicted by Ibrahim al-Nasikh (**Fig. 18**). The second icon dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, depicted by Anastasiy al-Rumi (**Fig. 19**).<sup>57</sup> The two examples seem to be close in representation. Saint Cyrus (*Apakir*) depicted on the right holds a medicine box with the inscription in Arabic reads as medicaments and a sign of a cross over it. While, Saint John on the left holds a medicine book in the first one and a book of wisdom in the second example, and a sign of a cross over it. It seems that Saint Cyrus is depicted older than Saint John in the two icons. They wear a cap over their heads in the two examples, with a cross over it. Zuzana Skálová and Gawdat Gabra argue that this cap was probably of Asian origin and transferred to the Coptic art.<sup>58</sup> It is headed the holy men of the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Saint Colluthus “*Abu Colta*”

The Egyptian holy physician Saint Colluthus is from Antinoe (Antinoopolis) in middle Egypt. Also known as “*Abu Colta*”, his accounts are among the more trustworthy historical narratives. His martyrdom was in 304 CE, during the great persecution of Emperor Diocletian.<sup>59</sup> The Coptic Church celebrates his memory on May 20, (25 Pashon in Coptic calendar). However, his cult is not widespread outside Egypt, Tatjana Starodubcev illustrates that there is an indication of St. Colluthus in *the*

<sup>54</sup> Starodubcev, T. *Свети лекари (Holy Physicians)*, 293.

<sup>55</sup> Innemée, K. C. *Dayr Al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Starodubcev, T. *Свети лекари (Holy Physicians)*, 293.

<sup>57</sup> Atalla, N. S., *Coptic icons II*, 125.

<sup>58</sup> Skalova Z., Gabra G., (2006). *Icons of the Nile Valley*. Sec. ed. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company – Longman, 227.

<sup>59</sup> Moore, J. & Pattengale, J. (2023). *The New Book of Christian Martyrs: The Heroes of our Faith from the 1st century to the 21st century*, Tyndale Momentum, p. 49-50.

*Synaxarion of the Church of Constantinople*, on 19<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>60</sup> Numerous Coptic and Arabic texts were survived on his memory; two *Passia*, two *Encomia*, the *collections of miracles*, and a note mentioned in the *Coptic Arabic synaxarion*. We are grateful and obliged to all English translations and the latest Arabic one by Christin Fawzy Aiad.<sup>61</sup>

Many churches and monasteries were established in the honor of St. Colluthus throughout Egypt, especially at the archaeological sites of Antinoe, Hermopolis, Aphrodito, Apollinopolis, Lycopolis (Asyut) and Panopolis (Akhmim). The sanctuary of Saint Colluthos in Antinoe was the most important of his cult centers, where incubation was performed. During Late Antiquity, it became a famous center for pilgrimage and healing, with a significant impact on the city's religious, cultural, and social life.<sup>62</sup> The Papyrological evidence<sup>63</sup> and oracular tickets,<sup>64</sup> referring to the sanctuary of Saint Colluthos, reveal that many miraculous acts happened, and many people were treated.

There are not many preserved images of Saint Colluthus. Probably the most famous among them, discovered in Antinoe, in the burial chamber of a girl called Theodosia, dates to the sixth century CE (**Fig. 21**). Theodosia was represented between Saint Colluthus on her right and Virgin Mary on her left. The name of Saint Colluthus, flanking his head in a Greek inscription, reads as: ΑΓΙΟΣ ΚΟΛΛΟΥΘΟΣ. He wears a white chiton with black strips, *potamoi*, and a white himation. He is giving a blessing with his right hand, while the left hand rests on the shoulder of the deceased girl. The few representations of saint Colluthus are preserved in the following: (1) A small icon from Antinoe, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, *encaustic technique*, kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo; (2) A painting on linen cloth (57.5 × 123 cm), part of a private collection in London since the 1970; (3) A depiction of the saint in Deir Abou Hennis; (4) A wall painting in the chapels no. 1, 20, 17 in Bawit; (5) At Karnak in the festival hall of Thutmose III, the depiction of Saint Colluthos with the inscription of his name Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ // ΚΟΛΛΟΥΘΟΣ, on the northeast side of the fourth northern pillar of the western bay, was discovered in 1925; (6) Finally, in the first *Khurus* in Dayr Al-Suryan.<sup>65</sup>

