

## **Storytelling as *Pharmakon* in Premodernity and Beyond: Training the New Generation of Researchers in Health Humanities (StoryPharm)**

### **Advertisement of Positions**

### **Call for Individual Applications**



**Cardiff University (CARDIFF UNI) is pleased to announce four three-year PhD positions with a generous research allowance in an international, multi-partner EU project, employment beginning between June and August 2025.**

The StoryPharm project, which is funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action – Doctoral Networks, is announcing a total of 19 PhD fellowships within the training programme “Storytelling as *Pharmakon* in Premodernity and Beyond: Training the New Generation of Researchers in Health Humanities” (<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/storypharm/>). The focus of the project will be on premodern narratives and images involving medicine, health, and healing. These will be studied from a transdisciplinary and comparative perspective, across linguistic and cultural borders. The five PhD candidates at UCY will form together a study group working on different research aspects of the StoryPharm project.

### **Project 1: “Mani as a Healer and Physician: Redefining Manichaean Origins in the Third Century CE” (StoryPharm Fellow 1)**

This subproject will contextualise Mani’s (216–c. 274 CE) persona as a healer in the court of Sasanian Iran under the rulership of Shapur I (d. 270 CE). It will investigate late antique Manichaeans’ concerns with health, well-being, and illness in relation to the spread of Manichaeism across West Asia and the Mediterranean. The subproject will also evaluate the importance of Mani’s role and identity as healer in the process of securing the patronage of these regions’ imperial elites and will contextualise the emergence of early Manichaeism in terms of its contemporary setting where healing was linked to prophecy and religious knowledge.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Cyprus and a one-month non-academic secondment at the Bamberg State Library. At Cardiff the PhD candidate will work under the supervision of Nicholas Baker-Brian and Eve MacDonald while Demetrios Michaelides will act as a supervisor at the University of Cyprus.

## Objectives

**Fellow 1** will aim at achieving the following results: (1) explain how the promotion of Mani's identity as a healer led to the extension of the new religion; (2) show how and why early Manichaean literature displays a pronounced concern with health and illness; (3) trace the origins of this concern; (4) provide a detailed understanding of the historical contexts for the emergence of Mani's teachings and the subsequent anxieties of 3<sup>rd</sup>-c. Manichaean communities in the Sasanian, Palmyrene, and Roman Empires.

## Specific Requirements

A Master's Degree in one of the following areas is required: Classics, History, Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, and Medieval Studies.

The University wishes our staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.

## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- How did the religious culture(s) of the time influence Mani's ideas – especially about the soul and the body?
- What were the prevailing ideas about health and illness in Late Antiquity?
- How might ideas about health and illness have affected the theological beliefs of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and Manichaeans?

## Short Bibliography

Baker-Brian, Nicholas J. 2016. “‘Putrid Boils and Sores, and Burning Wounds in the Body’: The Valorization of Health and Illness in Late Antique Manichaeism,” *Harvard Theological Review* 109 (3), 422–446.

Burns, Dylan M. 2023. “(No) Providence among the Manichaeans? Divine Care in the *Kephalaia of the Teacher*,” in Jason BeDuhn, Paul Dilley and Iain Gardner (eds), *The Medinet Madi Library of Manichaean Codices at 90*. Leiden, 96–122.

Gardner, Iain. 2020. *The Founder of Manichaeism: Rethinking the Life of Mani*. Cambridge.

Marx-Wolf, Heidi. 2016. *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority. Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century C.E.* Philadelphia.

Ort, L. J. R. 1967. *Mani: A Religio-Historical Description of His Personality*. Leiden (esp. 95–106).

For more information about this fellowship, contact Dr Nicholas Baker-Brian ([Baker-BrianNJ1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Baker-BrianNJ1@cardiff.ac.uk)).

## Project 2: “Between Doctors and Prophets: Healing and Health at the Sasanian Court” (StoryPharm Fellow 2)

This subproject will explore how healing stories can provide insight into Sasanian intellectual, medical, and cross-cultural environments. Stories of healing and the royal court abound in the sources for the Sasanian Empire and were passed on into the early Islamic period histories, narrative poems, and epics about the Sasanians, such as Abolqasem Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh*. Al-Tabari records that Shapur II (309–379 CE) brought a doctor from India to his court and people came from afar to learn and be healed. By investigating such stories, which infuse the practical with a narratological engagement between the court, king, and healer, this subproject will illustrate how the currency of medical knowledge was perceived and disseminated in the Sasanian period. Finally, the subproject will bring together a full corpus of medical knowledge from the Sasanian period and will look at its residual influences from Zoroastrianism to Eastern and Western healing traditions.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Cyprus and a one-month non-academic secondment at David Collection (Copenhagen). At Cardiff the PhD candidate will

work under the supervision of Eve MacDonald and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones while Dionysios Stathakopoulos will act as a supervisor at the University of Cyprus.

