CONSTRUCTING SAINTS IN GREEK AND LATIN HAGIOGRAPHY

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Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography

Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative

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Note on Editorial Choices and Abbreviations

In order to distinguish the two current meanings of the word 'life' (both 'the period from birth to death' and 'biography'), we capitalize it ('Life', plural 'Lives') when it is a synonym of 'biography' or 'description of one's life'. We similarly disambiguate 'martyrdom'/'passion' (the event or concept) and 'Martyrdom'/'Passion' (the account). For reasons of internal consistency across the book, English spelling is used for names of places, persons, and literary works where common. If there is no common English spelling, Latinized spelling or Greek transcriptions are used depending on the context of the literary tradition in question (e.g. Athanasios of Alexandria, Sulpicius Severus). References to titles of specific works (or parts thereof) are not only capitalized but also italicized (e.g. *Passion of Babylas*).

The abbreviations of Greek/Byzantine Christian texts are derived from Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (*PGL*). Other Greek and Latin texts and authors are cited using the conventions of the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (*OCD*) or otherwise the *Greek-English Lexicon* edited by Liddell, Scott, Jones, and McKenzie (*LSJ*, for Greek), and the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (for Latin). Books of the Bible (Old Testament, New Testament, and apocrypha) are abbreviated according to the *Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style*, 2nd edition (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). In the bibliography, abbreviations of periodicals used are those of *L'Année Philologique*. Other abbreviations will be explained in the context. In addition, this book uses the following abbreviations:

AASS	*Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by Socii Bollandiani (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1643–1940)
AByzF	*Acta Byzantina Fennica* (Helsinki)
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, ed. by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, Part I (vols 1–4) and Part II (vols 1–37.3) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972–)
AP	*Apophthegmata Patrum*
BHG	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, ed. by François Halkin, Subsidia hagiographica, 8, 3rd edn (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957 [1895])

BHL *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis*, ed. by Socii Bollandiani (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1899, 1900–1901)
BHO *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*, ed. by Socii Bollandiani, Subsidia hagiographica, 10 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1910)
Bon. Pat. Cyprian of Carthage, *De bono patientiae*
BMGS *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (Birmingham)
ByzF *Byzantinische Forschungen*
CHRC *Church History and Religious Culture*
COED *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by John A. Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
CollCist *Collectanea Cisterciensia: revue de spiritualité monastique* (Forges-lez-Chimay)
DNP *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. by Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, 16 vols (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1996–2007)
DS *Daniel Scetiotes Dossier*
FMLS *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (Oxford)
GRAA Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique Antique
HL Palladios, *Historia Lausiaca/Lausiac History*
HME *History of the Monks in Egypt*
MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Munich)
LSJ *Greek-English Lexicon, With a Revised Supplement*, ed. by Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
OCD *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. by Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
Od. Homer, *Odyssey*
ODB *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. by Alexander Kazhdan, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
PG *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857–1866)
PGL *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. by Gerhard W. H. Lampe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961)
PL *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1844–1855)
PLS *Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum*, ed. by Adalbert-Gautier Hamman (Turnhout: Brepols, 1900–1974)
PO *Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. by Philippe Luisier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1903–)
RAM *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* (Paris)
RH Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Religious History*
ROC *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* (Paris)
SicGym *Siculorum Gymnasium: A Journal for the Humanities* (Catania)
StudPatr Studia Patristica (Leuven)
VL Vita Latina

Koen De Temmerman

Saints, Narratives, and Hero(in)es

Scholarship, Definitions, and Concepts

Narratives

In the broadest terms, this book examines late antique and medieval hagiography — a modern umbrella term to which I return below — as narrative.[1] Historically speaking, this approach has only been established relatively recently in the field. For a long time after its emergence in the Counter-Reformation, scholarship on hagiography was driven both by a distinct interest in questions of authorship and authenticity, and by a tendency to mine texts for factually reliable data about persecutions, cults of saints, and liturgical practices.[2] This intellectual bias towards authenticity and historicity had profound consequences for the study of hagiography well into the twentieth century. The study of martyr accounts is a case in point. On the one hand, a disproportionate amount of attention has traditionally been paid to the earliest accounts,[3] which were written close to the time of the persecutions that they (purport to) describe (i.e. dating from the second, third, and early fourth centuries) and were therefore thought to provide fairly reliable historical documentation for them. On the other hand, later accounts (i.e. those written long after the persecutions) have typically received much less attention. Both their remoteness in time and the fact that they are more imaginative as well

1 I would like to thank Evelien Bracke, Jan Bremmer, Klazina Staat, and Julie Van Pelt for comments on an earlier draft of this chapter and/or editorial support. This chapter was written with the support of the European Research Council under the European Union's seventh framework programme (Starting Grant Agreement no. 337344) and the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant Agreement no. 819459).

2 For example, *Fasti sanctorum*, ed. by Rosweyde. On this tendency, see e.g. Rapp, 'Epiphanius of Salamis', p. 181; and Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh*, p. 115; Walker, 'Hagiography as History', pp. 31–32.

3 See Rebillard, *Greek and Latin Narratives about the Ancient Martyrs*, pp. 2–14 for a review of the history of collecting martyr acts.

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as more complex and elaborate in their narrative were reason enough for scholars to look at them with suspicion.[4] The state of scholarship on martyr acts, in other words, has been impacted significantly by scholars' traditional concern with 'separating the historical wheat from the fictional chaff', as two scholars put it eloquently in a recent study on hagiography.[5]

Nowhere is the systematic neglect of accounts that were felt to be too imaginative to be historically reliable more visible than in editorial practice: the Bollandists published no fewer than sixty-eight volumes of editions of late antique and medieval hagiographical texts in their 'Acta Sanctorum' between 1634 and 1940. (They also published a number of supporting series, such as 'Analecta Bollandiana' and 'Subsidia hagiographica'.) The subsequent identification of an ever-increasing number of these texts as 'not authentic' or 'spurious', however, prevented their inclusion in later editions.[6] Even when an influential Bollandist like Hippolyte Delehaye criticized the decision to include only historically reliable Lives in the 'Acta Sanctorum' and suggested that literary interests ('l'intérêt littéraire')[7] would be better served by a more inclusive approach,[8] the editors were slow to act.

Since the mid-twentieth century, although the quest for factual accuracy and authenticity no longer monopolizes scholarship, the historical interest has remained largely dominant in the field, and ample attention has been paid to hagiographical writings as sources for social history, theology, church history, and the history of gender and sexuality.[9] Less attention has been paid to narrative qualities of hagiography in their own right.[10] James Corke-Webster

4 See Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, pp. 236–315 on the later, so-called 'epic' Passions as 'productions artificielles' (p. 236), in contrast to the earlier, historical ones; see also Ameling, 'Vorwort', pp. 11–12 on the literary character of post-Nicene (as opposed to pre-Nicene) martyr acts.

5 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 2. On the history of research specifically into martyr acts, see Praet, 'Legenda aut non legenda?', pp. 156–70. See Bowersock, Brown, and Grabar, eds, *Late Antiquity* for comparable observations on some Lives that have traditionally been perceived to be historically accurate (e.g. Athanasios's *Life of Antony* and Sulpicius Severus's *Life of Martin*) and have therefore been studied both more extensively and more systematically than other Lives.

6 See De Temmerman and Praet, 'Martyrs and Life-Writing in Late Antiquity', pp. 376–77 for an overview.

7 Delehaye, *À travers trois siècles*, pp. 92–93.

8 Delehaye, *À travers trois siècles*, pp. 92–96. This was also noted by Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender*, pp. 8–9, with reference to the English translation of Delehaye, *À travers trois siècles*.

9 Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender*, pp. 4–7; Efthymiadis, 'Introduction', pp. 1–14; Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 19–24, and Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', pp. 1–6 offer more or less detailed overviews of the history of scholarship on (certain branches of) hagiography.

10 von Contzen, *The Scottish Legendary*, pp. 10–15 contextualizes this observation and rightly calls it 'remarkable' (p. 10), since narrative traditionally plays such a prominent role in Christian discourse. For more detail on the fundamental role of narrative in Christianity, see Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, pp. 89–119, and Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication' on concepts of narrative in hagiography in particular.

and Christa Gray sensibly look for an explanation for this tendency in the hagiographical texts themselves,[11] which generally are not only full of theological overtones, but also reveal their edifying purposes via a strongly moral and didactic agenda, all of which may be difficult to square with modern literary concerns. At the same time, another part of the explanation may lie in the traditional classifications of modern-day academia. Classicists and ancient historians, for example, have been studying the narrative qualities of texts for a long time, but until the 1970s those venturing into Late Antiquity mainly paid attention to pagan authors while leaving Christian literature from the same period largely to church historians and theologians.[12] Even though this situation has changed dramatically, especially since the publication of Peter Brown's 1971 work *The World of Late Antiquity: From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad*, and even though Late Antiquity has long been studied in more integrated ways through pagan, Christian, and Jewish documents alike, this change has not always impacted research on hagiography, where some traditions continue to receive more attention than others, as I have observed above.

In this book we approach hagiographical accounts as narrative constructions meriting scholarly attention in their own right, thereby inscribing ourselves in, and contributing to, a growing body of relatively recent scholarship. Over time more scholars have realized that reading hagiographical accounts simply as repositories of historical facts may not be the most productive way forward, and have rightly suggested that historical accuracy may, in fact, not even have been the authors' primary concern.[13] Such insights have contributed to the development of a scholarly rationale which increasingly values imaginative and fictional aspects of hagiography, for example for answering broader questions about narrative creativity and ideology.[14]

Furthermore, scholars of Late Antiquity have emphasized that an investigation of textual and rhetorical qualities of discourse can enhance our understanding of texts and their contexts — an insight introduced into early

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11 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 4.

12 On this tendency, see also Bremmer and Formisano, eds, *Perpetua's Passions*, p. 120. See Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, pp. 3–4 on the traditional division between patristics and (social) history.

13 See, for example, Gemeinhardt and Leemans, 'Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity', pp. 1–4 on the significant differences between versions of the martyrdom of Euphemia of Chalcedon and the fundamental questions they raise about the historical value of hagiographical texts, and Déroche, Ward-Perkins, and Wiśniewski, eds, *Culte des saints et littérature hagiographique* on interconnections between cults of saints and hagiographical literature.

14 Like the Bollandists, Elliot, *Roads to Paradise*, among others, is mainly concerned with sifting fact from fiction, but unlike the Bollandists, pays more attention to fiction than to fact. Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints* is another good example of an increased sensitivity with regard to imaginative aspects of hagiographical narrative constructions, specifically eroticism. Monge, San Chirico, and Smith, 'Introduction', p. 1 explicitly state that hagiographical accounts have been read increasingly as 'sophisticated narrative technologies'.

Christian studies by Averil Cameron[15] and picked up in this book, specifically in Part II, where individual chapters examine how hagiographical accounts mobilize and capitalize on both literary and rhetorical traditions. Even thirty years ago Cameron stated that the kind of post-structuralist analysis that had been common in the study of the gospels for some time (and in New Testament studies more generally) 'crie[d] out to be carried over into other early Christian literature'.[16] This insight has impacted the study of early Christian prose narrative of the second and third centuries, such as the apocryphal acts of the apostles, the Ps.-Clementines, and (some) early martyr acts to some degree.[17] Since both the gospels and the acts of the apostles (both canonical and apocryphal) provided models and motifs for later hagiography, it is not surprising that these texts and their scholarship have, in turn, proved inspirational for the study of hagiography.[18]

Even so, the apparatus of narratological analysis is only beginning to be introduced into the latter field.[19] Admittedly, there has been no shortage in recent decades of journal articles and book chapters that, in one way or another, examine the narrative qualities of individual hagiographical accounts for specific purposes.[20] There are even a few (edited) books dedicated to this broad approach, but none of these has our specific thematic focus, to which I return below. In one fine example, Arietta Papaconstantinou, Muriel Debié, and Hugh Kennedy map several textual and narrative qualities of hagiography in relation to historiography specifically and explore what the overlaps between the two genres can tell us about how authors reconstructed the past.[21] A recent volume edited by Christoph Brunhorn, Peter Gemeinhardt, and Maria Munkholt Christensen

15 Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*.

16 Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 3.

17 See e.g. Perkins, *The Suffering Self*; Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, and Bremmer and Formisano, eds, *Perpetua's Passions*.

18 See e.g. Cooper, 'Of Romance and Mediocritas' on how the *Passio Anastasiae* recycles plot patterns from the apocryphal acts of the apostles, and Bossu, 'Quick-Witted Women' for a literary analysis of a selection of Latin post-Nicene martyr acts.

19 Just as Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 3 does for early Christian literature, Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, 'Von der Erschliessung spätantiker Text-Welten', p. 5 adduce New Testament studies as a *comparans e contrario* to highlight the absence of narratology- and intertextuality-based research from studies of hagiography. See also Gemeinhardt, 'Christian Hagiography and Narratology', who notes the same lacuna, and Conermann and Rheingans, 'Narrative Patterns and Genre in Hagiographic Life Writing', p. 7, who characterize narratological exploration of hagiography as still being in its infancy.

20 See e.g. Guidorizzi, 'Motivi fiabeschi nell'agiografia bizantina'; Kazhdan, *History of Byzantine Literature*, pp. 154–61, 284–85, 300–01; Nilsson, 'Desire and God have Always been Around'; Jazdzewska, 'Hagiographic Invention and Imitation'; Hägg, 'The "Life of St Antony" Between Biography and Hagiography'; Leemans, 'The Martyrdom of Sabas the Goth'; Gemeinhardt, 'Christian Hagiography and Narratology'; Morgan, 'The Monk's Story'; and Vuković, 'The Early Christian Martyrdom Narratives', pp. 288–91.

21 Papaconstantinou, Debié, and Kennedy, eds, *Writing 'True Stories'*.

is comparable to the previous in that it also examines hagiographical accounts as literary rather than historical texts ('als *literarische* Texte', italics original) and asks which intertextual and narrative strategies are used to tell stories about saints.[22] It is significant that the contributions to the latter book are presented metaphorically as 'exploratory drills for oil' ('Probebohrungen'),[23] a metaphor aptly capturing the notion of hagiography as a vast reservoir of material waiting to be unearthed and explored in detail. The common focus of both the work of Papaconstantinou, Debié, and Kennedy and that of Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, namely the questions of how stories are told and how story-worlds are (re)constructed,[24] is shared by this present volume, but unlike the volumes mentioned, this book explores these questions specifically to address the narrative (re)construction of characters.

Another rich, solid, and recent book-length treatment of narrativity, textuality, and discursivity in late antique hagiography is the collection of articles edited by Christa Gray and James Corke-Webster.[25] Like Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen (and like the present book), they explore 'the decisions that authors of successive hagiographical works made about writing, selecting, arranging, and presenting their material' and analyse 'the forms and structures chosen to shape and reshape the material presented'.[26] Whereas Corke-Webster and Gray aim to trace a 'process of evolution' underlying hagiographical discourses and thus see their book as 'a study of development' that largely encompasses not just saints, but also authors and audiences,[27] we focus more strictly on narrative constructions of saints within individual texts.

Hagiography

Before clarifying the thematic approach of this volume, it is necessary to introduce the corpus of texts that we address, particularly the notoriously vague concept of hagiography. Whereas scholars agree that it is important to understand saints in the study of Late Antiquity,[28] opinions differ on what

22 Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, *Narratologie und Intertextualität* (citation from pp. 1-2).

23 Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, 'Von der Erschliessung spätantiker Text-Welten', p. 18.

24 Papaconstantinou, Debié, and Kennedy, eds, *Writing 'True Stories'*; Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, eds, *Narratologie und Intertextualität*.

25 Gray and Corke-Webster, eds, *The Hagiographical Experiment*.

26 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 13.

27 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 9.