On the example of the first khurus of Dayr Al-Suryan (Layer 2, 8<sup>th</sup> century CE), a remarkable scene of a holy physician is found in the middle of the southern wall (**Figs. 20, 22**). A saint sits on a small well-decorated seat, turned to the right, wearing a red

<sup>60</sup> Starodubcev, T. *Свети лекари (Holy Physicians)*, 298.

<sup>61</sup> *سيرة الشهيد قُلْتة الطبيب المصري*. (2019)، ترجمة النص عن القبطية وتقديم: كرسنين فوزي، مدرسة الإسكندرية.

<sup>62</sup> Sharafeldean, R. (2025). Origins and Development of the Martyr Cult in Egypt: Archaeological and Literary Insights into Coptic Martyria, *The International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Studies*, 06C, 8 (2): 135-169.

<sup>63</sup> For more about Papyrological evidence from Antinoopolis related to St. Colluthus, see: Corazza, F. (2016). The Antinoopolis Medical Papyri: a Case Study in Late Antique Medicine. *Ph.D thesis*, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

<sup>64</sup> Hidding, A. (2020). *The Era of the Martyrs: Remembering the Great Persecution in Late Antique Egypt*, Millennium Studies 87, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 67-97.

<sup>65</sup> Starodubcev, T. (2018). Between iconographic patterns and motifs from everyday life: The scene of an eye surgery performed by Saint Colluthos, 30ΓΡΑΦ 42: 1-24; Vassilaki, M. (2003). A painting of Saint Kollouthos. In C. Entwistle (Ed.), *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, 57–63. Oxbow Books.

tunic with a grey pallium. His hair and beard are grey, and much of the painting has been lost, including the face, but his right hand is easily identifiable. He holds a scalpel or similar device, which he directs close to the eyes of a much smaller person standing in front of him. His left arm is draped around the shoulder of the man, who is dressed in a red tunic with a greenish cloak over it and holds a staff in his left hand. In the background of the scene, a third one stands with his chest naked and his lower body wrapped in a red robe. Between the saint's head and the third figure is a little open cupboard with six red and green bottles. It is clear that it is a portrayal of a doctor treating patients in his private clinic or workshop, making a surgery. But, whose saint is being depicted. Several holy physicians are known in Coptic art, but here there are no inscriptions to identify the saint. K. Innemée refers that it is typical to discover an inscription adjacent to the head of a saint; nonetheless, even if the backdrop has been ruined, it appears that there has never been an inscription. The prominent place he takes in the decoration of the church suggests it should be an important saint, maybe so well-known and recognizable that the painter did not find an inscription necessary.<sup>66</sup> K. Innemée sets that the most likely identification is with Saint Colluthos, who was renowned for curing eye diseases<sup>67</sup>, and who was a very popular holy physician saint in Egypt.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

The Coptic Orthodox Church commemorates many healers and physicians as saints, some of them called Unmercenary (*Anargyroi*) saints, *i.e.*, physicians who practiced the profession and treated their patients without silver (No money). Although some of them were martyred during the first century (*e.g.*, St. Luke and St. Thekla), most of them were martyred during the fourth century, especially during Diocletian's persecution. All of them were martyrs, except for two cases: Hermolaus and Irene,