## Objectives

**Fellow 2** will aim at achieving the following results: (1) make available a full corpus of medical knowledge and point to its influences; (2) provide a comprehensive study of the healing narratives related to the Sasanian court preserved in the Middle Persian and Early Arabic sources; (3) show the ways in which healing interacts with prophecy and rulership.

A Master's Degree in Ancient History or Classics, Iranian Studies or Early Medieval Islamic Studies is required. Candidates are expected to have an ability to engage with a wide range of source material in various linguistic traditions (including strong knowledge of at least two of the traditions, i.e. Greek, Middle Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Hebrew etc.) and a willingness to learn and expand into further directions.

The University wishes our staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.

## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that the best effort is made toward making the document reflective of candidates' true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- To what extent can we explore Sasanian court healing narratives within the larger corpus – what makes them, and can we understand these stories within the concept of a “Sasanian” identity?
- How do the early new Persian and Abbasid period narratives “mythologise” health, healing and learning in the past, in the Sasanian and broader perceptions?
- What can we make of Gondeshapur – legend, medical school, palace?
- To what extent does the material from minority groups in the Sasanian period help us to articulate traditions of healing and health more generally – from the Talmudic to the Syriac, Mandaean and broader views?
- Considering the importance of Zoroastrian health and healing traditions can we filter these into the Sasanian narratological evidence of healing?

## Short Bibliography

- \*Bhayro, Siam. 2021. “Syriac Magic and Medicine: A Near-Eastern Paradigm of Priestcraft,” in Marco Moriggi and Siam Bhayro (eds), *Studies in the Syriac Magical Traditions*. Leiden, 31–56.
- Herman, Geoffrey. 2021. “The View from the Frontier and the View from Within: On Christian Persecution in the Fifth Century Sasanian Empire,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 21, 43–54.
- Gross, Simcha and Avigail Manekin-Bamberger. 2022. “Babylonian Jewish Society: The Evidence of the Incantation Bowls,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 112 (1), 1–30.
- Nayernouri, MD, Touraj. 2015. “A Brief History of Ancient Iranian Medicine,” *Archives of Iranian Medicine* 18 (8), 549–551.
- \*Davis, Dick. 2007. “Women in the Shahnameh: Exotics and Natives, Rebellious Legends, and Dutiful Histories,” in Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman (eds), *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity*. New York, 67–90.
- \*Mokhtarian, Jason Sion. 2022. *Medicine in the Talmud: Natural and Supernatural Therapies between Magic and Science*. Oakland, CA (esp. Chapter on “Talmudic Medicine in its Sasanian Context”).
- \*Pierce, Laurie. 2015. “Serpents and Sorcery: Humanity, Gender, and the Demonic in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh,” *Iranian Studies* 48 (3), 349–367.
- \*Savage-Smith, Emilie. 2013. “Medicine in Medieval Islam,” in David C. Lindberg and Michael H. Shank (eds), *The Cambridge History of Science* 2. Cambridge, 139–167.
- \*Silva, João Alcindo Martins. 2019. “The Influence of Gondeshapur Medicine during the Sassanid Dynasty and the Early Islamic Period,” *Arch Iran Med.* 22 (9), 531–540.
- Zargaran, Arman, Seyedeh Negal Sadat Ahmadi, Saeid Daneshamouz, and Abdolali Mohagheghzadeh. 2012. “Ancient Persian Pharmaceutical Vessels and Tools in Iranian Archaeological Museums,” *Pharm Hist (Lond)* 42 (4), 68–71.
- \*Zargaran, Arman. 2014. “Ancient Persian Medical Views on the Heart and Blood in the Sassanid Era (224–637 AD),” *International Journal of Cardiology* 172 (2), 307–312.
- Zeinalian, Mehrdad et al. 2015. “Iranian–Islamic Traditional Medicine: An Ancient Comprehensive Personalized Medicine,” *Advanced Biomedical Research* 4 (1), 191.