28 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 2 note both rightly and eloquently that, since Peter Brown's work on the holy man has been so influential in the study of Late Antiquity, 'it is not an exaggeration to claim that late antiquity as an area of study stands upon the shoulders of saints'.

exactly hagiography is. The Greek term *hagios* (like the Latin *sanctus*) has been widespread since the fourth century,[29] but our modern English compound (with its literal meaning of either 'holy writing' or 'writing (about) holiness/holy people') dates to the seventeenth century[30] and has since been used to denote a wide variety of textual material. While Delehaye, for example, defines hagiography as a corpus of texts inspired by or aimed at the propagation of a cult, others have noted, correctly, that much of the extant material does not fit this definition.[31] Today, most scholars use a fairly loose, inclusive definition of hagiography. Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, for example, read the term in the widest sense according to its etymology as describing phenomena that thematize holiness ('das [Be-]Schreiben von Phänomenen […] in denen "Heiligkeit" thematisiert wird') and explain that, in this sense, holiness is not so much an external quality ('etwas an und für sich Bestehendes') as a predicate attributed to a person by the texts themselves ('als Resultat einer Zuschreibung').[32]

One recent authoritative dictionary of Late Antiquity is more specific and defines hagiography as 'a broad designation encompassing a variety of literary forms in both prose and verse that take the life and/or the actions of a holy person as their subject'.[33] This definition takes 'hagiography' as an umbrella term that covers a vast number of types of texts. Scholars commonly divide these into subgenres such as saints' Lives, miracle collections, collections of sayings, edifying tales, acts of apostles, and martyr acts.[34] But such a classification gives an impression of the material that is much tidier than the material itself, with its staggering variety in terms of length, style, form, and narrative layout.[35] Even within individual 'subgenres' there is no general formal unity.[36] It is not surprising, then, that it has been a matter of debate in

29 Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, 'Von der Erschliessung spätantiker Text-Welten', p. 3.

30 See *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com) s.v. hagiography. Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, pp. 5–6 makes reference to Dionysius the Areopagite (sixth century), for whom the adjective *hagiographos* describes not the Lives of saints but the divinely inspired scriptures.

31 Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques*, p. 2. See e.g. Wiśniewski, 'Relate and Retell', p. 64 on fourth- and fifth-century Lives in general, and the Lives of Antony, Paul of Thebes, and Malchus in particular, as texts not written as cultic texts (even if they were used as such at a later stage).

32 Brunhorn, Gemeinhardt, and Munkholt Christensen, 'Von der Erschliessung spätantiker Text-Welten', p. 3.

33 *ODLA*, s.v. 'saints' Lives', pp. 1320–22 (Insley).

34 Praet, 'Legenda aut non legenda?', pp. 152–53 similary defines hagiography as a collective noun for all writings on the saints (both martyrs and non-martyrs), including several subgenres. Conermann and Rheingans, 'Narrative Patterns and Genre in Hagiographic Life Writing', p. 7, for their part, would prefer to see a closer text-based definition.

35 Some texts are in prose, others in verse; some are first-person narratives, others take the form of letters, some are orations, and yet others are presented as eyewitness reports. On the (variety of) formal characteristics of hagiography, see Praet, 'Holy Men', pp. 370–72.

36 On martyr acts, for example, see De Temmerman and Praet, 'Martyrs and Life-Writing in Late Antiquity', pp. 375–76.

the study of hagiography for some time now how one should conceptualize late antique accounts of saints and their lives in connection with other types of narrative. The most straightforward conceptualization of hagiography as a genre alongside other genres dates back as far as Theodoret of Cyrrhus who, towards the middle of the fifth century, saw a place for Lives of saints among the classic genres of the epic, history, tragedy, and comedy.[37] Naturally, given hagiography's focus on the lives, actions, and words of saints, scholars have long noted (and built upon) its similarities with ancient biography, and indeed, have conceptualized saints' Lives as a genre originating in the fourth century with Athanasios of Alexandria's *Life of Antony*.[38]

But since ancient biography, like hagiography, does not seem to exhibit any formal characteristics that lend themselves to a straightforward definition,[39] this association has not necessarily resulted in greater conceptual clarity. In fact, in order to come to terms with the uncertainties surrounding the concepts of both biography and hagiography, scholars have been devising creative metaphors. Tomas Hägg, for example, rightly warns against drawing borders between different types of ancient and late antique Life-writing 'where the authors themselves so obviously moved over mapless terrain'.[40] Danny Praet agrees with this and suggests replacing the metaphor of space with one of music, 'where certain themes are repeated but with new material and variations on old themes, played with different instruments, sampled and remastered, and so on'.[41] James Corke-Webster and Christa Gray allow for similar flexibility when they conceive of hagiography as a system of family resemblances: 'works about "saints" — subjects considered holy in some sense by their authors — need have no one shared feature, but rather are all part of a family that each share some features with each other'.[42] Some scholars have gone even further and suggested that the very notion of genre is not ideal

37 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Religious History*, Prologue 2. Cf. Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, p. 6; pp. 196–97.

38 Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, pp. 5–7 provides a useful discussion of hagiography as a genre and its history, also attending to its forms' and structures' indebtedness to modes of Graeco-Roman biography. See Priessnig, 'Die biographischen Formen der griechischen Heiligenlegenden' on hagiography and biographical forms. De Temmerman, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Biography* is a survey of ancient (and late antique) biography that deals with hagiography as one of the forms of Life-writing.

39 On definitions of ancient biography, see De Temmerman, 'Writing (About) Ancient Lives'.

40 Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity*, p. xi.

41 Praet, 'Holy Men', p. 370.

42 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', pp. 6–7. The same metaphor has also shaped scholarship on ancient biography. Burridge, *What Are The Gospels?*, p. 38 draws on Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblance to conceptualize different types of biographical writing — in his view, gospels would have been recognized by ancient readers as (belonging to the family of) *bioi* because they have a number of characteristics in common with other works labelled as *bioi*. Williams, *Authorised Lives*, p. 5 sees Christian and non-Christian biography as 'siblings', and Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, p. 24 uses the same metaphor to distinguish Christian biography from acts of the Christian martyrs.

for capturing the complexities of hagiographical narrative.[43] Most famously perhaps, Marc Van Uytfanghe sees hagiography not as a genre but rather as a type of discourse ('discours hagiographique') that pervades several genres, such as biography, novels, and panegyric.[44]

Clearly, given the variety of the extant material, it is difficult to make general claims about hagiographical narrative. Instead, it is one of the aims of this book to offer a detailed analysis of specific texts, to allow for differentiated scholarly appreciation.[45] More specifically, this volume pays attention primarily to Lives and martyr acts (and, to a lesser extent, edifying tales) because these subgenres (if we can call them that) offer the most relevant material in terms of narrative analysis in general and our thematic approach, to which I turn below, in particular. As for their time of composition, most of them date from between the fourth and eighth centuries, although we have also included later texts, and a small number of earlier ones, where thematically appropriate. In order to achieve some balance between breadth and depth, the book offers chapters that aim to trace patterns across entire corpora or subcorpora (e.g. Chapters 2, 3, and 6) as well as chapters that focus on one or two individual texts (e.g. Chapter 5) or groups of texts dealing with the same saints (e.g. Chapters 7 and 8).

Hero(in)es

As the title of this book suggests, our thematic focus is on heroes and heroines. This focus addresses an essential aspect of the narrative construction of hagiographical accounts, as illustrated by Van Uytfanghe's notion of the 'discours hagiographique'. Drawing inspiration from Michel de Certeau,[46] Van Uytfanghe identifies one essential quality of hagiographic discourse as the presence of a hero or heroine who has specific exemplary Christian values and norms, and on whom the story is based. This book, in other words, is not a contribution to the work of the so-called 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule', which asks whether and how we can conceptualize Christian

43 For similar criticism of the concept of genre for an approach towards ancient biography, see *OCD*, s.v. 'biography, Greek', p. 232 (Pelling).

44 Van Uytfanghe, 'Heiligenverehrung II'. The concept is vaguely comparable to that of 'the biographic', which Edwards and Swain, eds, *Portraits* suggest for studying ancient biography — not so much a strictly delineated genre as a broader category, a trait, or a set of traits present not just in biographies, but also in a variety of other texts (Swain, 'Biography and Biographic', p. 1). Gemeinhardt, 'Christian Hagiography and Narratology', p. 23 agrees that hagiography is not at all a fixed genre.

45 See also Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 11 for a sensible warning against blanket judgements, given the 'extraordinary variety of material'.

46 de Certeau, 'Hagiographie'; de Certeau, 'Une variante'.

saints as successors of pagan heroes.[47] Rather, its title is a play on two other important meanings of the word 'hero(ine)'. First, given our interest in hagiography as narrative, we adopt the term 'hero(ine)' as a concept referring quite simply to the main character in a story.[48] Indeed, Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chapter 2) explores the dynamics between protagonists and minor characters in a wide variety of Byzantine hagiography and examines how Lives appropriate earlier accounts to construct these dynamics. He demonstrates not only that in this interplay the characterization of protagonists often intersects with doxological issues, but also that minor characters are sometimes semantically invested to the extent that they become so-called 'secondary heroes' in hagiographical narratives otherwise centred around a single hero.

The second definition of the English term 'hero(ine)' is also relevant to our purposes, namely an extraordinary character exhibiting both exemplary behaviour and a set of specific qualities that distinguish them from others.[49] As it happens, from a modern, religious point of view, this notion of heroism is intimately linked with that of sainthood. The *Corpus iuris canonici*, for example, which dates from the first half of the eighteenth century, explicitly states that one of the crucial questions to be addressed in canonization procedures is whether a person possessed both the theological and the cardinal Christian virtues 'to a heroic degree' ('in gradu heroico').[50] Moreover, the close connection between sainthood and the essential aspects of what we refer to as heroism today is also borne out by the late antique and medieval texts with which we are concerned in this book. Indeed, what characterizes many hagiographical stories is their portrayal of saints as individuals who distinguish themselves from others specifically through their devotion to God and their embodiment of essential Christian values, and who exhibit these values in extraordinary ways (for example by performing miracles,[51] inspiring followers, undergoing physical torture, or embracing asceticism)[52]

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47 Bremmer, 'From Heroes to Saints' gives a detailed and balanced survey of differences and similarities between Greek heroes and Christian saints; Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 25–29 surveys scholarship on questions of continuity between Graeco-Roman cultic models and Christian saints. On the meaning of the Greek term *hērōs* (including its divine associations), see Bremmer, 'From Heroes to Saints', pp. 37–38.

48 See *COED*, s.v. 'hero' (4): 'the chief […] personage in a […] story'.

49 See, for example, *COED*, s.v. 'hero' (2), 'heroine' (2), 'heroism'.

50 Canon 2104, as discussed by Mulder-Bakker, 'The Invention of Saintliness', p. 4.

51 On the performance of miracles as an advertisement of the individuals' holiness, see Humphries, 'Saints and Hagiography', p. 504. On miracles as a rhetorical trope in Christian discourse that allows the articulation of the relation between the human and the divine worlds, see Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, pp. 60–61.

52 On martyrs and ascetics as two types of heroes of the faith, see Humphries, 'Saints and Hagiography', pp. 503–07. On asceticism as bloodless martyrdom, see Baumeister, 'Heiligenverehrung I', pp. 136–39.

in order to defend and propagate the faith.[53] At the same time, hagiographical accounts clearly construct saints as examples of Christians who inspire imitation and devotion in others, be it characters within the text or audiences who read or hear it.[54]

When we conceive of saints as heroic figures in this sense, as scholars often do,[55] we can identify a number of markers — prominent to different degrees in different traditions and subcorpora — that single them out as extraordinary characters, for example a noble death,[56] or the exhibition of moral virtues,[57] including the rejection of marriage and cultivation of chastity and virginity (especially for female saints).[58] Hagiographical accounts also typically mobilize paradigms from the Old Testament,[59] the New Testament,[60]

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53 See Gemeinhardt, 'Christian Hagiography and Narratology' on the declaration of values attributable to a special individual as inherent to both martyr acts and Lives, and Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 1 on the consideration of saints as extraordinary because of their devotion to God.

54 See Cooper, 'Of Romance and Mediocritas', pp. 107–08 on martyr acts constructing 'appealing' Christian exempla, whose struggle to preserve their bodily and spiritual purity 'was meant to afford morally elevating contemplation to an audience less exemplary than themselves'; see Van Uytfanghe, 'La biographie classique et l'hagiographie chrétienne antique tardive', p. 234 on 'exemplifier un ethos' as one of the markers of hagiographical discourse, and Mulder-Bakker, 'The Invention of Saintliness', pp. 8–12 on the quality of exemplarity in medieval hagiography in general.

55 See e.g. Van Uytfanghe, 'La formation du langage hagiographique en Occident latin' on different types of hagiographical discourse and the heroes' place in them; Krajewski, *Archetypal Narratives*, pp. 18–20 on hagiography as 'heroic biography'; Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 354–55 on the hero as saint, and Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 315–54 on 'l'héroïsation des martyrs'.

56 See van Henten, 'The Martyrs as Heroes of the Christian People' on noble death as a marker of heroism and martyrdom, and on the similarities and differences between the Christian and Jewish traditions; Bremmer, 'Imitation of Christ' on martyrs and their *imitatio Christi*, and Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, p. 4 on the glorious death of martyrs as an inversion of pagan heroism.

57 See Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 263–354 on hagiography as a discourse of virtue specifically in the acts of African martyrs, and on the Stoic background of some of their moral virtues. See Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 65 on *kartēria* towards the powerful as a philosophical virtue and its links with Christian martyrs.

58 See Consolino, 'Modelli di santità femminile' and Praet, 'Meliore cupiditate detentus' on the rejection of marriage in early martyr acts; Bossu, 'Quick-Witted Women' on virginity as Agnes' defining characteristic; Traulsen, 'Virginität und Lebensform' on virginity as a choice of life, and Burrus, 'Life after Death' and Scourfield, 'Violence and the Christian Heroine' on eroticization strategies used in the depiction of women in Gregory of Nazianzus and Jerome.

59 See e.g. van Henten, 'The Martyrs as Heroes of the Christian People' on the notion of exemplariness in conceptualizing heroism in II and IV Maccabees and the Christian tradition.

60 See Löhr, 'Paulus als Vorbild des Sterbens' on Paul as a model in early Christianity (in apocryphal acts and, to a lesser extent, martyr literature); Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, pp. 15–62 on biblical narrative, biblical composition, and biblical models in construction of authority; Wiśniewski, 'Relate and Retell', pp. 76–81 on Sulpicius Severus's attribution of sayings and doings taken from stories about Egyptian fathers to Martin.

or non-biblical traditions to invest their characters with meaning.[61] They also typically characterize saints by using a fixed set of metaphors, for instance describing believers and martyrs as 'slaves of Christ',[62] and ascetics as martyrs.[63]

In this book we take these general observations into two directions. First, we ask how exactly — that is, with which narrative techniques — saints are depicted as heroes.[64] Unlike fictional heroes, saints and martyrs also exist in various cultural registers outside the texts that depict them; they have existed, or are believed to have existed, as historical persons and are often commemorated in religious culture and liturgy. Therefore, it can be proposed that hagiographers do not construct their heroes purely from their imagination (as authors of fiction do) but reconstruct them from legendary or historical material.[65] Four chapters of this book survey some of the narrative complexities behind these processes by exploring how such reconstructions draw upon various traditions.[66] Chapters 3 and 4 analyse how hagiographers marshal different literary and rhetorical traditions in the constructions of their heroes. In a study of African Lives and Passions ranging from the second to the fourth centuries, Sabine Fialon (Chapter 3) demonstrates that the narrative texture underlying depictions of the saints as models of sanctity is intimately connected with specific rhetorical concepts, especially those originating in epideictic rhetoric.[67] At the same time, the construction of these saints is shown to be more polyphonic in that they are also defined by models of heroism drawn from other traditions, such as the Stoic sage and the epic hero. Anne Alwis (Chapter 4) also essentially builds on the importance of rhetoric for the characterization of saints. She examines how two female martyrs, Ia and Tatiana, were rewritten as orators in Byzantium (in the middle and late

61 See e.g. Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 315–54 on Sulpicius Severus presenting Martin as a third type of hero alongside Hector (an epic hero) and Socrates (a philosophical hero); see Fialon, 'L'imprégnation virgilienne' on Virgilian echoes in two African Passions; Consolino, 'La santità femminile' on different types of exempla in hagiographical constructions of female virtue, and Cooper, 'Of Romance and Mediocritas' on fictional models in the *Passio Anastasiae*.

