

Cicero or Cyprian in Hieronymian Hoodoo? (*Vita Hilarionis* 12, 3)¹

NEIL ADKIN

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

A nun of Gaza was the object of sexual attentions from the swain next door, who endeavoured to win his heart-throb with magic spells fetched specially from Memphis. The tale is told in ch. 12 of Jerome's *Life* of St. Hilarion, whose intervention broke the magic. An edition of this work was published in 1975 by Antoon Bastiaensen, who qualified his text as "critico"². In fact however this recension was based merely on earlier editions. In Bastiaensen's own edition the swain's thaumaturgics are described as follows: *subter limen domus puellae portenta quaedam verborum et portentosas figuras, sculptas in aeris Cyprii lamina, defodit* (12, 3). Here Bastiaensen failed to identify a source for Jerome's particular phraseology³.

¹ Texts are cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*², Leipzig 1990, and its online *Addenda* at <http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/pdf/addenda.pdf>.

² C. MOHRMANN, A.A.R. BASTIAENSEN, J.W. SMIT, L. CANALI and C. MORESCHINI, *Vita di Martino, Vita di Ilarione, In memoria di Paola*, Milan (Vit. Sant. 4) 1975, 69.

³ The words *portentosas figuras... in aeris Cyprii lamina* evince the influence of Apuleius according to S. WEINGARTEN, "Jerome and the *Golden Ass*", in E.A. LIVINGSTONE (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 33, Louvain 1997, 385 with n. 12; cf. ead., *The Saint's Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome*, Leiden and Boston (Anc. Jud. Early Christ. 58) 2005, 93-4 ("Shared images").