<sup>66</sup> In the first report, Innemée presented the working hypothesis that a doctor treating a patient, perhaps Saint Luke, was presented, although he immediately warned that this assumption was very uncertain. That report speaks of the frescoes discovered in 1999, at a time when the research had not been completed of all the surfaces of the interior walls of the church, where the saint is also referred to as a doctor, for the illustrations of retouched painting. Gormatiuk mentions the scene as a representation of the holy physician Cyrus. He states that a composition, painted with many figures, depicts a healing with Saint Cyrus. He then says that Saint Cyrus, healer of eye diseases, was celebrated after his martyrdom in Alexandria and the translation of his relics to the town of Menouthis. That one can see the scene of a holy doctor directing an instrument towards the eye of a young man. The basic reason for accepting Innemée's identification is the fact that Saint Cyrus was already painted in the choir area in the same layer of frescoes. Saints Cyrus and Colluthos have a similar appearance, indeed. For the images of Saint Cyrus in the frescoes chronologically close to those in the church of the Monastery of the Syrians, within the church of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome, in the Chapel of Physicians decorated during the pontificate of Pope John VII (705–707) and in the niche on the lateral wall of the atrium, probably from the time of Pope Paul I (757–767), both with Greek inscriptions. For more discussion about the opinions around the holy physician depicted in the scene, see: Starodubcev, T. *Between iconographic patterns and motifs from everyday life: The scene of an eye surgery performed by Saint Colluthos*, 3-4.

<sup>67</sup> For more about the miracles of St. Colluthos in the healing of eye diseases, see:

عبد الرحمن، ولاء علي. (2023). تراث طب العيون القبطي تطبيقاً على أمراض العيون الداخلية دراسة في المصادر القبطية، مجلة كلية الآثار بقنا 18 (1): 957-959.

<sup>68</sup> Innemée, K. C. *Dayr Al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, 16-17.

who were not originally doctors, but served as companions to other holy physicians as assistants, such as Saint John the soldier, the companion of St. Cyrus (*Apakir*) [Appendix A, Table 1]. However, they venerated together, it is worth mentioning that only St. Cyrus was celebrated and depicted in early iconographies. That is making them an unequal couple in art.

The famous couple of saints are SS. Cosmas and Damian. However, there are three pairs of saints Cosmas and Damian in Hagiography, research accepts some scholars' approval to identify them as one pair of saints, not three pairs. This triplication is a result of an ancient ecclesiastical tradition of the evolution of the legends, in which the author wants to give value to every cult center of the saints.

In Coptic Art, there are no surviving iconographies of Holy Physicians dated to the 4th–5th century CE. The Medical instruments and attributes that were represented with them are very characteristic [Appendix A, Table 2]. Some physician saints are portrayed without medical symbols or equipment, highlighting their role in miraculous healing. The disappearance of medical symbols with Saint Luke the Physician is clear despite his fame as a doctor, to illustrate his role as one of the four evangelists. The depictions of these medical instruments and attributes varied across time (e.g., scroll, scalpels and lancets, probe, spoon and tweezers, medicine chest (BAGS or/and BOXS). A scroll and a medicine bag for equipment are depicted from the sixth century CE onwards. The next century witnessed the appearance of scalpels and lancets, while from the late seventh century onwards the probe, spoon, and perhaps tweezers appeared. The form of medical equipment bags has varied throughout time. They were originally rectangular or trapezoidal. From the 7th to 10th centuries CE, a curiously formed item known as a bag or box "with ears of ropes" appeared. The first depictions of medicinal boxes date back to the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> century CE, when they were not often utilized. The first known depictions of holy physicians holding books date to the same time. Those medicine cases or boxes for surgical instruments appeared only in art until the discovery of a Coptic wooden one, which was published in 1909.<sup>69</sup> It was discovered at Erment (*Hermonthis*) and dates between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE (Figs. 23, 24).

In earlier depictions, holy physicians are represented in *orans* attitude (e.g., St. Cosmas and Damian in Wadi Serga). In historical context, the physician saints dress in the typical Greek and Roman garbs; this, in certain depictions, is converted into priestly clothes through the ages. But, there are no depictions of them in monastic clothes in Coptic art. In general, the way of their iconography introduces the details of daily life, using some pagan artistic traditions and the Christian iconographic patterns. The existence of sustainability in Coptic Art is clear in the reproduction of Coptic icons by modern artisans using the same specific colors, motifs, and symbols.