62 See Bremmer, 'God and Christ in the Earlier Martyr Acts', pp. 242–43 on this trope in early martyr acts.

63 See Gemeinhardt, '"Vita Antonii" oder "Passio Antonii?"', pp. 88–99 on the martyrium terminology used in the *Life of Antony* to characterize Antony.

64 See Kazhdan, *History of Byzantine Literature*, pp. 400–03 on the importance of this question.

65 See Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, pp. 18–37 on this distinction between fictional and non-fictional characters in theory, and De Temmerman, 'Ancient Biography and Formalities of Fiction', pp. 7–12 on its relevance for the study of ancient Life-writing.

66 See Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', pp. 29–31 for an early discussion of the hagiographical hero as incorporating epic, tragic, and dramatic traditions.

67 On rhetoric providing a narrative toolkit for the construction of characters, see also De Temmerman, 'Ancient Rhetoric as a Hermeneutical Tool'. On the vitality of ancient rhetoric in literary production throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition*; Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, and specifically for Near Eastern cultures, Watt, 'Eastward and Westward Transmission of Classical Rhetoric'.

Byzantine periods respectively), how these acts of rewriting have resulted in the paring down of more traditional aspects of their characterization, such as their physical beauty, and how they became an inextricable part of Byzantium's literate, performative, and argumentative society.

As Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chapter 2) reminds us, a well-established technique from the hagiographical toolbox is for hagiographers to associate themselves with subjects, for example by presenting their stories as eyewitness accounts or by claiming other types of affinity.[68] In Chapter 5, Piet Gerbrandy focuses on a text from the ninth or early tenth century in which that general principle has been developed creatively along metanarrative lines. He explores how the authors of the *Life of St Gallus* associated their own writing process with the adventures of their protagonist, and how this affects both the depiction of their hero and the presentation of their own activities as biographers. Finally, Markéta Kulhánková (Chapter 6) examines how the construction of characters is defined and moulded by generic considerations and formats. She turns to edifying tales in three distinct corpora and demonstrates that, even if these are typically organized around character types, an investigation of specific characterization techniques can reveal a differentiated picture that takes into account the protagonists' spiritual transformation.

All these chapters encourage us to be open to the idea that (many) hagiographers were perhaps more skilful than is often acknowledged. Mark Humphries rightly notes that hagiography has long been regarded as 'little more than a whimsical devotional literature that served to instruct the docile faithful in tales of the heroic age of the church'.[69] Even if hagiographical texts have been subjected to a more critical approach since the scholarship of Delehaye and Brown, it is fair to add, as I have clarified above and as Humphries also notes, that to date much of this critical rehabilitation has addressed primarily historical questions. Our book, then, aims to contribute to this debate with a focus on narrative.

In addition, this book takes narrative (re)constructions of saints into another direction. We aim to add complexity to one of the most prominent statements in scholarship about the characterization of saints in hagiography, the statement that hagiographical accounts are virtually always about the simple glorification of saints who cannot be described further beyond their stereotypical moral perfection. Indeed, this idea is rooted so deeply in our culture that the term 'hagiography' itself has become a figure of speech to denote it.[70] Certainly, much

68 See e.g. Humphries, 'Saints and Hagiography', p. 510. On hagiographical writing as an ascetic act of devotion in itself, see Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*.

69 Humphries, 'Saints and Hagiography', p. 502.

70 See e.g. Smith, 'Devotion, Critique, and the Reading of Christian Saints' Lives', p. 23 on the pejorative connotations of that term in vernacular discourse (supposedly being 'thoughtlessly affective', lacking 'intellectual rigor', noting 'a paucity of truth, and an excess of emotion', and 'creating images that are false in their perfection').

hagiography does invite such appreciations.[71] Chapters 7 and 8 of this book, by contrast, suggest that this may not be the full picture. This insight resonates once more with recent scholarship which has argued, for example, that none other than Jerome was interested in exploring morally complex characterization in his depiction of Malchus, including aspects of failure and transgressive behaviour.[72] Less known authors or redactors also probed into more ambivalent aspects of saints: the author of the Latin *Passio of Agnes*, for example, characterizes the saint as cunning and manipulative;[73] the Latin *Passio of Caecilia* revolves more around complex characterization than it does around typification;[74] and in the Greek *Life of Mary of Egypt* the central character Zosimas becomes complacent and proud.[75] As Corke-Webster and Gray remark more generally, '[i]n the extant hagiographical corpus the cleancut saint of popular imagination rubs shoulders with cavorting, incompetent, petulant, and even murderous saints'.[76]

Occasionally some chapters in our book point in the same direction,[77] but the final two chapters have a more dedicated interest in depictions of variously complex saints in common. For example, some hagiographers raise ethical issues about saints rather than simply and straightforwardly proclaiming and celebrating their moral perfection. Whereas Sabine Fialon (Chapter 3) explores how the hagiographer's art essentially revolves around the notion of praise, Christian Høgel (Chapter 7) thematizes moral complexity in his reading of Byzantine Lives of so-called doctor saints. While hagiography often eschews material concerns and is explicitly not interested in material advantages, the depictions of doctor saints, Høgel argues, are quite different in that they raise ethical questions about the spending of money, which in turn relates to contemporary debates about poverty and power. He also proposes that the Lives of doctor saints are ambiguous and paradoxical in

71 See e.g. Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', pp. 29–31 on 'the hero' in medieval hagiography as being 'very weakly individualized […] the cop[y] of a common prototype'; see Van Uytfanghe, 'Heiligenverehrung II', p. 156 on the idealization of saints as a function of hagiographical discourse; Gemeinhardt, 'Christian Hagiography and Narratology', p. 35 on hagiographers' lack of interest in the saint's intellectual, emotional, or mental development as being conducive to typification, and Fialon, *Mens immobilis*, pp. 263–313 on African martyrs exhibiting all characteristics of perfection.

72 See Gray, 'The Monk and the Ridiculous', pp. 115–21; Gray, 'How to Persuade a Saint', p. 242 on the Latin version, and Staat, Van Pelt, and De Temmerman, 'The Greek Vita Malchi', pp. 101–05 on its (anonymous) Greek retelling.

73 Bossu, 'Quick-Witted Women', pp. 99–114.

74 Bossu, De Temmerman, and Praet, 'The Saint as an Astute Heroine'.

75 Andreou, 'Many Faces, a Single Pair', p. 110; p. 114.

76 Corke-Webster and Gray, 'Introduction', p. 11. See also van't Spijker, 'Saints and Despair' on vanity, doubts, and despair complicating the flawlessness of the saint (in western hagiography), and Franco, 'Psychological Introspection and the Image of Sanctity' on the psychological characterization of both martyrs and persecutors in Byzantine *passiones*.

77 See e.g. Efthymiadis (Chapter 2) on Niketas David Paphlagon's depiction of Ignatios the Patriarch as not straightforwardly ideal, and Kulhánková (Chapter 6) on the suboptimal quality of haughtiness in edifying tales, and on spiritual transformation.

the sense that those who deal with the so-called *anargyroi* (the moneyless) focus on these issues the most.

Whereas Høgel addresses Christian re-evaluations of wealth and poverty, Virginia Burrus (Chapter 8) takes the idea of less-than-ideal character to another level in her analysis of Lives of the fourth-century saint Constantina, whose rhetorical abilities and educational background are reminiscent of the virgin martyrs discussed by Anne Alwis (Chapter 4). Not only may this saint present behaviour that is not to be directly imitated, and thereby challenge the generic protocols so often said to be at work in hagiography, but the textual tradition itself also raises fundamental questions about who the saint really is in the first place: since there is no single, stable Life, there is no single, stable heroine, but rather 'a kaleidoscopic array of shifting portraits' — an observation that fundamentally challenges any assumption that hagiography typically deals with saintly saints.

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Stephanos Efthymiadis

Saints and Secondary Heroes in Byzantine Hagiography

Both the Hellenistic and Roman eras saw the rise of the hero-centred narrative, a literary form that dominated different genres and authors from Apollodoros's epic poetry to Polybios's historiography and from Plutarch's biography to imperial panegyric and the erotic romance. Although not all these authors and genres necessarily reserved praise and an idealized portrayal for their principal characters, they did give much greater prominence to them in their narrative than they had been assigned in earlier literature. A few centuries later, this development, which undoubtedly mirrored the philosophical trends and social ideals of the post-classical world, reached its culmination in a new kind of discourse that we tend to associate with the wider phenomena of the rise of the holy man and the religious cult of saints. Different genres that are the scions, either close or distant descendants, or conflations of biography, panegyric, and romance, and that can be grouped under the umbrella of hagiography naturally adopted this hero-centred perspective in which the saint being celebrated stands out as the focus of the action and as the figure who governs the plot.

Simply by virtue of their subject matter, biographies and encomia of saints, the Passions of martyrs, and even accounts of translations of relics follow the protagonist's life from one stage to another, permitting only a limited number of changes in focus. Only collections of miracles and beneficial tales deviate significantly from this relatively prescribed course. Authors of miracle

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collections gathered stories usually featuring various unheroic protagonists, and compilers of 'spiritually beneficial' tales reduced the role of the holy man or woman to that of the catalyst of the story, thereby highlighting the edifying message that was to be derived from the account rather than its protagonist.[1]

As in pagan biographies and panegyrics, saints' Lives and encomia introduce the hero or heroine to the reader/listener at the outset, immediately after the encomiasts' admission of their reservations and fears of being unable to extol the subject's exemplary life in fitting terms. Following a laudatory preamble, the hero or the heroine is confronted with a sequence of events and influences in which various characters make cameo appearances or more significant contributions. On the positive side, these may be persons related to the hero or heroine through kinship, companionship, or also some spiritual bond, which includes masters, disciples, or beneficiaries of their miracle-working. On the negative side, more often than not, inimical figures like the saint's challengers or persecutors are contrasted with these benign figures. Though fewer in number than those that are on the positive side of the saint, these are, nevertheless, possessed with an abiding desire to do him or her harm. In hagiography, as in any kind of literature, secondary characters, both positive and negative, add to the intricacy of a story, which is always at risk of being dry and repetitious.

Unlike saints' Lives and encomia, the Passions of the martyrs are usually based on a rather straightforward narrative skeleton. Considerably more succinct, they report their subjects' basic biographical details briefly but dwell on the violent core of the story of their death. Echoing the gospel accounts of the trial and passion of Christ as well as the episodes of spiritual trials found in the Book of Daniel and the fourth Book of Maccabees, they naturally put the emphasis on the confrontation between their hero(es) and their persecutor(s) and on justifying the former's heroism in response to the cruelty of the ordeals imposed on them, which paves the way to their final martyrdom.[2] The potential for literary invention and elaboration in this type of emotional account, which evidently received widespread and enthusiastic acclaim throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is obviously limited, affording only quantitative rather than qualitative modifications. By this I mean, for instance, expanding on the dialogues between the martyr and the pagan tyrant, or intensifying the series of tortures that the martyr has to suffer until he or she meets a heroic death.

Variations in this set narrative pattern can be seen in the arrangement of events, the amount of tension introduced, and, as in saints' Lives and encomia, the embellishment of the frame story with both positive and negative secondary characters. Sometimes we are confronted with a kind of subversion, prompted by the author's concern to keep some sort of balance by treating the martyr and his/her opponent on equal terms. To achieve this

1 For these considerations, see Binggeli, 'Collections of Edifying Stories'.
2 Detoraki, 'Greek "Passions" of the Martyrs in Byzantium', pp. 61–66.

daring effect, the application of one specific literary device turns out to be a forceful tool. The anonymous *Passion of St Babylas* (BHG 205), a martyr from Antioch elaborately celebrated in John Chrysostom's famous homily (BHG 207), consists almost entirely of a dialogue between the hero and his persecutor. The non-dialogic parts are minimal, and serve only as connecting links between one section of conversation and another. As the martyr and the tyrant exchange words in equal measure and on equally serious terms, the reader comes away with the impression of a 'democratic debate' that is at odds with the typical saint-centred narrative.[3]

Taking their inspiration from biblical texts, the acts of the martyrs preceded the birth of Christian biography by almost two centuries and, in turn, constituted the narrative matrix of multiple later texts of a similar nature. Taking their cue from their pagan literary antecedents and their imitations, the hagiographical Lives of the saints represented not only longer but also much more elaborate and flexible works that required particular writing skills ranging from describing the protagonist's achievements to narrating episodes with a bearing on historical reality. Their audiences may have been identical to those that enjoyed the repetitive stories about heroic martyrs, but the audiences of biographies had higher expectations. Clearly, there was a divergence that, however, retained some rapprochements in the plotlines, for instance, the termination of the life of a saint in his or her martyrdom, or the appearance of a second important character in the narrative.

Opponents and Villains

In this chapter I argue that saints' Lives, *bioi*, could appropriate a secondary hero, or a co-protagonist, as a foil to their subject from the much more stereotyped accounts of Passions in the form of the martyr's persecutor, transformed into the protagonist's opponent. As is well known, the narratives of countless Passions were constructed from pairs of opponents and the exchange of dialogue between them.[4] Despite the similarities between all these texts, several differentiations occur regarding the role of the opponent and the introduction of secondary characters. For instance, in the *Passion of Barbara* (BHG 213–218) it is her pagan father, Dioskoros, who is identified as the archetypal villain and consequently the clash with his only daughter is the focal point of the dramatic account.[5] The figure of the father is given

3 The *Passion of St Babylas* was published in *Συλλογὴ παλαιστινῆς καὶ συριακῆς ἁγιολογίας*, ed. by Papadopoulos-Kerameus, pp. 75–84. On the points in which this Passion diverges from John Chrysostom's homily, see John Chrysostom, *Discourse on Blessed Babylas*, trans. by Schatkin and Harkins, pp. 52–53 n. 186 and n. 189; pp. 59–60.

4 Cf. Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, pp. 171–226, where the characters and themes of 'passions épiques' are outlined.

5 'Passion of Barbara', ed. by Viteau, pp. 89–99.

particular prominence, making him a lynchpin of the story, whereas Barbara remains a passive figure before she confesses her Christian faith. In a similar vein, the *Martyrdom of Theodotos* (BHG 1782 and BHG 1782a) retains this 'paired' narrative form, switching back and forth between the virtuous Christian Theodotos and Theoteknos, local ruler of Ankyra, apostate and persecutor of the Christians. The resemblance of the names is not accidental here.[6] In turn, the Passions of Nikephoros the Martyr (BHG 1331–1334) tell the story of two friends, a presbyter and a layman, who are in disagreement about something. Although he is about to be martyred, Saprikios the Presbyter continues to bear a grudge against Nikephoros and refuses to forgive him. As a result, Saprikios renounces his Christian faith, whereas Nikephoros suffers martyrdom.[7]

The contrast between a positive and a negative character (e.g. the tyrant), which was central to the dramatic construction of the Passions, could also be explored in similar terms in a saint's Life.[8] The intrusion or introduction of a second, negative, figure into a hagiographical account was well suited to highlighting the Christian ideal of the holy man's or woman's victory over those kinds of temptations that might also involve a great deal of opposition and polemic, especially on the part of advocates of heresy and worldly values. To begin with, this negative hero is latent, if omnipresent, in Athanasios of Alexandria's *Life of Antony*, which was instrumental in the proliferation of Christian biography, and more generally monastic literature, in Late Antiquity. Antony embodies the ideal hero in a biographical account shaped by the author's two-fold endeavour: first, to place his subject within the setting of the wild desert and present him as its conqueror, and second, to extend the impact of this paradigm beyond the confines of the desert. In his efforts to establish the Egyptian ascetic Antony as both a preacher and a model of doctrinal orthodoxy, Athanasios leads him through a climactic sequence of experiences which involve latent or open fights with the tempting devil. The confrontations range from verbal provocations to physical attacks and appear intermittently in the narrative, as a recurring theme.[9] The devil first appears after Antony's successful integration into the ascetic way of life. Evidently, the saint's struggle with the devil harks back to the opposition of the heroic martyr and the cruel tyrant, but the progression of events is reversed: the ascetic first withstands the tortures inflicted upon him and then triumphs over his opponent with words. Clearly, these intertextual resonances flesh out the idea that asceticism was a new form of martyrdom and that, in the period following persecutions, Antony emerged as the martyrs' true successor.[10]

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6 *Martyrdom of Theodotos*, ed. by de' Cavalieri.

