

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

Advertisement of Positions

Second Call for Individual Applications



Cardiff University (CARDIFF UNI) is pleased to announce two 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, has announced 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.

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 3rd-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).

Project 2: “Early Byzantine Literature as *Pharmakon*: A Narratological Approach to Medical Writings” (StoryPharm Fellow 13)

This subproject will employ narratological approaches to any of the three early Byzantine medical authors: Oribasios (4th c. CE), Aetios of Amida (6th c. CE), and Paul of Aegina (7th 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).

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 (University of Salerno)
- Training in Intersectionality, Sexuality, and Gender (UCY)
- Spring 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 groundbreaking 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 **23/12/2024** until **17/02/2025** 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
Criterion 1: 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%
Criterion 2: Potential impact on the applicant’s career and motivations to participate in the StoryPharm training programme	20%
Global score	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
Criterion 1: Excellence of the applicant's presentation: Argumentation, communication, and evidence of knowledge of the ancient/medieval/modern languages when relevant	35%
Criterion 2: Excellence of the research statement, originality, understanding of the different facets of research demonstrated during discussion	65%
Global score	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.