<sup>69</sup> For the first publishing of this Coptic medicine case in French, see: Daressy, G. (1909). "Une Trousse de Médecin Copte". *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (10): 254-257. Also, republished in English in: Dawson, W. R. (1924). Egyptian Medicine under the Copts in the early centuries of the Christian Era, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 17 (Sect Hist Med), 51–57. Furthermore, there is modern Arabic publishing in:

فلته، كمال صبري. (2008). المقلمة الطبية في مصر القديمة والعصر القبطي، ترجمة: يوسف ذكي بطرس، راكوتي: اضاء علي الدراسات القبطية 5 (2): 8-6.

Finally, it seems that the Christian holy incubation was held close to those holy physicians' depictions. Like that of the first Khurus in Dayr al-Suryan, the place filled with the representations of the holy physicians. So, probably it is the portion where holy incubation happened in this monastery.

### APPENDIX (A)

**Table 1: Holy Healers & Physicians in Coptic and Orthodox churches.**

Name	Doctor	Cen.	Feast	Died
Luke	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup>	Oct. 18	Martyr
<i>Healers remembered during holy oil service</i>				
Cosmas & Damain of Asia	Yes	4 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 1	Peacefully?
Cosmas & Damain of Rome	Yes	3 <sup>rd</sup>	July 1	Martyrs
Cosmas & Damain of Arabia	Yes		Oct. 17	Martyrs
Cyrus ( <i>Apakir</i> )	Yes	4 <sup>th</sup>	Jan. 31	Martyrs
John ( <i>Companion of Cyrus</i> )	No			
Collothus ( <i>Abu Kolta</i> )	Yes	4 <sup>th</sup>	May 20	Martyr
Panteleimon	Yes	4 <sup>th</sup>	July 27	Martyr
Hermolaus	No	4 <sup>th</sup>	July 26	Old Age
<i>Healers remembered during Sunday Matins</i>				
Menas	No	4 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 11	Martyr
Catharine of Alexandria	Yes	4 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 24	Martyr
Thekla	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup>	Sept. 24	Martyr
Irene	No	1 <sup>st</sup>	May 5	Old Age

**Table 2: Medical instruments and attributes represented with the Holy Physician.**

	4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
- Scroll								
- Scalpels and lancets								
- probe, spoon and, tweezers								
- Medicine chest (BAGS)								
• Rectangular or trapezoidal								
• a bag “with ears”								
• Medicine boxes								

## Figures

**Fig. 1:** St. Luke the Evangelist on the left of the northern wall in the first Khurus in Dayr al-Suryan, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, Wadi al-Natrun. (After: K. Innemée, *Dayr al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, fig. 17).



**Fig. 2:** St Luke, crypt fresco, Catacombs of Commodilla, Rome, Italy, 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. (Retrieved from: <https://www.bridgemanimages.com/en/Image-no.PRZ-3433222>) 18 April, 2025.



**Fig. 3:** St. Luke from St. Menas Church, Fum Al Khalig, 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, by youhanna al-Armani. (Atalla, N. S. *Coptic Icons* II, 104; شفيع، ممدوح، الأيقونات القبطية، 145)



**Fig. 4:** SS. Cosmas and Damian, Chapel 28, Apollo Monastery, Bawit, 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> CE. (After: Clédat, J. *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît*, pl. XCVII).



**Fig. 5:** Colored wall painting of saints Cosmas and Damian, Chapel 28, Apollo Monastery, Bawit, 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> CE. (After: Clédat, J. *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît*, pl. C).



**Fig. 6:** Saints Cosmas and Damian depiction in the narthex of Dier Abou Hennis, Mallawi, 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. (After: Van Loon, G. J. M., & Delattre, A. *"La fries des saints de l'église rupestre de Deir Abou Hennis"*, fig. 11).



**Fig. 7:** Wall-painting of Saints Cosmas and Damian, their three brothers and the Three Hebrews, North of Wadi Sarga, Daniel villa. (After: Dalton, O. M., *A Coptic Wall-Painting from Wadi Sarga*, pl. IX, p. 35).