7 'John of Sardis and the Metaphrasis of the Passio of St Nikephoros the Martyr', ed. by Efthymiadis.

8 Cf. Pratsch, 'Der Gegenspieler'; *Der hagiographische Topos*, pp. 170–83.

9 See Athanasios of Alexandria, *Life of Antony*, ed. by Bartelink, chs 5–6, 9, 11–13, 24, 40–42, and 52–53.

10 This particular theme is fully expanded in ch. 46.

Besides projecting an underlying argument, hagiographical texts that allocate considerable space to a figure who tempts, contests, or disputes the saintly hero or heroine are reinforced by his/her biographer with dramatic depth that commands the attention of the reader/listener. Moreover, at another level, they hint at the scepticism with which they were received either in their own lifetime or posthumously. Late antique hagiography has a large number of anti-heroes, be they Jews, heretics, sorcerers, demoniacs, or a combination of the above. In the *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger* (BHG 1689), which was composed not much later than the saint's death in 592, the impersonal figure of the devil who fights Antony in the desert is introduced in a more concrete fashion.[11] In this long work (actually, collection of miracles) a vast number of pilgrims come from afar to venerate the saint on his pillar. In this case the anonymous hagiographer does not set up an atmosphere of contemporary doctrinal polemic by including, for instance, a Miaphysite adversary for the saint, but gives considerable space to the shadowy figure of the Isaurian monk Angoulas. On several occasions, Angoulas, whose region of origin and malevolent-sounding name imply his brutality, tries to stem the flow of pilgrims by contesting Symeon's miraculous power.[12] As has rightly been noted, the need to demonstrate Symeon's holiness and promote his cult constantly was of higher priority for the hagiographer than the refutation of a particular heresy.[13]

Nonetheless, in other instances late antique hagiography traced the line of opposition between orthodoxy and heresy, once again in its own idiosyncratic fashion. In his introduction to the edition of the *Life of Markellos the Sleepless* (BHG 1027z), Gilbert Dagron shows that hagiographers, when choosing an opponent to the saint, would not usually pick the follower of a contemporary heresy, but rather the follower of an almost forgotten one, such as Arianism.[14] In cases where tensions involved more delicate matters, a considerable period of time needed to pass before the antithesis could be highlighted. Similarly, a century or two needed to elapse before the events that finally led John Chrysostom into exile could be elaborated upon in writing, namely his confrontation with Theophilos, Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Empress Eudoxia. Thus it was only through the works of his later biographers between the seventh and the tenth centuries, like Theodore of Trimithous (BHG 872), George of Alexandria (BHG 873), and Niketas David (BHG 876k), that allusions to these conflicts in Palladios's *Dialogue* (BHG 870), in Bishop Martyrios's *Funeral Oration* (BHG 871), and in the works

11 On its date see *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, ed. and trans. by Van den Ven, pp. 124*–30*.

12 Angoulas figures in chs 123, 128, 168, 240, and 256; *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, ed. and trans. by Van den Ven.

13 Déroche, 'Quelques interrogations', pp. 74–80.

14 See Dagron, 'La Vie ancienne de saint Marcel l'Acémète', pp. 276–77.

of fifth-century Church historians were amplified.[15] In accordance with the importance attached to their persons in one text or another, Theophilos and Eudoxia are allotted small or greater portions of the narrative. Hagiographical discourse naturally exploited opposition of this kind, yet only once a safe period of time had passed.

Paradoxically, though it is rarely mentioned or given credit for inventiveness, hagiography from the Middle Byzantine period onwards (i.e. the eighth to twelfth centuries) introduces negative figures as fully-fledged characters.[16] The examples that can be culled from the rich output of the ninth and tenth centuries and from the smaller crop of eleventh-century texts explicitly or implicitly reflect opposition from a variety of spheres, such as the highest echelons of ecclesiastical power (the majority), monastic milieus, or even the domestic sphere. Significantly, the saint's enemy does not merely take on the role of her/his rival and opponent but becomes the one who 'helps' to sanctify the holy man or woman. By and large, the examples of paired Lives presenting a saint and an 'anti-saint' in tandem are well known and will therefore be discussed only briefly here.

In his opening to the *Life of the Patriarch Ignatios* (*c.* 797/798–877) Niketas David Paphlagon declares that he has written the text for two reasons: first, in order to make the servant of justice and virtue (i.e. Ignatios) known and seen to be praiseworthy and enviable, and second, to show how detestable the 'author of wickedness and injustice' (i.e. Photios) was (ch. 1).[17] In fact, thanks to this programmatic statement, which is unique to Byzantine hagiography, the *Life of the Patriarch Ignatios* (BHG 817) can be read in two ways: as a biography of the sainted Patriarch Ignatios, and as an anti-biography of his main opponent, Photios. In alignment with his prologue, Niketas divides his narrative between praise for his hero and invective against his anti-hero. A cursory glance at this historically documented text suffices to realize that Ignatios is by no means portrayed as an ideal holy figure, but rather as a victim of historical circumstances in which the mean Photios and his supporters had the upper hand. Far from following the bipartite division of classical biography into *praxeis*, i.e. a chronological account of the life, and *ēthos*, a systematic

15 Cf. van Ommeslaeghe, 'Jean Chrysostome en conflit avec l'impératrice Eudoxie'; Palladios, *Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome*, ed. and trans. by Malingrey; *Douze récits*, ed. by Halkin; *Oratio Funebris in laudem Sancti Johannis Chrysostomi*, ed. by Wallraff, pp. 10–13. On the Life by Theodore of Trimithous, which dates from the second half of the seventh century, see Efthymiadis, *H βυζαντινή αγιολογία της Κύπρου*, pp. 209–13. On the Life by Niketas David, which has been dated to between 920 and 945, see Antonopoulou, 'The Unedited "Life" of St John Chrysostom'. On John Chrysostom's conflicts with the empress and contemporary clergy, see Liebeschuetz, 'Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom'. On Palladios's *Dialogue* see Katos, *Palladius of Helenopolis*, pp. 33–97.

16 For a survey of this hagiography, see Efthymiadis, 'Hagiography from the "Dark Age" to the Age of Symeon Metaphrastes'.

17 Niketas David, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*, ed. and trans. by Smithies, ll. 13–17 (p. 4) (= PG 105.489B).

treatment of character, Niketas places considerable emphasis on historical events.[18] The following observation may explain this hagiographical paradox: the narrative focuses not on Ignatios's two periods of reign as patriarch, but on the persecutions he and his followers suffered during Photios's first patriarchate (858–867). In other words, Ignatios's victimization is sufficient to indicate his sanctity; a positive reference, for instance to his philanthropic work, is here regarded as redundant.

The anonymous Lives of Leo of Catania provide the closest parallel to Niketas David's *Life of Ignatios* in terms of giving prominence to the villain. In this text, which survives in three prose versions (BHG 981, 981b, 981d) with the oldest apparently dating from the ninth century, it is not the Sicilian bishop who takes centre stage, but rather the sorcerer Heliodoros as the devil incarnate. Although the action is set in real-life locations, some principal characters appear to be mythical and, as such, engaged in extraordinary activities. After following the instructions of a Jewish magician and making a Faustian deal with the devil, the Christian Heliodoros performs a number of miracles using black magic which affect the population of Catania and the imperial circles of Constantinople. In the end, Leo, who is unharmed when stepping into a fire with Heliodoros, proceeds to tame Heliodoros's evil power, with lethal consequences. Although the historicity of this *Life of Leo of Catania*, or 'anti-Life' of Heliodoros, remains an open question, it seems clear that the hagiographer's aim was to affiliate a historical setting with a pre-existing legendary tale.[19]

Similarly, but now in a domestic context rather than a public, urban one, the boorish husband Nikephoros contributes to the sanctification of his pious wife, Maria the Younger (d. *c.* 903). Though a military official and a hero in the war against Tsar Symeon (893–927) and the Bulgarians, Nikephoros was open to criticism for the mistreatment of his wife, Maria. The hagiographer does not question Nikephoros's military achievements

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18 On this dual structure of classical biography and its survival in Christian hagiography, see Priessnig, 'Die biographische Form der Plotinvita des Porphyrios' and Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*, pp. 45–65.

19 Several interpretations have been put forward regarding the character, the chronology of this text, and the identity of its protagonist Heliodoros. The editor of the version BHG 981, Acconcia Longo (*Life of St Leo, Bishop of Catania*, pp. 36–55), proposed Southern Italy as its place of composition and tentatively dated it to the period of the Second Iconoclasm (815–843). Without refuting its 'pro-Iconoclastic' orientation, Auzépy, 'L'analyse littéraire et l'historien', pp. 62–67 considered this Life to be the biography of a 'negative hero', and as such it is the 'anti-Life' of a saint rather than the Life of an 'anti-saint'. This hypothesis met with the criticism of the Life's editor: see Acconcia Longo, 'A proposito di un articolo recente', as well as Auzépy, 'À propos des Vies de saints iconoclastes', and Acconcia Longo, 'Di nuovo sull'agiografia iconoclasta'. By contrast, the editor of BHG 981b opted for a dating to the period of the Second Iconoclasm (815–843) and considered it a work of Iconophile inspiration that was produced in Constantinople: see *Life of St Leo, Bishop of Catania*, ed. by Alexakis and trans. by Wessel, pp. 60–72. The literary particularities of this Life were discussed by Kazhdan, *History of Byzantine Literature*, pp. 296–302. The latest contribution to the discussion is, once more, by Acconcia Longo, 'I percorsi di una leggenda'.

and paints a relatively positive portrait of his anti-hero in the introductory paragraphs. However, the further this Life (BHG 1164) proceeds, the more Nikephoros is criticized for acting in a way alien to the Christian model of life. Unable to perceive his wife's philanthropic disposition, Nikephoros, being an uncouth husband, gives credence to rumours that she has been unfaithful to him. After he had violently beaten her to death, his suspicions about her conduct, which he thought sinful, outlive her. These suspcisions are only allayed when she appears to him in a dream and urges him to have a church built for her. Nikephoros, who is a hero in the public domain, is presented as no more than a bully and a tormentor in the private sphere.[20] A second Life, that of Thomaïs of Lesbos (BHG 2454), also dating from roughly the tenth or eleventh century, is likewise constructed around a fierce clash between a husband and wife, although it does not claim to communicate a similarly ambitious message.[21] In this case the irascible husband is portrayed in a rather elliptical and sketchy way, while that of the pious Thomaïs takes precedence. By contrast, the character of her coarse and merciless husband is portrayed in full detail in an extensive and rhetorical hagiographical text composed in the first decades of the fourteenth century. Its author shifts the focus of literary attention to the invective against the 'anti-hero' and (relatively speaking) away from the praise of the saintly woman.[22]

The last text to be dealt with here from this perspective reveals that more serious priorities were at stake. A learned and rational bishop is contrasted with a monk who, in a period not much concerned with sanctity or saintliness, defended the sanctification of his spiritual father (cf. chs 74–93). The *Life of Symeon the New Theologian* (BHG 1692), an expansive text written by his disciple Niketas Stethatos (*c.* 1005–*c.* 1090), spends some time on developing the personality of Stephen Bishop of Nicomedia, who strongly opposed the idea of admitting new saints to the Church and challenged the sanctification of Symeon. *Phthonos*, envy, is key to understanding the cause of the polemic against Symeon and, not accidentally, the latter is likened to John Chrysostom, who also fell victim to envy, in his case the Egyptian Theophilos's (ch. 119). Once again, we meet the idea that the holy man who faces such opposition is a martyr without martyrdom (ch. 109).[23]

The introduction into the narrative of a person who would contrast with, promote, or trigger the saint's heroism was undoubtedly intertextually

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20 In the introduction to her English translation of the Life, Laiou (*Life of Maria the Younger*, trans. by Laiou) emphatically dates the composition of this text to the eleventh rather than the tenth century. For this Life, see also *Life of Maria the Younger*, ed. by Delehaye and Constantinou, 'Performing Gender in Lay Saints'.

21 'Life of Thomaïs of Lesbos', ed. by Delehaye.

22 Efthymiadis, 'Une hagiographie classicisante et son auteur'.

23 See Niketas Stethatos, 'Life of Symeon the New Theologian', ed. by Koutsas, and Niketas Stethatos, *Life of Symeon the New Theologian*, trans. by Greenfield. On envy as a central theme in this Life, see Hinterberger, *Phthonos*, pp. 361–70.

linked to the primary hagiographical model of martyrdom. In other words, time and again, the recurrence of a villain, who is always a useful device for the hagiographer, revived memories of the more extreme world of the early martyrs, who faced state persecution. In some rare yet noteworthy cases, this world had allowed the reconciliation of the positive and the negative hero, usually after the latter's conversion to Christianity. One example is Basilissa, the female martyr from Nicomedia, who lived during the reign of Diocletian. In a dramatic account she convinces her persecutor, the pagan Alexander, to be catechized and baptized (BHG 2058p and 2059).[24] Notably, exceptions of this kind were out of the question for later saints. The gap between saint and anti-saint was too deep and too wide.

Family, Couples, and Friends

Secondary heroes, that is, fleshed-out characters who occupy a significant position in the hagiographical narrative otherwise centred around a single hero, are not always the villains, but often simply serve as a foil to different saintly paradigms. Secondary heroes could be members of the saint's family, persons very well-disposed towards the saint and acting in his or her favour, those once lost to the hero or heroine and then found again, or those with a loose association with him or her; finally, they might also be totally independent individuals or those not at all related to him or her, those embedded in the narrative as part of a story within the story, i.e., those that appear in a separate account and are inserted as a digression into the regular course of a hagiographical Life. Needless to say, all these types of secondary characters help to lend a narrative some literary originality which might otherwise unfold in a preordained, if not formulaic, structure. There is a limited number of examples that can be adduced here, but they do pertain to different kinds of texts. Some of these may be considered emblematic and largely recognized by the scholarly community of Byzantinists, whereas other are generally unknown, judging from the lack of secondary literature on them. Taken as a group, they cover a large chronological range in that they can be found in late antique through Middle Byzantine hagiography. Some of them may have known a wider dissemination beyond the confines of Byzantium but, in line with those discussed so far, priority will be given to texts of Byzantine extraction.

