

Wolfgang Häfele

Krankheit und ihre Behandlung

Studien zu Sophronios von Jerusalem's Wundern der Heiligen Kyros und Johannes

[Illness and its Treatment. Studies on Sophronios of Jerusalem's »The Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John«(BHG I 477–479).]

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What is illness and in what way does Christian understanding of it differ from that handed down from pre-Christian antiquity? Wolfgang Häfele analyses *The Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John*, written by the subsequent patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios, between 610 and 614 AD. This text is commonly yet unjustly thought to harbour a certain hostility towards doctors and medicine. While Sophronios does sharply criticise the conduct of the contemporary medical (and by then Christian) elite, he also appreciates what contemporary medicine is capable of and uses the latter's approaches to describe diseases. However, a second major aspect of illness becomes apparent in the text, particularly when it comes to diseases of the soul: illness and its treatment as metaphor.

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