**Fig. 8:** Reconstruction of the wall painting of SS. Cosmas and Damian in display at the British Museum (EA 73139).<sup>70</sup> (After: O'Connell, R. *Campbell Thompson's 1913/14 excavation of Wadi Sarga*, fig. 74, p. 189)

<sup>70</sup> The photographer of the painting *in situ* provides context and indicates that the scene of the three Hebrews was in fact raised a few centimeters from the rest of the wall. The scene is now in display in a single flat surface. See: O'Connell, R. *Campbell Thompson's 1913/14 excavation of Wadi Sarga*, 133.



**Fig. 9:** SS Cosmas and Damian on the right of the southern wall in the 1<sup>st</sup> Khurus in Dayr al-Suryan, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, Wadi al-Natrun. (After: K. Innemée, *Dayr al-Suryan: 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, fig. 15).



**Illustrated Box with lid.**

- Panopolis, Akhmim, 6<sup>th</sup> cen. CE.
- wax painting on wood,
- 10.8 – 11.1 – 11.3 CM.
- (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), National Museums, Berlin.
- Inventory no. 6113

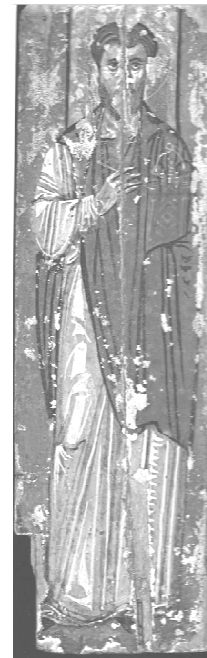
**Fig. 10:** St. Cosmas on an illustrated Box with lid. Panopolis, Akhmim, 6<sup>th</sup> cen. CE. National Museums, Berlin, 6113. (After: 155 ص، لوحة 145، الفن القبطي في مصر، لوحة 145، ص 155. Trans. From: L'Art Copte en Egypte, 2000).



**Fig. 11:** Triptych Icon of St. Damian, 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai. (After: Weitzmann, K. *The Monastery*, B. 18, pl. LXV).



**Fig. 12:** Triptych Icon of St. Cosmas, 8<sup>th</sup> century, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai. (After: Weitzmann, K. *The Monastery*, B. 47, pl. CII).



**Fig. 13:** Triptych Icon of St. Damian, 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai. (After: Weitzmann, K. *The Monastery*, B. 55, pl. CX, back).



**Fig. 14:** Cosmas, Theodota, Damian, and Panteleimon, 12<sup>th</sup> century, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai. *The Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sinaiarchive.org/s/mpa/page/sinaicollection> (7 May 2025).



**Fig. 15:** Icon of SS. Cosmas and Damian, their mother Theodota and their three brothers Anthimus, Leontius, and Euprepus, the Hanging Church in Old Cairo, 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, by Youhanna al-Armani. (After: Atalla, N. S. *Coptic Icons II*).



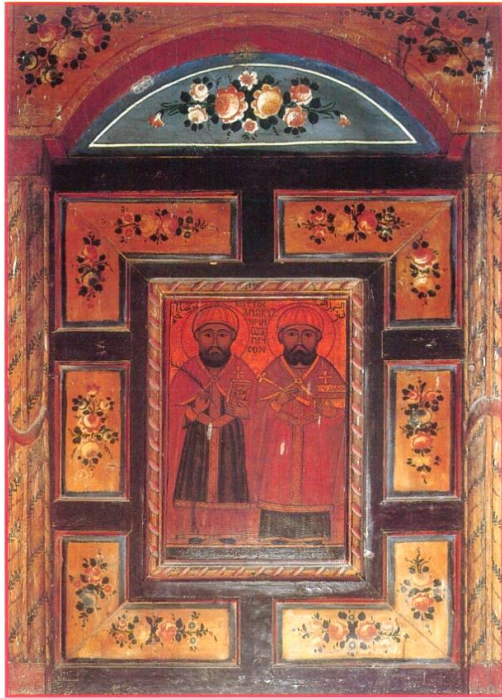
**Fig. 16:** Icon of SS. Cosmas and Damian, their mother Theodota and their three brothers Anthimus, Leontius, and Euprepus, church of Saint Barbara in Old Cairo, 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, by Ibrahim al-Nasikh. (After: Atalla, N. S. *Coptic Icons II*, p. 116).