Secondary heroes as members of a family, a couple, a friendship, a group, or an otherwise clearly defined relationship are much in evidence in early Christian literature. It is, once again, the rich tradition of the martyrs' Passions that seems a validating pedigree. There are numerous accounts of

24 See *Martyrdom of Basilissa of Nicomedia*, ed. by Halkin, and Nikephoros Gregoras, *Life of St Basilissa*, ed. by Bezdechi for a later rhetorical reworking by the fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar.

martyrdom which reject the model of the solitary martyr saint, and instead promote a group of adamant defenders of the Christian faith. Although there were figures who were crowned with the wreath of martyrdom and who, like their partners, companions, or other members of their family, were also sanctified, these tended to exist in the hero's shadow, never having been ranked as protagonists of the Passion's story. For instance, although it is Nestor the gladiator who fights the barbarian Lyaios and is therefore put to death by the Emperor Maximian, his glory and widespread acclaim are credited to his moral supporter Demetrios.[25] In fact, in such accounts it is hard to see what aspect in particular caused one character to be ranked higher than another. On other occasions, the emergence of a secondary hero or heroine may be incidental and treated as such in the narrative. The aforementioned Barbara is said to have been lent emotional assistance by a pious woman by the name of Juliana. The latter's tearful reaction provokes the anger of the governor, who has her executed in front of her friend. This short episode alone was not felt to be significant enough for adding Juliana's name to the Passion's heading.[26]

By the same token, the listing of a number of martyrs' names in a Passion's heading did not necessarily entail their equal treatment in the narration. When both the names of the individuals in a martyred couple appear in the title (e.g. the husband's and wife's, or those of two friends of the same sex), the emphasis is, more often than not, on the perennial bond that has led them to suffer a joint heroic end. Yet, within the world of narratives, things often turn out different. Either priority is given to the male partner or, if both are male, one of the characters is given more attention than the other. In that respect, Sergios and Bakchos are a case in point. In the Passion (BHG 1624), Sergios is allotted markedly more space in the plot, not only because he is the last to suffer death. In fact, he is introduced in the narrative in much more detail than Bakchos (chs 1–2) and is addressed by name by the *doux* Antiochos when both martyrs are advised to escape persecution by sacrificing to the gods (ch. 17). Moreover, despite the fact that he is visited and encouraged in his dreams by his companion, it is Sergios who dominates the narrative in the scene after Bakchos has suffered a heroic martyrdom (chs 24–30).[27]

Slightly different is the case of Lucy and Geminianos, whose Passion (BHG 2241) is deeply imbued with legendary elements, with little care for historical and geographical accuracy.[28] Lucy is a widow from Rome aged

25 See texts in the anthology of texts on St Demetrios by S. A. Paschalides, *Μαρτύρια, συλλογὲς καὶ ἐγκώμια στὸν ἅγιο Δημήτριο. Πρωτοβυζαντινή-μεσοβυζαντινὴ περίοδος* (Thessaloniki, 2005).

26 See, e.g., *Passion of Barbara*, BHG 213–14, 'Passion of Barbara', ed. by Viteau, pp. 95–99.

27 See *Passion of Sergios and Bakchos*, ed. by Van den Gheyn. Note that in Symeon Metaphrastes' *Passion* (BHG 1625) the two saints are introduced in 'egalitarian' terms: see PG 115.1005C. For the changes introduced in the Metaphrastic redaction, see Høgel, 'The Redaction of Symeon Metaphrastes', pp. 18–21. On the friendship of the two saints, see Constantinou, 'The Gift of Friendship'.

28 *Passion of Lucy and Germinianos*, ed. by Re.

seventy-five who is tormented by Maximian and Diocletian during the Great Persecution, and Geminianos is a pagan who has converted to Christianity. He is introduced much later than Lucy in the narrative (ch. 11) and then takes on the role of her close companion and supporter. During the ensuing wanderings and adventures that end in eastern Sicily he never manages to become the central figure of the account, yet he survives Lucy by four days, takes care of her relics, and finally suffers a martyr's death.

Similarly, collective Martyrdoms, in spite of all their rhetorical insistence on the entire group's determination that they should suffer for their common faith, tend to individualize the action of certain characters either by separating them from the group or by assigning them a leading role in the overall defence of their position. From the first Christian collective Martyrdom, that of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, we find one who is presented as an apostate giving in to the enemy, while a Roman soldier joins the other thirty-nine after his sudden conversion to Christianity.[29] From one redaction to another, different characters are singled out through various shades and nuances, which may sometimes reflect an underlying argument. This applies *par excellence* to the *Passion of the Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion* (BHG 1209–1214b) which has come down to us in five different versions. All of these martyrs were high-ranking military officials who suffered martyrdom as captives of the Arabs in 845, following the fall of the city of Amorion in 838. Notably, each version of this *Passio* is distinguished by its promotion of a specific figure who is singled out from the group.[30]

Friendship or the establishment of a new relationship proved fertile soil for the construction of secondary heroes. One of the most original pieces of Greek hagiography produced in Late Antiquity, the *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool* by the Cypriot hagiographer Leontios of Neapolis, uses the theme of male friendship to insert a co-protagonist in the narrative. This seventh-century Life is chiefly acclaimed for its second part, in which Symeon visits the Syrian town of Emesa (modern-day Homs) to mock the world and feature in a series of anecdotal episodes in which he pretends to be a fool.[31] But equally intriguing, in my view, is the first part, which is set in a totally different landscape, that of the Judean desert.[32] This is the place where Symeon and John, two men who

29 For an analysis, see Karlin-Hayter, 'Passio of the XL Martyrs of Sebasteia' and also Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, pp. 132–50.

30 See *The Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion*, ed. by Vasil'evskij and Nikitin; 'The Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion', ed. by Halkin, and *The Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion*, ed. by Kotzabassi. On differences between the extant versions, see Kazhdan, 'Hagiographical Notes: 14', pp. 150–60. For the figures that each version promotes (esp. with regard to the Passions BHG 1209 and 1212), see Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance*, pp. 131–41.

31 Leontios of Neapolis, 'Life of Symeon the Holy Fool', ed. by Rydén and trans. by Festugière, pp. 79–104. Also, Leontios of Neapolis, *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool*, ed. by Cavallero, Fernández, and Lastra Sheridan.

32 See Leontios of Neapolis, 'Life of Symeon the Holy Fool', ed. by Rydén and trans. by Festugière, pp. 58–79. All scholars who have dealt with this text note the 'dichotomy' between the first and the second part: Rydén, *Bemerkungen zum Leben des heiligen Narren*,

first met on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, spend a large part of their lives. Although it becomes obvious from certain allusions that they will follow different paths in later life, the two friends share a common life until halfway through the text. They are both strongly attracted to the eremitical life, guided by the Abba Nikon, tempted by the devil (John concerning his new wife, and Symeon in relation to his beloved old mother), visited by similar dreams which they exchange the following morning, informed at some point by means of a nocturnal vision that they have lost kin, and certain about leading an anchorite's life together until death shall them part.[33] After twenty-nine years, however, Symeon announces to his friend that he is going to leave the desert for the city in order to edify people and bring them back to righteousness. The farewell scene is long and emotionally charged. Brother John admits towards the end that Symeon has surpassed him in terms of spiritual maturity, and he gives way to his grief upon hearing, among other things, his friend's solemn statement: 'Think of me as dead. Wouldn't you have to think about being alone by yourself?' (77. 8–10).[34]

The same question may actually resonate with the modern commentator of this exceptional hagiographical text with its division into two quite distinctive sections. Why did Leontios not depict Symeon alone but placed a companion by his side? Why did he introduce a secondary hero standing by the central hero and provide a fully-fledged portrait of him? The scene of recognition and reunion, so common in late antique hagiography, is missing from this text.[35] John is one of the many holy men evoked in late antique monastic writings without anything other than literary posterity.

I believe that the introduction of John as a secondary hero admits a multi-layered interpretation, both literary and spiritual in character. By showing the common trajectory the two friends used to follow for such a long time, Leontios explores the theme of spiritual friendship and also infuses the narrative with literary originality. The desert becomes a new *locus amoenus* which — as it does in romances and another classic of hagiography, the *Life*

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pp. 28–84; Mango, 'A Byzantine Hagiographer at Work', pp. 26–27; Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, pp. 109–15; Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie*, pp. 179–86; Van Pelt, 'Saints in Disguise', pp. 151–57. On the role of John the Deacon in the narrative, see Cesaretti, *Leonzio di Neapoli*, pp. 39–41. It has been suggested that Leontios initially wrote the second half and then added much of the first half to the text: see Leontios of Neapolis, *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool*, trans. by Krueger, pp. 30–31. While all scholars emphasize that the first part is insignificant, Festugière goes one step further and describes it in derogative terms: 'rien à coup sûr n'est plus insipide que cette littérature, et s'il n'y avait que cela dans la *V. Sym.*, on fermerait aussitôt le livre' (Leontios of Neapolis, 'Life of Symeon the Holy Fool', ed. by Rydén, and trans. by Festugière, p. 1). For a more balanced and just approach regarding the two sections of this Life, see Johnson, 'Between Madness and Holiness'.

33 On the bonds developed between Symeon and John, see Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, pp. 157–61.

34 Leontios of Neapolis, *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool*, trans. by Krueger, pp. 148–49.

35 Boulhol, *Ἀναγνωρισμός*.

of Mary of Egypt — seduces and encircles the two companions, detaching them from all mundane, urban concerns, and chiefly the care for the persons to whom they were emotionally attached. Like so many saintly heroes of Late Antiquity, both Symeon and John separate themselves from their relatives and households for the sake of a solitary life. In this case, however, separation — a common theme in late antique hagiography — does not, as in many other cases, eradicate all human feelings and bonds, such as the intimacy of their friendship. Symeon and John share a life in the desert for a long period of time and have been blessed for this purpose by their spiritual father Nikon. Having built up this innovative scenery, Leontios introduces another innovation in the form of another separation which is far more radical than the previous. Symeon's decision to depart from the desert and leave his friend exemplifies the need for a new release, this time from his attachment to the desert and the bonds of spiritual friendship. In line with what is foreshadowed in his other extant hagiographical work, the *Life of John the Almsgiver, patriarch of Alexandria* (BHG 886d),[36] Leontios artfully promoted the idea of a return to the civilized world and the value of actively caring for other people's lives and assisting them in every way.

As a secondary hero, John exemplifies the reality of spiritual companionship while being part of its deconstruction at the same time. By virtue of his final abandonment he serves the objectives of the author who, in his underlying argument, wished to dispute a hagiographical model that had become common by then and to make a significant move in terms of spatial codes. The flight from the world was followed at some point by the flight from the desert, and culminated in a complete escape from human reality and history. As the hagiographer asserts at the end, no remains of Symeon the holy fool for Christ were found in his tomb.

Staying with the model of friendship, we find a new and interesting occurrence in a much later text celebrating the founder of Megisti Lavra, the first organized monastic establishment on Mount Athos. Athanasios the Athonite is the hero of at least two biographies, the earliest of which must date to within one generation of his death in 1001/1004.[37] The so-called *Vita A* is an extensive and rhetorically elaborate text that reflects the high level of Constantinopolitan literary culture in the eleventh century in several respects. Athanasios is portrayed as a character combining the skills of a spiritual leader, those of a man of letters, and those of an efficient politician. As a spiritual leader and as a politician, he cultivated a long-term friendship

36 Leontios of Neapolis, 'Life of Symeon the Holy Fool', ed. by Rydén and trans. by Festugière.

37 The date and priority of each version are still matters of debate: see, *inter alios*, Kazhdan, 'Hagiographical Notes: 1', and Krausmüller, 'The Lost First *Life of Athanasius the Athonite*'; 'Sophisticated Simplicity'. The discovery of two quaternions in codex Mt Sinai M63, which preserves the introductory chapters of a third version, changes the question entirely; see *Life of Athanasios the Athonite*, ed. by Manafis and Pitsinellis. On the dating of this codex see Noret's observations: 'Notes sur la Vie "sinaïtique"'.

with Nikephoros Phokas, the eminent general of the Byzantine army who later ascended to the imperial throne (963–969). The ties that saints established and maintained with powerful lay people receive much attention in all kinds of hagiographic writings, but the way in which Athanasios's relationship with Nikephoros is depicted in this particular Life is quite unprecedented. To begin with, the relationship takes up a large part of the Life and has several phases. The two men make each other's acquaintance (ch. 22),[38] meet again but then drift apart, their separation is prolonged due to Athanasios's change of name to Barnabas, and they are re-united in Crete during the victorious naval expedition led by Phokas against the Arabs. Nikephoros's accession to the imperial throne frustrates his friend, who has decided to found the first coenobium on Mount Athos in the expectation that his dear companion would join him soon. This phase of frustration, underscored by the use of emotionally charged vocabulary, concludes with the two men's meeting and reconciliation in the imperial palace at Constantinople.

To what extent this relationship and long-term friendship reflects reality or was constructed by the hagiographer is hard to tell. In any case, the story develops a *Ringstruktur* ('separation-initiation-return') reminiscent of ancient Greek novels and several Lives from Late Antiquity which had a wide circulation in the East and the West.[39] Though it was produced in an entirely different cultural context, this text revives this narrative device in large part by confining it to an inner narrative concerning a period during which the lives of the saintly hero and the secondary hero run in parallel. Yet this secondary hero does not constitute a satellite figure for the saint, e.g. a follower, or an assistant. The hagiographer's innovation lies in Nikephoros Phokas's assumption of the role of a recurring character, as a ghost figure fading in and out in the narrative (chs 22, 28–30, 44, 68–69, 73, 90, 94–95, 102, 114).

Autonomous, Secondary Heroes

The texts dealt with so far have revealed that Byzantine hagiographers were much more inventive and skilful in portraying saints and their associates as literary characters than we might have expected. Two further clusters of stories confirm this impression. The secondary heroes we have met thus far have appeared in the course of the narratives as persons related to the main character who maintain a role by his or her side. Middle Byzantine hagiography, although not often credited with literary originality, also includes a few instances in which the secondary hero gains an autonomous presence in a text within the main text.

38 'Life of Athanasios the Athonite', ed. by Noret. Cf. 'Life of Athanasios the Athonite', trans. by Greenfield and Talbot.

39 Cf. Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, pp. 42–76.

This phenomenon occurs in four Lives of varying size, plot, and geographical setting. The shortest of these is the *Life of Athanasia of Aegina* (BHG 180), a ninth-century saintly woman born on the island of Aegina opposite Piraeus, who was married and widowed twice before embracing the monastic way of life. After becoming an abbess, Athanasia meets the hieromonk Matthias at some point, a holy man from whom she receives spiritual counselling. Surprisingly, the hagiographer then shifts the focus to Matthias, whose spiritual gifts he extols, and provides a condensed account of his miracles. This nested biography (chs 6–9) is rounded off with a tragic shipwreck in the Aegean in which Matthias is lost. The hagiographer laments this sad event for an additional reason, namely the destruction of the holy man's relics, a loss which deprives the latter of the posthumous veneration that, as the hagiographer claims, would have been of a great benefit to believers.[40]

The biography of a man embedded in that of a woman receives fuller treatment in the *Life of Theodora of Thessaloniki* (BHG 1737), another female saint born on the island of Aegina. Gregory the Presbyter, the author of this long Life, accounts for his decision to digress from his main subject and take up the biography of Theodora's relative Antony (d. 844), the Archbishop of Thessaloniki, with the following words:

> Ἐβουλόμην, ἐνταῦθα τοῦ λόγου γενόμενος, πολλῶν τῶν τῆς μακαρίας Θεοδώρας προσεχῶν καὶ γένους ἀνωτάτου τοὺς βίους διεξελθεῖν, οὐχ ἵνα εἰσοίσω τι ταύτῃ πρὸς εὐφημίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἴδητε τοὺς αὐτῆς προσγενεῖς, οἷα κατὰ Θεὸν ζῶντες ἐτύγχανον. Ἐπεὶ δὲ περιττὸς εἶναι δόξω, ὡς πόρρω τοῦ προκειμένου ἐξιών, Ἀντωνίου μόνου τοῦ ἡμῶν ἀρχιποίμενος ἐπιμνησθείς, αὖθις τὸν λόγον ἐπ' αὐτὴν καὶ δὴ τρέψομαι.
>
> > At this point in my narrative I would have liked to describe the lives of many of Theodora's relatives, who were of a very high-placed family, not in order to add to her praise, but so that you might see in what sort of godly manner her relatives lived. But since I will seem to exceed <my mandate> if I go beyond my assigned theme, I will mention only our archbishop Antony, and then return my narrative again to Theodora.[41]

As Antony is a confessor of the faith who resisted the persecution of the Iconoclasts, his short biography (chs 10–18) contains a speech in which he adduces arguments in favour of the veneration of icons, and which is largely excerpted from the relevant treatises by Iconodule apologists.[42] The extensive

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40 On this episode, see Dennis, 'Perils of the Deep', p. 83; Mullett, 'In Peril on the Sea', p. 263, and Efthymiadis, 'The Sea as Topos and as Original Narrative', p. 116. For the Life itself, see 'Life of St Athanasia of Aegina', ed. by Carras, and 'Life of St Athanasia of Aegina', trans. by Sherry.