For more information about this fellowship, contact Dr Even MacDonald  
([MacDonaldG1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:MacDonaldG1@cardiff.ac.uk)).

### **Project 3: “Byzantine Imperial Women in Narratives of Illness and Healing” (StoryPharm Fellow 8)**

This subproject will focus on Byzantine narratives about imperial women and healing (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> c. CE), exploring how and why these stories were created and what they reveal about Byzantine attitudes towards gender, status, and suffering and about the literary culture of the period. Very rich source material exists for the project, such as Michael Psellos’ *Chronography* which details the reigns of emperors and empresses of the 11<sup>th</sup> c., including those of the empress sisters Zoe and Theodora; and the *Lives of Saint Theophano*, the first wife of Emperor Leo VI (886–912). These texts feature stories of imperial women participating in suffering and healing. The subproject will also examine if these women were more linked to suffering and healing than their male counterparts and the extent to which they had medical education.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at Lund University (ULUND) and a one-month non-academic secondment at Dr. Pflieger (Bamberg). At Cardiff, the PhD candidate will work under the supervision of Shaun Tougher while Christian Høgel will act as a supervisor at ULUND.

### **Objectives**

Fellow 8 will aim at achieving the following results: (1) demonstrate imperial women’s association with suffering and medicine in a period of cultural revival; (2) trace the interrelationships between contemporary historiography and hagiography; (3) show the gendered aspects of suffering and healing processes.

**Specific Requirements:** a Master’s Degree in Ancient History, Byzantine Studies, Classics, or Late Antique Studies

The University wishes our staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.



## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- To what extent were Byzantine imperial women associated with stories of healing and medicine?
- Were imperial women more associated with healing than imperial men?
- To what extent were imperial women educated in medicine, and to what extent did they practise it?
- What different types of texts include narratives of imperial women and healing, and what differences are there between these narratives, if any?

## Short Bibliography

Garland, Lynda. 1999. *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*. London and New York.

Gouma-Peterson Thalia (ed.) 2000. *Anna Komnene and Her Times*. London and New York.

Neville, Leonora. 2016. *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*. Oxford.

Papaioannou, Stratis. 2013. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge.

Pitarakis, Brigitte (ed.) 2015. *Life is Short, Art Long: The Art of Healing in Byzantium*. Istanbul.

Pitarakis, Brigitte and Gülru Tanman (eds) 2018. *Life is Short, Art Long: The Art of Healing in Byzantium – New Perspectives*. Istanbul.

Temkin, Owsei. 1962. “Byzantine Medicine: Tradition and Empiricism,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16, 97–115.

For more information about this fellowship, contact Prof. Shaun Tougher ([toughersf@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:toughersf@cardiff.ac.uk))

## Project 4: “Early Byzantine Literature as *Pharmakon*: A Narratological Approach to Medical Writings” (StoryPharm Fellow 13)

This subproject will employ narratological approaches to three early Byzantine medical authors: Oribasios (4<sup>th</sup> c. CE), Aetios of Amida (6<sup>th</sup> c. CE), and Paul of Aegina (7<sup>th</sup> c. CE), whose writings were long considered as “encyclopaedias”, composed of excerpts from earlier medical writings, particularly those of Galen. Recent scholarship has shown that great care was deployed in the act of compiling, but much work remains to be done on the rhetorical and narrative techniques employed by these authors. The subproject will contribute to this work, by focusing on the ways in which these works are presented as artefacts contributing to the well-being of their audiences, through both their material and the way in which this is presented. Particular attention will be paid to prefaces, the use of the first person, the works’ structure, and the use of anecdotes. Effort will be made to place the works in a tradition of medical writing and in the literary contexts of their times.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Salerno (UNI SALERNO) and a one-month non-academic secondment at AVVA Pharmaceuticals (Limassol). At Cardiff, the PhD candidate will work under the supervision of Laurence Totelin while Amalia will act as a supervisor at UNI SALERNO.

## **Objectives**

Fellow 13 will aim at achieving the following results: (1) offer a rhetorical and narrative analysis of important early Byzantine medical works; (2) contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which the examined authors carefully crafted their works as healing artefacts; (3) further refute the thesis that these authors were merely compilers who simply excerpted their predecessors.