**Fig. 17:** Wall painting of SS. Pasintius and Cyrus (*Apakir*), north wall in the first khurus, in Dayr al-Suryan, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, Wadi al-Natrun. (After: K. Innemée, *Dayr al-Suryan*, fig. 19).



**Fig. 18:** Icon of SS. Cyrus (*Apakir*) and John, Old Cairo, 18<sup>th</sup> century, by Ibrahim al-Nasikh. (After: Atalla, N. S., *Coptic icons II*, 125).



**Fig. 19:** Icon of SS. Cyrus (*Apakir*) and John, Old Cairo, 19<sup>th</sup> century, by Anastasiy al-Rumi. (After: Atalla, N. S., *Coptic icons II*, 125).



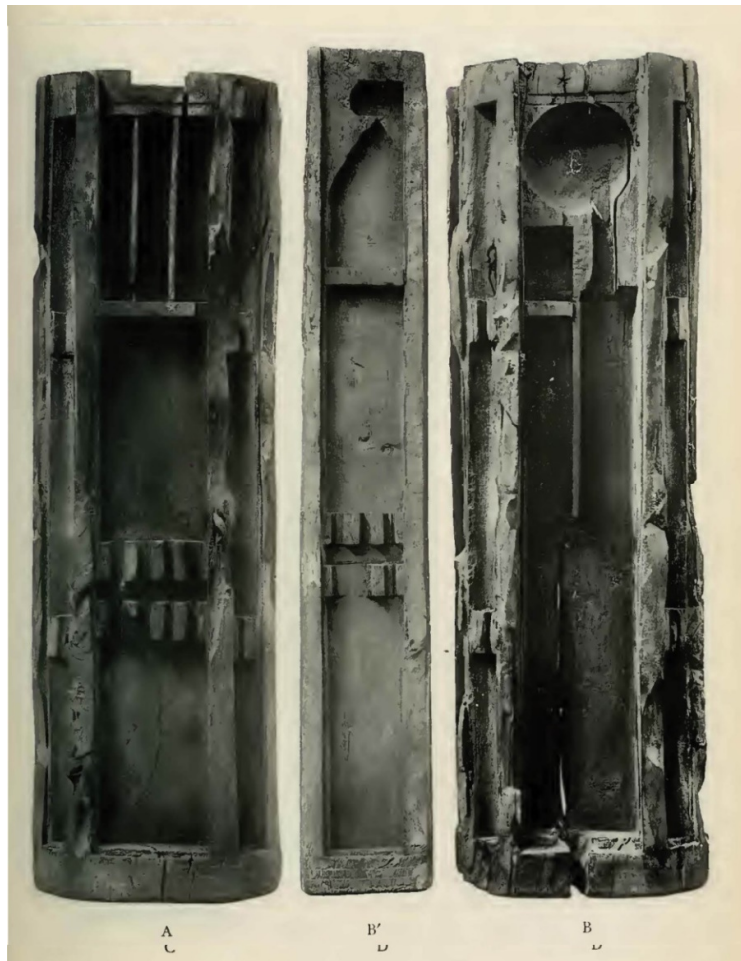
**Fig. 20:** The holy physician wall painting (St. Colluthos?) "*Abu Kolta*", first khurus, Dayr al-Suryan, 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, Wadi al-Natrun. (After: K. Innemée, *Dayr al-Suryan*, fig. 14).