41 'Life of St Theodora of Thessaloniki', trans. by Talbot, p. 171; cf. *Life of Theodora of Thessaloniki*, ed. by Paschalides.

42 For his portrayal, see Paschalides, '"Ενας ὁμολογητὴς τῆς Δεύτερης Εἰκονομαχίας'.

reference to his holy paradigm highlights Theodora's saintly ancestry for which she will prove to be a worthy heir.

For other holy figures whose biographies are embedded in the *Lives* of other saints we must look towards Arab-held Syria and Palestine, and holy men who defended Christianity against Islam. After drawing a portrait of Theodore of Edessa as a spiritual father in rhetorical brush-strokes, his biographer Basil continues with a lengthy digression (chs 11–34) on the passion of Michael, a relative of the saint. A visit to Jerusalem to sell wicker baskets that he has woven himself traps him, a monk in the *lavra* of St Sabas in the Judean desert, in a sequence of episodes involving a sexual attack on the wife of the Persian (i.e. Arab) caliph, a confrontation with the caliph in the form of the exchange of theological arguments, and Michael's final sacrifice as a martyr. Clearly, this digression gives the hagiographer the opportunity to include much anti-Muslim polemic in the narrative and to demonstrate his writing skills. He artfully transforms his main hero, Theodore, from the focus of the action to a passive observer and narrator. Thus, once the caliph had agreed to hand over the saintly martyr Michael's relics to the *lavra* of St Sabas, the whole passion is revealed in a vision to Theodore, who transmits it to his fellow monks (ch. 33).[43]

The biographer of Antony the Younger explores the same device but without theological pretensions. Antony, a ninth-century native of Palestine, had followed a military career before becoming a monk in Byzantine Asia Minor. In this case the digression is inserted into the narrative after a rhetorical preamble and an introduction of basic information about the main hero's origins and family.[44] It takes the form of a narration (*diēgēsis*) about a bandit who became a monk and later an ascetic after victoriously fighting an Ethiopian attached to the Arab high commander of Syria in a public theatre. Interestingly, this digression serves as a prequel to the actual biography of the saint, in the sense that this ascetic, John, has only a tangential relationship with the main hero. Antony the Younger is entrusted to him as a servant by his parents for a while, and as a result he learns from John via a prophecy that he will move to the land of Romania (i.e. Byzantium) one day and serve in the army there before becoming a tonsured monk and a servant of Christ for forty years.

Hagiographers

There is a final category of texts that explore the introduction of a secondary hero to the hagiographical narrative. These insertions do not undermine the

43 For this Life (BHG 1744), see 'Life of Theodore of Edessa', ed. by Pomjalovskij; Griffith, 'The Life of Theodore of Edessa', and Messis and Papaioannou, 'Translations from Other Languages into Greek', p. 199. Note that the *Passion of Michael* survives in a Georgian translation as an autonomous text: see 'Passion of Michael the Sabaite', ed. by Peeters.

44 See chs 3–9; see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Συλλογὴ παλαιστινῆς καὶ συριακῆς ἁγιολογίας*, pp. 186–216, and 'Life of Antony the Younger', ed. by Polemis, pp. 376–418.

protagonist's leading position, but rather support, or claim to support, the authenticity of the story or stories. I am referring to the Lives of saints in which the hagiographer inserts himself into his subject's biographical account, either as a recurrent eyewitness to episodes and achievements or as a secondary hero who is attached to the protagonist in various guises. These cases do not merely mention a personal acquaintance with the saint, or constitute brief authorial interventions or passing testimonies to one or two incidents. Rather, they involve the author or narrator in a genuine engagement with the plot as a whole, and they affect the presentation of a saint's biography. Examples are fairly numerous and spread over a considerable period of time from Late Antiquity to the hagiography of the ninth and tenth centuries. In most of them the author identifies with the narrator and pretends to be either a fellow ascetic (as in the late antique Lives of Onouphrios, Paisios, and John Kalyvites, or John the Hut-Dweller), a contemporary follower or disciple of the saint (as in the tenth-century *Life of Andrew the Fool*),[45] or a family servant who later joins the holy couple in their ascetic endeavours (see, e.g., the figure of Eutolmios in the *Vita* and *Passion of Galaktion and Episteme*).[46] As Lennart Rydén points out, 'as the image of the saints that one gets from hagiography is most often far from the historical facts, so the image the hagiographer offers of himself is often quite different from his real self'.[47]

Conclusion

Anyone familiar with the modern novel, which delights in using a multitude of characters, a variety of digressions, and subversive narrative techniques, must find interesting similarities in the literary devices employed in texts of a different era that were intended for an audience or readership that, unlike us, cherished repetition and formalization. The secondary heroes employed and developed by Byzantine hagiography and the role that they assume in the narrative find distant counterparts in *Don Quixote*'s squire Sancho Panza, in Inspector Javert as opponent to Jean Valjean in *Les misérables*, and in Doctor Watson's role as a narrator and eyewitness of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

In addition to portraying idealized figures in accordance with predictable patterns, Byzantine hagiography demonstrates a remarkable flexibility in using models other than the obvious ones and deviating from its own norms. Its depiction of exemplars of those living a virtuous life side by side with 'depersonalized' diabolical figures or 'naturalistic' human characters was a

45 In this Life (BHG 115z; *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. and trans. by Rydén), two fictional characters take up significant roles in the narrative: Nikephoros, the priest of Hagia Sophia, is allegedly the 'author' and narrator of the saint's Life, while Epiphanios is his close follower.

46 See Alwis, *Celibate Marriages in Late Antique and Byzantine Hagiography*, pp. 67–72, and 'Life of Sts Galaktion and Episteme', ed. by Delehaye.

47 See Rydén, 'Fiction and Reality in the Hagiographer's Self-Presentation', p. 552.

response to contemporary social, religious, and political issues. That is to say, anti-heroes were selected both from religious groups that represented a constant threat to Christianity (i.e. pagans, Jews, heretics) and from actual historical reality, whether this were the highest echelons of society (the imperial or ecclesiastical court) or the microcosm of a monastic community. By granting appearances to negative characters, like ill-disposed men or women of power, the religious dissenter or the scheming monk, hagiography took part in the general cultural discourse of Byzantine society and reflected its mentality. By the same token, drawing inspiration from the Passions of the martyrs and from saints' Lives alike, it opened itself up to creating pious secondary characters who were paired with the primary ones and pursued similar spiritual aspirations throughout a large part of the narrative, or gained a parenthetic existence embedded in the main character's biography. Significantly, none of these pious figures seems to have earned an extra-textual existence, i.e. a cult or commemoration in liturgical books. In a sense, these were literary rather than real figures, thereby confirming in numerous cases that what mattered in hagiography was not the promotion of a saint's cult but what we may term 'entertaining edification'. After all, this is a priority of any literature at any time.

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Rhétorique de l'éloge et construction des modèles de sainteté dans l'hagiographie africaine (IIe–VIe siècles)*

Les liens entre certains discours hagiographiques et l'éloge ont été très tôt mis en lumière par Hippolyte Delehaye, qui, dans sa classification, réservait une place spéciale à une catégorie de textes produits en Orient au IVe siècle: les panégyriques des martyrs, prononcés le jour de la fête anniversaire de leur mort. Il distinguait nettement ces textes des actes et Passions dites authentiques et d'autres, plus tardifs, qualifiés de 'passions épiques'.[1] Cette classification semblait ainsi nier ou du moins occulter l'influence laissée par la rhétorique de l'éloge sur toute une série de textes hagiographiques. Pourtant on n'évoque le parcours d'un saint ou d'un martyr qu'après sa mort selon le principe édicté dans l'Ecclésiaste 11.30: 'Ne louez aucun homme avant sa mort, car on connaît un homme par les enfants qu'il laisse après lui' ('ante mortem ne laudes hominem quemquam, quoniam in filiis suis agnoscitur uir'), formule qui suppose que les hommes ne peuvent bénéficier de louanges qu'après avoir accompli de grandes actions et s'être comportés en modèles pour leurs enfants. Cet aspect rapproche donc le discours hagiographique de l'éloge funèbre: la première partie de la formule biblique pourrait en effet définir aussi, dans un autre contexte, l'éloge funèbre grec et romain, autrement dit, sous sa forme semi-privée, le discours exaltant un défunt et sa *gens*, prononcé près de la tombe devant le peuple,[2] et, sous sa forme publique, l'éloge fait par

* Je tiens ici à remercier M. Van Uytfanghe et J. Meyers pour leur relecture et leurs conseils avisés.

1 Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*.

2 Sur la *laudatio funebris*, voir entre autres Kierdor, *Laudatio funebris*; Durry, '"Laudatio funebris" et rhétorique', pp. 105–14; Arce, 'La "laudatio funebris"', pp. 41–50, et Guérin, *'Persona'*, pp. 225–27, qui dit de la *laudatio* qu'elle est 'le moyen de donner à un événement privé une dimension publique' (p. 225).

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un magistrat mandaté ou par le prince pour un dignitaire ou un membre de la famille impériale. À Rome, ce type de discours n'a certes pas eu le succès des genres judiciaires et délibératifs, ou même de la louange honorifique (en particulier du panégyrique),[3] mais il a quand même été pratiqué pendant tout l'Empire et sa structure et ses modalités ont retenu l'attention des auteurs de traités de rhétorique.

Depuis Delehaye, des travaux pionniers, comme ceux de Jacques Fontaine pour la *Vie de saint Martin*,[4] et surtout ceux de Marc Van Uytfanghe, ont par ailleurs montré que l'hagiographie entretenait des rapports avec plusieurs formes littéraires: la biographie, le roman, la nouvelle et l'éloge, funèbre et honorifique. Tout en soulignant la spécificité du discours hagiographique chrétien, Van Uytfanghe a étudié ce jeu d'influences mutuelles qui nuance les catégorisations traditionnelles.[5] Ces nouvelles pistes ont malheureusement été assez peu suivies,[6] alors qu'elles ouvrent des perspectives particulièrement fécondes, comme je voudrais le montrer à partir du corpus hagiographique africain. Celui-ci constitue en effet un excellent sujet d'étude: il présente une réelle diversité géographique (de la Maurétanie Tingitane à l'Afrique Proconsulaire en passant par la Césarienne et la Numidie), chronologique (les faits relatés se déroulent entre 180 pour les *Actes des martyrs scillitains* et 484 pour la *Passion des sept moines*, datée du VI^e^ siècle) et générique (des actes dont la rédaction est la plus 'fidèle' aux procès-verbaux judiciaires aux Passions les plus narratives, romanesques et fictives). Cette richesse offre un large éventail des caractéristiques du discours hagiographique chrétien.[7] Or l'éloquence épidictique, funèbre, mais aussi honorifique, a visiblement inspiré les auteurs d'un certain nombre de Passions.[8] C'est cet aspect que je voudrais aborder ici en montrant le rôle déterminant qu'elle joue dans la construction de modèles de sainteté même dans des textes non 'panégyriques' selon la classification de Delehaye.

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3 Sur le panégyrique, voir notamment Vereecke, 'Le corpus des Panégyriques latins', pp. 140–57; McCormack, *Art and Ceremony*; Sabbah, *De la rhétorique à la communication politique*, pp. 363–88, et Whitby, *The Propaganda of Power*.

4 Sulpice Sévère, *Vie de saint Martin*, éd. par Fontaine.

5 Van Uytfanghe, 'Heiligenverehrung II'; 'L'hagiographie'; 'La typologie de la sainteté en Occident'; *La biographie classique*; 'L'origine et les ingrédients'.

6 L'importante étude de Heim, 'Les panégyriques des martyrs', pp. 105–28 consacrée aux panégyriques des martyrs occidentaux, porte exclusivement sur les sermons prononcés le jour de la fête des saints honorés. Il n'étudie donc pas l'influence de l'éloge dans l'hagiographie (actes, Passions, Vies), mais dans une catégorie bien précise de textes, celle définie par Delehaye sous l'appellation 'panégyriques des martyrs'. Pour les *uitae* médiévales, voir l'article très stimulant de Goullet, 'La "Laudatio sanctorum"'.

7 Je me permets ici de renvoyer à ma thèse: Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2012), pp. 263–352.

8 Sont concernés les textes suivants: 'Passion des saintes Perpétue et Félicité', éd. par Amat (= *P. Perp.*); 'Passion des saints Dativus, Saturninus et autres', éd. par Franchi de' Cavalieri, avec les variantes de 'Passion des saints Dativus, Saturninus et autres', éd. par Dolbeau (= *P. Dat.*); 'Passion de saint Donatus', éd. par Dolbeau (= *P. Don.*); 'Passion de saint Marculus', éd. par Mastandrea (= *P. Marcul.*); 'Passion des saints Isaac et Maximien', éd. par Mastandrea (= *P. Is.*); 'Passion de sainte Salsa', éd. par Pirreda et trad. par GRAA (= *P. Sals.*); 'Passion

Prologues

L'influence de la rhétorique de l'éloge se ressent très nettement dans la plupart des prologues de notre corpus.[9] Une première constatation s'impose à leur lecture: quand la situation d'énonciation est évoquée par l'auteur, il qualifie son texte de *laus*,[10] de *praeconium*,[11] de *praedicatio*.[12] Il fait donc un éloge de martyrs. Cette terminologie inscrit la Passion dans une perspective discursive ou oratoire, ce que confirme à l'occasion la mention des auditeurs:[13] de même que l'éloge est prononcé devant un public, la Passion est écrite avant tout pour être lue en présence de fidèles chrétiens.[14] Comme le rappelle Vincent Zarini, le genre épidictique met en rapport interactif au moins trois entités: l'objet, ou *laudandus*, en tous points exemplaire, le public, exhorté à croire et à imiter, et l'auteur, personnellement impliqué dans son propos.[15] Ces trois éléments apparaissent nettement dans les Passions: le saint qui, pour reprendre une expression de Michel de Certeau 'est celui qui ne perd rien de ce qu'il a reçu',[16] est un être parfait et le récit de son martyre un encouragement constant à l'imitation. Cette dimension parénétique de l'hagiographie est renforcée par l'implication de l'auteur, sensible par son parti-pris, son ton parfois polémique, et ses interventions; dans certains textes, il s'adresse même directement au Diable ou à l'un de

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de sainte Marciana', éd. par Fialon (= *II P. Marc.*); *Passion de saint Fabius*, éd. par Piredda, pp. 90–123 (= *P. Fab.*); 'Passion de saint Victor', éd. par Fialon (= *P. Vict.*), et *Passion des sept moines*, éd. par Lancel (= *P. Sept.*).

9 Si l'on ne peut exclure la possibilité qu'ils aient subi des modifications au cours de la tradition textuelle (au même titre d'ailleurs que les Passions elles-mêmes), rien ne permet à mon sens d'affirmer que ces prologues ne soient pas l'œuvre des hagiographes eux-mêmes. Sur les prologues hagiographiques, voir Strunk, *Kunst und Glaube*; Dolbeau, 'Transformations des prologues hagiographiques'.

10 *P. Dat.* 1; *P. Is.* 11.9; *P. Marcul.* 1.3; *II P. Marc.* 1.1.

11 *P. Is.* 11.8; *P. Sals.* 1.

12 *P. Is.* 11.10; *P. Sals.* 2. Voir aussi *P. Sept.* 1 ('praedicaturus').