## **Specific Requirements**

A Master’s Degree in Ancient History, Classics, or Byzantine Studies is required.

The University wishes our staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.

## **The Application**

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.



When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- What type of authorial work goes into producing “encyclopaedic” materials?
- How do authors of encyclopaedia adapt their material to the context in which they are writing?
- What roles do prefaces play in scientific and medical writings?
- In what ways can technical writings improve the wellbeing of their readers?

### Short Bibliography

Bouras-Vallianatos, Petros, and Barbara Zipser (eds) 2019. *Brill's companion to the reception of Galen*. Brill.

Dubischar, Markus. 2015. “Preserved Knowledge: Summaries and Compilations,” in Martin Hose and David Schenker (eds), *A Companion to Greek Literature*. Oxford, 427–440.

Slaveva-Griffin, Svetla. 2018. “Byzantine Medical Encyclopedias and Education,” in Paul T. Keyser, and John Scarborough (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Science and Medicine in the Classical World*. Oxford, 965–986.

Van der Eijk, Philip J. 1997. “Towards a Grammar of Scientific Discourse,” in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in Its Linguistic Contexts* Leiden, 77–129.

van Der Eijk, Philip J. (ed.) 2018. *Ancient Histories of Medicine: Essays in Medical Doxography and Historiography in Classical Antiquity*. Brill.

For more information about this fellowship, contact Prof. Laurence Totelin ([totelinlm@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:totelinlm@cardiff.ac.uk)).

### Main Training Activities Specific to the Project

- Induction Week (University of Cyprus; UCY)
- Training in Critical Discourse Analysis (Lund University)
- Training in Narrative and in Literary Criticism (UCY)
- Training in Intersectionality, Sexuality, and Gender (UCY)
- Summer School (University of Bamberg)
- Training in Obtaining Funding in Project Management (online)
- Training in Entrepreneurship (online)
- Training in Publishing Industry (Bamberg State Library)

## Expectations

The PhD candidates will fulfil the requirements of the School of History, Archaeology and Religion's PhD programme in Ancient History

(<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/programmes/programme/ancient-history>),

lead their research under the guidance of the supervisors and present their work at international conferences, in accordance with the consortium's communication and dissemination plan.

Furthermore, they will cooperate with other fellow PhD students to fulfill the StoryPharm's training and other objectives. Participation in StoryPharm's training and other activities is compulsory.

## Salary

The successful candidate will be employed full-time. There is a salary range from £42,048 to £51,012. Salary provided as a range and estimate, with actual salary being determined based on eligible allowances (living, mobility, family), exchange rates, and pension options, which are based on each doctoral researcher's individual circumstances.

All recruited doctoral fellows will become highly skilled cultural historians specialising in premodern intellectual and healthcare worlds. At the same time, they will acquire transferable skills allowing them to use, develop, and deploy cutting-edge approaches to storytelling and its ethical ramifications for scientific, professional, business, healthcare, and social purposes. After the offered doctoral training, the fellows will be ideally positioned to (1) achieve ground-breaking research results; (2) meet current trends and needs in the job market; (3) work towards establishing a human-centred medical system; and (4) create better and more resilient societies.

StoryPharm welcomes highly-motivated applicants. The call is open to applicants of any age and nationality who meet the following requirements at the recruitment date:

- Prior to the starting date of the PhD programme they must hold or be due to hold a Master's Degree in relevant fields mentioned above.
- Must not already hold a doctoral title.
- Must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date (mobility Rule). Any time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967

Protocol), compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays do not count towards the total.

Additional requirements can apply for specific positions. For further information, please consult the detailed information for each position.

If any of the above prerequisites is not satisfied, the StoryPharm consortium reserves the right to exclude applicants from the selection procedure at any time, even after the selection procedure has taken place.

### **Application Procedures**

Applications for the first round will be accepted from **15/10/2024** until **15/12/2024** at **14:00** (Central European Time).

Applications must be submitted electronically to the email address: **ceamar@ucy.ac.cy**

Applicants may apply for one or more positions, up to three positions in total. In case of multiple applications, applicants should submit one application with a separate research statement for each position **and specify the priority order** in their personal statement.