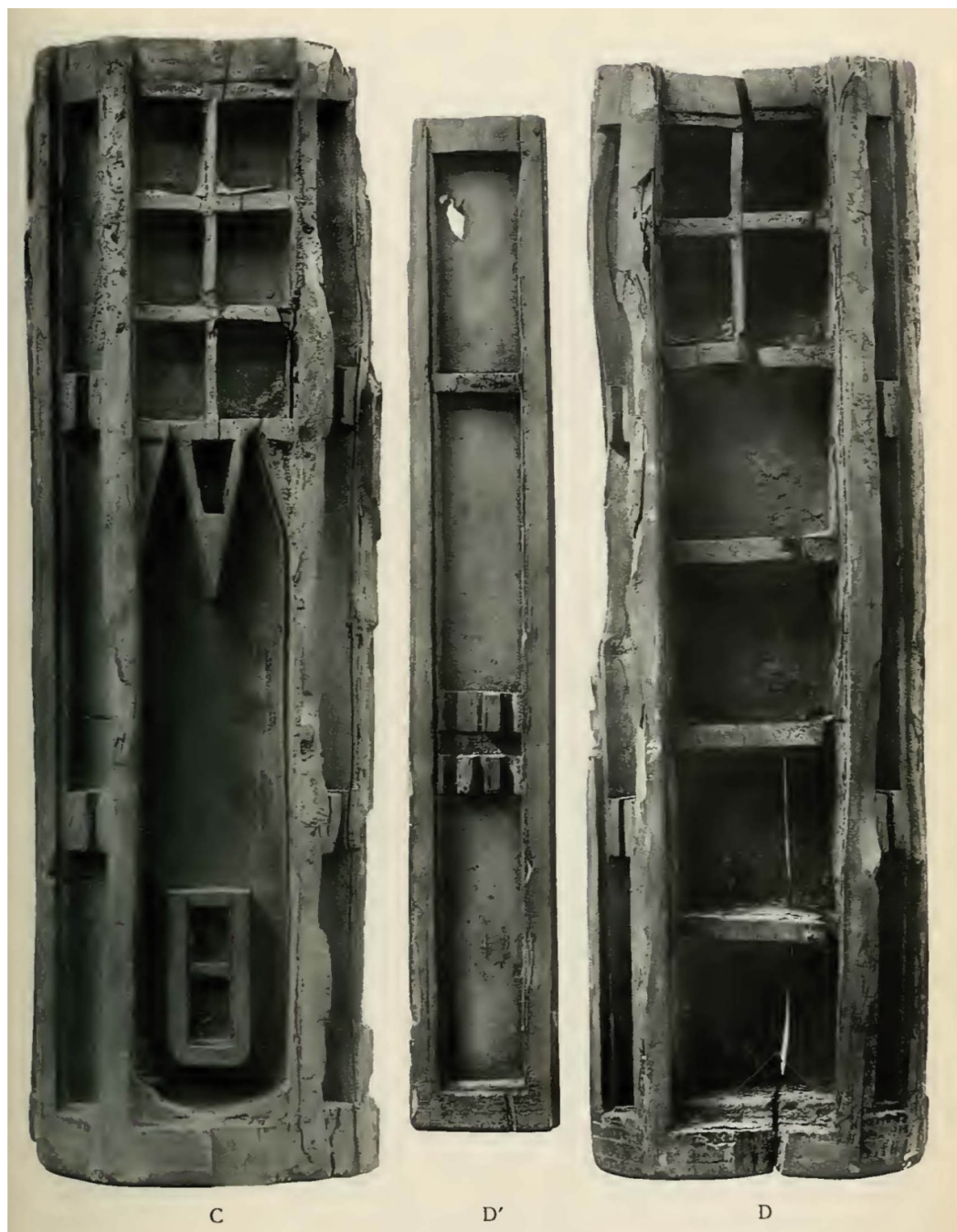
**Fig. 21:** Saint Colluthus, Theodosia and Virgin Mary, Antinoe, sixth century CE. (After: Starodubcev, T. *Between iconographic patterns and motifs from everyday life*, fig. 4).



**Fig. 22:** The southern wall of the first khurus, Dayr al-Suryan, 8th century AD, Wadi al-Natrun.



**Fig. 23:** The first face of a Coptic Surgical Instrument Case, Erment, *Hermonthis*, 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> cen. CE. (After: Daressy, G. *Une Trousse de Médecin Copte*, *ASAE* 10, pl. I).



**Fig. 24:** The second face of a Coptic Surgical Instrument Case, Erment, *Hermonthis*, 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> cen. CE. (After: Daressy, G. *Une Trousse de Médecin Copte*, *ASAE* 10, pl. II).

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