13 *P. Perp.* 1.1: 'qui nunc cognoscitis per auditum'; *II P. Marc.* 1.2: 'cum municeps adstat auditor'; *P. Sals.* 13: 'attonitus lector et auditor cautus ausculta'; *P. Vict.* 2: 'Erit iam magna audientium merces'.

14 Voir par exemple *P. Don.* 1: 'nec inconsulte in honore martyrum et aedificatione credentium anniversaria sollemnitate leguntur'. Voir aussi le concile d'Hippone du 3 octobre 393, repris dans celui de Carthage du 28 août 397, ch. 5: 'Liceat etiam legi passiones martyrum, cum anniversarii dies eorum celebrantur' (*Concilia Africae, A. 345 - A. 525*, éd. par Munier). Sur la lecture publique des textes hagiographiques en Afrique, en Espagne et en Gaule, voir De Gaiffier, 'La lecture des actes des martyrs'; Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques*, pp. 200–08, et Van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie et son public'. À Rome, l'Église n'a pas admis la lecture liturgique des textes hagiographiques avant la fin du VIII^e^ siècle, mais elle la tolérait dans les sanctuaires cimétériaux et les paroisses urbaines, comme le rappelle De Gaiffier, 'La lecture des Passions des martyrs', pp. 63–78. Notons enfin que ces textes pouvaient aussi faire l'objet d'une lecture privée; voir Fialon, 'Mens immobilis' (2012), pp. 1039–40.

15 Zarini, 'Le problème de l'éloge', pp. 135–36.

16 de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 282.

ses agents pour dénoncer leur comportement et souligner la supériorité du christianisme.[17]

À ce 'triangle panégyrique' s'ajoute, dans le cas des textes chrétiens, une quatrième entité, qui gouverne l'ensemble, Dieu, à la fois destinataire et objet de l'éloge. De fait, pour nos hagiographes, le texte est louange de Dieu, louange de l'Église;[18] on ne loue le saint que parce que Dieu l'a choisi et a combattu en lui ou à ses côtés. La Passion est avant tout la manifestation de la puissance divine, manifestation dont le saint est le meilleur exemple, comme le rappelle l'auteur de la *Passion de sainte Salsa*:

> Les titres éclatants des passions triomphales, les glorieux combats des martyrs, quand ils confessent le Christ, auprès de Dieu leur valent assurément les honneurs pour avoir témoigné de leur conviction, mais nous aussi, nous leur avons fait cortège **en proclamant leurs louanges** ('laudis praeconio'); et la fête où nous célébrons leur victoire nous a emplis d'allégresse. **Comme dit l'Écriture, 'quand on loue les justes, le peuple chrétien est dans l'allégresse'** ('cum laudantur viri iusti, laetantur populi christiani').[19] Car il y a un nouveau et double bénéfice pour la ferveur, quand on rappelle leurs mérites pour servir d'exemple à l'ardeur des fidèles: tandis qu'on rappelle à la mémoire les exploits de leurs vertus, qui sont des enseignements pour les contemporains, le discours exposé sert ensuite aussi à l'instruction de la postérité. En effet, enseigner ceux qui ne savaient pas, donner des armes à ceux qui ont été formés, célébrer ceux qui n'ont pas été vaincus, c'est multiplier et faire croître les trophées de l'Église et porter partout en triomphe la gloire des vainqueurs. Celui qui est toujours victorieux en la personne des vainqueurs est Lui-même invincible; '**et si, comme il est écrit, il faut louer le Seigneur en ses saints**'[20] ('et si laudandus est Dominus in sanctis suis'),[21] **ne faudra-t-il pas le louer** ('laudandus erit') **surtout en ceux que l'ardeur de leur foi et la force inébranlable de leur espérance ont armés pour mépriser la mort? En eux, pour dire vrai, c'est Lui-même qui a vraiment combattu et vaincu.** Entrons donc par nos prières en communion avec les saints dont nous devons célébrer la sainte et toute vénérable mémoire; et si la faiblesse de la chair nous empêche de les imiter et de combattre en vivant nous aussi comme eux, réjouissons-nous au moins avec ceux qui ont souffert et célébrons maintenant dans l'Esprit ce qu'ils ont accompli dans la victoire, de sorte que nous chantions nous aussi avec David en disant:

17 Voir par exemple *P. Fab.* 8.

18 *P. Is.* 1.5: 'ad laudes Christi'; *P. Marcul.* 1.1: 'ad incentivum virtutis et laudis ecclesiae'.

19 Cf. Proverbes 11.11 et Psaumes 104.43.

20 Le sens originel hébreu de ce verset est plutôt 'en son sanctuaire' et n'a donc rien à voir avec les saints, même si les hagiographes latins le comprennent comme l'auteur de la Passion. Sur ces infléchissements de sens, voir Van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie et son public', p. 165.

21 Psaumes 150.1.

> '**Le Seigneur a exalté la force de son peuple, louange à tous ses saints**' ('exaltavit Dominus cornu populi sui, laus omnibus sanctis eius').[22] Dieu tout-puissant nous verra porter, avec la ferveur que fait naître leur foi, les enseignes des martyrs et il nous accordera le salaire qu'ont mérité leurs exploits à la mesure de notre dévotion. (*P. Sals.* 1)[23]

Ce prologue est un véritable plaidoyer en faveur de l'éloge des saints. En utilisant plusieurs passages bibliques (Proverbes 11.11; Psaumes 104.43; 150.1, et 148.14), l'hagiographe justifie très habilement son panégyrique: louer les justes au jour de leur fête provoque l'allégresse des fidèles, encouragés à imiter leurs modèles, accroît les trophées de l'Église et la gloire de Dieu, qui a triomphé en eux. La louange du saint est donc la louange de Dieu. Comment ne pas voir ici une justification du recours à l'éloquence épidictique, parfois critiquée par les élites chrétiennes occidentales du v^e^ siècle en raison de son caractère mensonger?[24] Alors que, dans le reste de la Passion, il ne cite jamais littéralement le texte sacré, l'auteur a soigneusement sélectionné dans ce passage des versets de l'Ancien Testament qui contiennent tous le mot *laus*. De cette manière, il démontre non seulement que la louange chrétienne est possible puisqu'elle est encouragée dans la Bible, mais qu'elle est nécessaire quand on évoque les saints, toute louange d'un homme juste étant de fait louange de Dieu.

Le prologue est également, comme l'exorde encomiastique,[25] l'occasion pour un écrivain d'expliquer ses motivations. L'idée de la valeur du témoignage des saints y est unanimement rappelée, mais d'autres motifs s'y ajoutent. Ainsi, pour l'auteur donatiste de la *Passion de saint Marculus*, les hauts faits du martyr doivent être mis par écrit car ils s'inscrivent dans la continuité des louanges relatives aux anciens témoins du Christ.[26] Ce thème, d'origine biblique, est traditionnel dans les prologues hagiographiques; on le trouve

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22 Psaumes 148.14.

23 Je cite ici, comme ailleurs, ma propre traduction.

24 Il suffit ici de rappeler, pour le panégyrique, l'exemple bien connu d'Augustin qui, en sa qualité d'orateur officiel, dut faire, à Milan, le panégyrique de Valentinien II pour ses *decennalia* en 384, et de Bauton pour son consulat en 385. Il évoque cette expérience dans les *Confessions* en disant qu'il lui fallut 'recitare imperatori laudes, quibus plura mentirer et mentienti faveretur ab scientibus' (Augustin, *Confessions*, éd. par Verheijen, 6.6.9). Sur cet épisode, voir Moroni, 'Le mensogne del panegirico', pp. 25–51, et sur les réticences d'Augustin vis-à-vis de la louange, les remarques de Heim, 'Les panégyriques des martyrs', pp. 107–11.

25 Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 301–04 relève que, dans l'exorde, sont abordés les thèmes suivants: difficulté de la tâche, raisons de parler (rendre hommage, manifester son admiration, proximité entre l'orateur et le sujet), dissipation des mauvaises impressions préalables. Ces thèmes, fréquents dans la littérature classique et tardive en général, ont été relevés par Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*. Voir enfin, sur l'influence de l'éloge sur les prologues dans la poésie panégyrique, Zarini, 'Les préfaces dans la poésie panégyrique', pp. 178–80.

26 *P. Marcul.* 1.3: 'Iustum enim ac satis dignum est, ut antiquorum testium laudibus recentium quoque martyrum virtus adiuncta glutinetur'.

déjà, au début du IIIe siècle, dans la *Passion des saintes Perpétue et Félicité* (I.1 et XXI.11), mais, dans ce texte, le témoignage sanglant doit simplement être rappelé et non loué comme dans la Passion donatiste. D'autres auteurs prétendent qu'ils sont poussés par la nécessité de dévoiler au grand jour des actions qui leur étaient jusque-là inconnues, de révéler ce qui était caché.[27] Enfin, l'hagiographe de la *Passion des saints Dativus, Saturninus et autres* invoque un motif particulièrement intéressant dans notre optique: il doit raconter le martyre des chrétiens d'Abitina car il est uni à eux par un attachement civique (*P. Dat.* 2: 'ex actis publicis scribere non tam ingenio praeditus quam **civico illis amore** coniunctus'). Il inscrit donc son récit dans le cadre de la cité, dans la tradition des éloges funèbres publics de la République romaine. Or ce thème apparaît dans un autre texte, la recension longue de la *Passion de sainte Marciana*:

> Très chers frères, bien que — vous le constaterez sans doute de vos propres oreilles — ce soit un style rustique nullement contaminé par une éloquence encothurnée ('rusticus sermo nulla contaminatione cuturnati eloquii') qui recommande vivement à votre studieuse attention **l'éloge civique** ('ciuicam laudem') de la martyre Marciana, pourtant il n'y a pas de raison que les propos incultes d'un langage relâché se déprécient là où la vérité ne saurait rougir de la simplicité. Il est donc inutile de revendiquer une saveur exotique quand on a affaire à un auditoire de compatriotes, et les règles du discours sont fixées par quelqu'un qui s'avère témoin des faits. On peut accréditer le passé si l'on ne refuse pas de reconnaître ce qui en a été divulgué. (*II P. Marc.* I.1–2)

L'auditoire voudrait que l'auteur fasse l'éloge civique ('civicam laudem') de Marciana, un éloge qui doit être prononcé dans une langue urbaine, qualifiée de 'encothurnée', en référence à un style élevé et recherché. L'horizon d'attente du public est donc sans aucun doute l'éloge romain du grand personnage, de l'homme d'État, propice à la communauté, dans la lignée duquel s'inscrit, au Ve siècle, le saint, en particulier quand il est patron de cité.[28] Mais aux règles traditionnelles du discours épidictique,[29] l'hagiographe, qui se présente comme un témoin des faits pouvant garantir leur véracité, préfère un *sermo rusticus* et un langage relâché. Cette déclaration implique à mon sens deux positions complémentaires de l'hagiographe, l'une évidente, l'autre peut-être plus subtile. D'une part pour lui, comme pour Augustin, la prose d'art doit être mise au service de la communication de la vérité, et la Bible, qui contient des *sublimia* exprimés en langage quotidien, en donne le modèle par excellence:

27 *P. Fab.* 1; *P. Sals.* 1.

28 Voir Orselli, *L'idea e il culto del santo patrono cittadino*, pp. 32–66; pp. 69–90; Brown, *Le culte des saints*, pp. 75–79 et, sur les patrons de cité dans l'hagiographie africaine, Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2018), pp. 258–62.

29 Sur ces règles, voir Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 331–421.

elle fait théoriquement disparaître l'habituelle distinction entre *sermo humilis* et *sermo sublimis*.[30] Ainsi, l'hagiographe, qui en réalité utilise, dans le reste de la Passion, une langue très recherchée, revendique, pour raconter les hauts faits des martyrs, un langage et un style simples, sur le modèle biblique, afin d'être compris au mieux du public. D'autre part, en prétendant faire passer le fond avant la forme au détriment des règles rhétoriques de l'éloge,[31] il inscrit son texte dans la tradition du discours philosophique, tel que le définit Sénèque: centré sur les *res*, il s'oppose au discours délibératif ou judiciaire, porté plutôt sur les *uerba*.[32] Cette filiation peut s'expliquer par le fait que le christianisme se revendique comme la seule vraie philosophie,[33] et même si cette filiation est moins visible dans les autres Passions, le martyr y partage toutefois certaines prérogatives des sages. Dans la *Passion de sainte Marciana*, en tout cas, la jeune femme est un véritable modèle de comportement bien avant son martyre et l'auteur met l'accent sur ce point: le long développement qu'il consacre à l'apparence extérieure de Marciana est un cas unique dans le corpus africain. Le texte se présente ainsi comme une source d'enseignement pour un auditoire peu confronté à des violences religieuses païennes. En élaborant ses propres règles de discours ('dicendi legem') dans le prologue, l'auteur suggère donc manifestement que sa Passion est une louange chrétienne, accessible et vraie, ancrée dans un contexte urbain, qui possède une dimension philosophique en proposant un modèle de comportement dont l'auteur a été témoin.

Les hagiographes affectent de rejeter les principes de l'éloquence traditionnelle qui siéraient à leur propos au profit d'une langue plus rustique, soit par choix, comme dans le cas de la *Passion de sainte Marciana*, soit, le plus souvent, parce qu'ils se disent incapables d'écrire avec style.[34] À ce *topos* se mêle celui de l'humilité de l'orateur, indigne de raconter de si hauts faits, lui qui n'est qu'un 'pauvre petit homme'.[35] Ce refus de l'ornementation, purement théorique, permet de valoriser le personnage loué et dessine une opposition

30 Voir Fontaine, *Vie de saint Martin*, pp. 32–40; Auerbach, *Le haut langage*, pp. 39–63.

31 Sa conception du primat de la forme dans l'éloquence épidictique n'est pas fidèle à la pratique impériale. Les théoriciens de la Seconde Sophistique comme Ménandre et le Pseudo-Denys prônent au contraire le recours à des styles divers par souci d'adaptation au sujet et de persuasion de l'auditoire. Voir Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 339–62.

32 Sénèque, *Lettres à Lucilius*, Ep. 100.10; voir aussi Ep. 115.1. Cette distinction, qui n'exclut pas pour autant l'attention prêtée au style, apparaît aussi chez Cicéron, comme le montrent Merchant, 'Seneca the Philosopher', et Cizek, 'À propos de la lettre 100 de Sénèque', p. 394. Sur le *sermo* philosophique romain, voir les remarques de Guérin, *'Persona'*, pp. 24–25, et Garbarino, 'Lo stile del filosofo secondo Seneca', p. 69.

33 Voir Pouderon, *Foi chrétienne et culture classique*, qui recense de nombreux textes sur le sujet, et Morlet, *Christianisme et philosophie*, pp. 79–167.

34 *P. Fab.* 1: 'et quamquam facundiae copiis et eloquentiae cothurno haec digna sunt recenseri, tamen in dona Dei pro modulo pauperioris ingenii duo minuta quae habeo non negabo …'; *P. Sept.* 1: 'mihi indigno et inmerito quantulacumque verborum porrigat ornamenta'.

35 *P. Is.* 1.1: 'indignus homuncio'.

entre une éloquence traditionnelle, vaine, et la véritable éloquence, la louange philosophique chrétienne.