The following documents must be provided:

- Personal statement (max 2 pages) detailing the applicant's motivations and goals within the StoryPharm programme
- CV (max 2 pages) with emphasis on prior academic achievements
- Research statement (max 2 pages, 1,000 words) detailing how the applicant will approach the research project and how the StoryPharm training goals fit into the applicant's career plans. Please consider the research questions included in each position's description.
- Copy of Bachelor's and Master's Degree certificates and transcript of records
- Copy of Master's Thesis
- A reference letter by the MA supervisor and one other academic reference.
- Copy of an ID document valid at the time of the interview.

All application documents **must be drafted** in English. For **certificates and other official documents** official translations in English are preferable. We, however, accept documents in the following languages: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish.

Applications must be submitted by the call deadline.

The applications must be complete in all their parts and must include all required material in PDF format without any protection that prevents printing.

## Evaluation

A specific Evaluation Committee will be established to assess each topic's applicants. Each Committee will be composed of the main supervisors, an external member from the Supervisory Board, and possibly other faculty members of the recruiting university.

The evaluation process will include two stages.

### 1st Stage: Application Assessment

Application materials will be assessed based on the criteria specified in Table 2.

The score will be calculated on a scale of 0 to 100 points. Candidates with a score of at least 60 over 100 will pass to the second step and will be invited to an interview. We expect to notify shortlisted candidates in December 2024.

**Table 2:** Evaluation Criteria for the Preliminary Selection

Criteria	Percentage
<b>Criterion 1:</b> Excellence of the applicant's CV, skills and track record (see Application Procedures), fulfilment of the relevant requirements related to the position applied for	80%
<b>Criterion 2:</b> Potential impact on the applicant's career and motivations to participate in the StoryPharm training programme	20%
<b>Global score</b>	100% (threshold 60%)

### 2nd Stage: Interview

Individual interviews will have the purpose of gaining a better sense of the applicants' academic background and their approach to the proposed PhD research project as well as the vision of their role within the network and of their future career. If a candidate has applied for more than one fellowship, the interview will test the fulfilment of the requirements for all of them.

The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. Candidates will be interviewed on-line via Zoom or Teams.

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the interviewees based on the criteria specified in the table below. It will produce an evaluation summary report for each applicant, with scores and detailed motivations.

All interviews will be conducted in English.

**Table 3:** Evaluation criteria for the interview

Criteria	Percentage
<b>Criterion 1:</b> Excellence of the applicant’s presentation: Argumentation, communication, and evidence of knowledge of the ancient/medieval/modern languages when relevant	35%
<b>Criterion 2:</b> Excellence of the research statement, originality, understanding of the different facets of research demonstrated during discussion	65%
<b>Global score</b>	100%

The Evaluation Committee will produce a ranking list for each position.

### Ranking List

All applicants invited to the interview will be informed of the outcome of the selection process with an Evaluation Summary Report.

### Applicants with Disabilities or Specific Learning Difficulties

StoryPharm will take specific measures for applicants with disabilities (e.g. blind or deaf applicants or those suffering from any other relevant disability) or with specific learning difficulties (e.g. applicants diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia or dysorthography) to guarantee equal treatment.

### Admission to the PhD Programmes

Successful applicants are admitted to their selected PhD programme following the order of the ranking list. The selected applicants must confirm by email their acceptance of the position within 15 days.

Applicants who fail to meet this deadline will be replaced by the next applicant on the ranking list, who will be informed by email and must enroll within 15 days following the same procedure.

If no other applicant is available in the ranking list for the position, StoryPharm may decide to assign the position to a qualified applicant for a different PhD position or launch an extra call for applications for the vacant position.

### **PhD Fellows' Rights, Obligations and Incompatibilities**

It is not possible to be simultaneously enrolled in more than one study programme leading to the awarding of a degree (e.g. Bachelor, Masters, Postgraduate Specialisation, short/executive Masters or PhD).

In the case of enrolment in the StoryPharm PhD programme successful applicants will be required to suspend or, if not possible, discontinue any enrolment in their other degree programme before the commencement of the PhD programme in order not to be excluded.

### **Confidentiality**

Personal data will be collected, used and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

StoryPharm commits to using personal information for the purposes of the selection process alone.

The participation in the selection process implies the applicant's consent to the collection, use and process of their personal data by the StoryPharm consortium.

For more information about the StoryPharm project, visit our website

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/storypharm/>. For any questions contact Dr Andria Andreou, contact the StoryPharm Scientific Project Manager, Dr Andria Androu [andreou.andria@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:andreou.andria@ucy.ac.cy).