Dans les prologues sont enfin exposés les projets des hagiographes: raconter le martyre de chrétiens qui ont lutté contre un adversaire païen ou prétendument catholique. À la différence de la *vita*, consacrée à l'ensemble du parcours d'un chrétien, la Passion se concentre sur un moment précis: le dernier combat, celui qui entraîne la mort du héros et dans lequel éclatent toutes ses vertus. Mais face à un tel sujet, les hagiographes se demandent par quoi commencer et par où finir, *topos* que l'on trouve aussi par exemple dans la *Vie de saint Cyprien* de Pontius.[36] Deux d'entre eux expriment même une inquiétude qui aurait pu avoir des conséquences génériques: en racontant le martyre de leur héros, ils doivent taire le reste de sa vie alors que la carrière du personnage pourrait être l'objet d'une louange tout aussi justifiable et bénéfique pour la communauté.[37] On sent chez eux une tentation pour le récit biographique[38] (tous deux parlent d'ailleurs de *vita*), en particulier chez le rédacteur de la *Passion de saint Marculus*. Très influencé par l'hagio-biographie de Pontius,[39] il ne résiste qu'en partie à cette tentation, ne parvenant pas à taire la formation intellectuelle de Marculus, un ancien avocat qui a délaissé la science profane pour embrasser la vérité chrétienne et la carrière d'évêque. Cette hésitation essentiellement théorique valorise le *laudandus*: sa vie est si exemplaire qu'il est difficile de la taire. Mais elle traduit également le fait que d'autres formes littéraires ont influencé les auteurs. Ceux-ci, en annonçant qu'ils raconteront les faits dans l'ordre ('per ordinem'), mettent l'accent sur l'organisation chronologique

36 *P. Dat.* 1: 'Sed non invenio, fratres dilectissimi, quibus utar exordiis quoque principio laudis aggrediar sanctissimorum martyrum felicissimam confessionem'; *P. Marcul.* II.9: 'Unde igitur incipiam, unde limen tantae laudis ingrediar, unde rursus eiusdem liminis exitum claudam? Aperire conturbor et claudere defatigor'. Voir aussi Pontius, *V. Cypr.* II.1: 'Unde igitur incipiam? Unde exordium bonorum eius adgrediar, nisi a principio fidei et natiuitate caelesti?' (Pontius, *Vie de saint Cyprien*, éd. par Bastiaensen). Ce *topos* a été relevé par Burgess, *Epideictic Literature*, pp. 149–50.

37 *P. Is.* II.10–11: 'Si vitae totius memorare mores incipiam, reverenti martyrio facere videbor iniuriam: si ad praedicationem martyrii dirigam gressus, tantae vitae contemptor tenebor adstrictus. Premor cuncta percurrere et scio me cuncta nequire'; *P. Marcul.* I.5: 'Et quia praetermittendus non est superioris vitae memorabilis cursus, de virtutibus Marculi gloriosi, etsi propter multitudinem nequeunt omnia, propter testimonium tamen uel pauca dicenda sunt'.

38 Sur les rapports entre biographie et hagiographie, voir Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*; Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*; Sonnabend, *Geschichte der antiken Biographie*; Heinzelmann, 'Neue Aspekte'; Van Uytfanghe, 'La biographie classique'. On notera enfin que la tentation biographique peut s'expliquer aussi par le modèle des Évangiles qui, sans être des biographies, entretiennent des rapports analogiques de forme et de contenu avec le genre de la biographie antique; voir, sur ce point controversé, l'article détaillé de Dormeyer and Frankmölle, 'Evangelium als literarische Gattung', pp. 1543–1704.

39 Voir entre autres Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, p. 65; Saxer, 'La "Vita Cypriani" de Pontius'; Schmidt, 'Pontius, "Vita Cypriani"'; 'Die Cyprian-Vita des Presbyters Pontius'.

et la dimension narrative du propos.[40] Or ces procédés sont plus caractéristiques de l'histoire, et dans une certaine mesure de la biographie,[41] que du genre épidictique, dans lequel ils ne sont cependant pas absents: dès les origines, l'*enkomion* est dominé par une tension entre récit chronologique et portrait,[42] le premier étant généralement suivi dans la *laudatio funebris* et le panégyrique.[43] De plus, en dehors de l'adresse aux auditeurs et, parfois à d'autres entités (le Diable ou une cité personnifiée), le propos est à la troisième personne, comme dans les genres narratifs, alors que l'éloge est un discours souvent adressé directement à son destinataire, à la deuxième personne. En définitive, cette brève étude des prologues montre bien, à mon sens, que la terminologie utilisée, l'intention des auteurs et les attentes du public sont autant de thèmes rapprochant l'hagiographie tardive des genres de l'éloge, sans en être pour autant la seule source d'inspiration.

Les portraits des personnages

Le discours hagiographique partage également avec l'éloge une même tendance à la stylisation et au traitement hyperbolique du sujet. Ce procédé figure d'abord dans les portraits des personnages. L'éloge classique, grec ou latin, contient une première partie dans laquelle sont abordés les origines géographiques et familiales (*patris* et *genos*), la naissance et l'éducation du

40 Voir par exemple *P. Perp.* II.1: 'Haec (Perpetua) ordinem totum martyrii sui'; XVI.1: 'voluit Spiritus Sanctus ordinem ipsius muneris conscribi'; *P. Is.* II.7: 'Quorum triumphos exsequi quemquam per ordinem posse … credo difficile'; *P. Fab.* 1: 'sancti Fabii martyris venerabilem passionem rei ordinem prosecutus expediam'; 5: 'ut per ordinem passionis robusta fides mereretur adipisci martyrium. Minus autem haberet gloriae, si non videretur per ordinem martyrii cucurrisse'.

41 Voir cependant les nuances que l'on peut apporter à propos de Suétone qui adopte un plan à la fois chronologique et thématique, comme le montre Gascou, *Suétone historien*, pp. 343–456.

42 Ainsi Aristote (Aristote, *Rhétorique*, III.1416b, 22–26) évoque le récit complet des actions dans l'ordre chronologique et le récit qui distribue les actions suivant les vertus qu'elles mettent en lumière, méthode qu'il juge plus simple et plus unie. En revanche, l'auteur de la *Rhétorique à Alexandre* (Pseudo-Aristote, *Rhétorique à Alexandre*, 35) semble préférer une approche chronologique de l'évocation des vertus. Voir Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 134–40.

43 Pour la *laudatio*, on peut citer l'exemple de l'oraison funèbre de César par Antoine chez Dion Cassius, qui évoque les faits dans l'ordre chronologique (Dion Cassius, *Histoire romaine*, XLIV.41–48), ou celui d'Auguste par Tibère, partiellement chronologique (Dion Cassius, *Histoire romaine*, LVI.36–39). Voir aussi les remarques de Durry (*Éloge funèbre de 'Turia'*, éd. par Durry, pp. lxxix–lxxxii). Dans le cas du panégyrique, il suffit de se reporter aux excuses que formule Pline, dans le *Panégyrique de Trajan*, dès qu'il s'éloigne un peu du plan chronologique (Pline, *Panégyrique de Trajan*, 56.2; 63.1; 66.1). Voir aussi *Éloge funèbre de 'Turia'*, Galletier, p. xxxii.

laudandus (*anatrophē* et *paideia*).[44] Ces éléments sont peu développés dans le corpus africain. Si l'origine géographique est très souvent rappelée, en raison de la dimension fortement civique du martyre et du culte des saints, le *genos* n'est mentionné que quand le personnage a des parents païens et appartient à une famille noble. Dans le premier cas, il s'agit évidemment de souligner la sagesse du héros, qui a suivi le chemin lumineux de la vérité alors que son entourage est plongé dans les ténèbres de l'erreur.[45] Cette situation entraîne d'ailleurs parfois un rapport de force entre le martyr et sa famille, voire une rupture; dans la *Passion de sainte Salsa*, elle est même à l'origine de la destruction de la statue de *Draco* et du lynchage de la jeune fille par la population de Tipasa. La noblesse, presque exclusivement féminine, participe elle aussi à la construction d'une figure exemplaire[46] en suggérant la pureté du sang. Elle permet surtout d'introduire un thème biblique très répandu, le rejet des richesses,[47] et d'insister sur l'humilité du héros. La naissance n'est jamais évoquée puisque la seule véritable naissance est offerte par la mort (le *dies mortalis* est le *dies natalis*), et l'éducation limitée à la connaissance du texte biblique dans de rares cas.

Si l'on suit la structure traditionnelle du genre encomiastique, on s'attendrait ensuite à trouver dans les textes une description physique du héros (*sōma*) en cinq aspects: santé (*hugieia*), taille (*megethos*), vélocité (*tachos*), force (*ischus*), et beauté (*kallos*), le plus important de tous, qui est souvent l'apanage des jeunes gens.[48] Or cet élément, totalement absent dans le cas des hommes, ne se trouve que dans quelques portraits féminins de vierges: l'hagiographe affirme simplement que les jeunes femmes sont très belles.[49] L'auteur de la *Passion de sainte Salsa* explique les raisons de ce silence:

> Quant à son physique, je n'en dis rien ici: certes, elle était d'une beauté remarquable, comme on le raconte, mais puisqu'elle s'était consacrée à la chasteté, il n'y a pas lieu de la louer sur ce point, du moins dans une prédication ('praedicatione'); en effet selon les valeurs divines, on ne

44 C'est ce que l'on trouve par exemple dans *Rhétorique à Herennius*, III.10; Cicéron, *De inventione*, II.177; *De oratore*, II.45–46; *De partitionibus oratoriae*, 74; Quintilien, *Institution oratoire*, III.7, 10. Voir à ce sujet Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 153–58; pp. 161–65.

45 *P. Sals.* 2.

46 Voir *P. Dat.* 17; *II P. Marc.* II.12; *P. Fab.* 2–3; *P. Dat.* 3. Sur la noblesse féminine, voir Giannarelli, *La tipologia femminile*, p. 54, et sur la noblesse en général, voir Van Uytfanghe, *Stylisation biblique et condition humaine*, pp. 164–69, et Poulin, *L'Idéal de sainteté*, pp. 45–48.

47 Sur ce thème, voir les remarques de Bartelink, 'Adoption et rejet des topiques profanes'.

48 Voir Aristote, *Rhétorique*, I.1360b, 21–22, 1361b, 3–25 (où la vélocité est un aspect de la force). La force et la beauté sont les plus fréquentes (*Rhétorique à Herennius*, III.14; Cicéron, *De oratore* II.46; Quintilien, *Institution oratoire*, V.10, 12), et cette dernière l'emporte sur la première (Cicéron, *De partitionibus oratoriae*, 74). Cette description physique est parfois développé à la fin de l'éloge, dans le *topos* de la *tuchē*. Voir Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 159–61.

49 Voir *P. Dat.* 17; *II P. Marc.* II.4.

> s'arrête pas aux charmes du corps, mais on ne loue que la beauté de la conduite. (*P. Sals.* 2)

Tout en soulignant la beauté de la jeune femme, il considère que, dans le cadre d'une louange chrétienne, appelée ici 'praedicatio' en raison de sa fonction parénétique, le portrait du héros doit se concentrer sur l'exposé des vertus morales, seule véritable beauté au regard de Dieu. La beauté des vierges vient simplement souligner la pureté d'un corps consacré. Elle est le miroir où se reflète le comportement exemplaire des jeunes femmes. Cette idée, déjà présente dans l'éloge classique, est beaucoup plus prégnante dans l'hagiographie: non seulement les *virtutes* morales l'emportent sur le portrait physique, mais le discours doit leur être tout entier consacré. Pourtant, dans la *Passion de sainte Marciana*, l'hagiographe fait un portrait très précis de la jeune martyre:

> Son comportement réservé révélait un corps pudique de vierge et sa beauté cachée disait sa retenue, pourtant physiquement prête pour le lit nuptial. Chez elle, point d'anneaux de boucles d'une chevelure entrelacée errant impudemment sur son front avec des mèches frisées qui retombent, point non plus de cheveux flottants: modestement rassemblés, ils ne fouettaient que le contour de son pudique visage. Sa chevelure couvrait sa tête, sans apprêt, et n'était pas nouée par des procédés raffinés. Elle ne se laissait pas envahir par les artifices d'une œuvre de séduction ni n'était attachée par la dent d'une épingle pointue pour former une sorte de tour, mais elle était rassemblée dans une totale rusticité par le parcours du simple ruban qui la séparait; il était discrètement tenu sur le front, mêlé à une chevelure qui pût néanmoins flatter l'image de son chaste visage sans le dévoiler davantage. L'artisan du mensonge n'avait rien à faire là où la beauté conservait son naturel. Son teint avait toujours sa pâleur native sans être abîmé par aucun des artifices que l'on trouve dans les tons grenats d'une poudre fabriquée, et l'adultère d'une pudeur factice ne l'avait pas rendu étranger. Ses yeux baissés regardaient le sol et, dans la limite des bornes fixées par la retenue, ils se retranchaient, dans un mouvement de discrétion, derrière le rempart d'un regard dérobé. Un noir tranchant n'avait pas trouvé place dans le creux délaissé de ses paupières et un mince crayon n'avait pas dessiné une ligne sombre. Son visage de vierge était semblable à celui du premier homme façonné par le Christ même, son artisan. La toilette même de la vierge, qu'elle fut improvisée ou conforme aux règles de la vie courante, était aussi d'une extrême sobriété. Car la jeune fille, qui, née de naissance illustre et dans une famille vivant noblement, avait été élevée dans l'opulence d'une fortune si grande qu'elle pouvait s'attacher aux richesses du monde trompeur, méprisa les plaisirs du siècle et préféra l'amour du combat pour la modération céleste. Elle avait méprisé les vêtements tissés d'or et rejeté les fils admirés des tissus de soie. Elle avait condamné les bandes teintes de pourpre précieux et rejeté avec une énergique vigueur la discorde qui cherche la concorde dans la variété des textiles. Elle avait

> choisi, pour ses pudiques sorties, un vêtement qu'elle pût porter comme compagnon de son martyre. (*II P. Marc.* II.3–14)

Cette description porte successivement sur la coiffure, le maquillage et les habitudes vestimentaires de la sainte, et à chaque fois, l'hagiographe met l'accent sur les modes et les pratiques que Marciana refuse d'imiter. En s'inspirant profondément de textes classiques et patristiques relatifs aux femmes,[50] il fait de son héroïne l'incarnation de la *pudicitia*: la simplicité de sa coiffure, son refus du maquillage, la sobriété de sa tenue sont autant de signes extérieurs de sa pudeur, de son humilité et de sa vertu. Ils sont les reflets de ses qualités morales; c'est donc la chasteté de la jeune femme qui oriente les choix de l'auteur. Fidèle à sa formation rhétorique, l'hagiographe n'a pu renoncer au désir de faire un portrait mais il propose au lecteur un portrait inversé et moral.

Ces remarques montrent que les composantes de la partie théorique relative au portrait du *landandus* ont fait l'objet d'une sélection. À mon sens, deux facteurs permettent d'expliquer ce phénomène. Tout d'abord, il faut tenir compte du modèle des comptes rendus judiciaires exercé sur les Passions. L'alternance de questions et de réponses qui en est la caractéristique essentielle a pour effet de 'dilater' voire de faire disparaître le portrait: les indications relatives aux personnages sont données non au début du texte ni, dans le cas de groupe, au moment de l'introduction du personnage sur le devant de la scène, mais dans les réponses que celui-ci fournit aux autorités. La description laisse alors place au dialogue. De plus, dans l'hagiographie, le traitement hyperbolique du sujet se traduit souvent par une typologie d'origine biblique. Celle-ci peut se superposer à la structure traditionnelle de l'éloge ou la remplacer complètement. Dans le corpus africain, cela concerne en particulier trois catégories de personnages: le pasteur, l'enfant et la vierge.[51] Les pasteurs sont des prêtres ou des évêques dont les signes distinctifs sont toujours la chasteté et souvent l'âge avancé, indice de leur sagesse et de leur autorité naturelle. Les enfants ou les jeunes gens partagent tous une maturité exceptionnelle pour leur âge, dans la tradition du thème classique et biblique du *puer senex* antique.[52] Enfin, pour les vierges, l'accent est mis sur leur chasteté, leur intégrité physique, leur pudeur, leur modération et leur discrétion.[53] Ces vertus, qui puisent dans le modèle de la matrone romaine, dessinent un idéal féminin largement plébiscité par les auteurs chrétiens.

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50 Voir Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2018), pp. 434–35.

51 J'ai développé ce thème dans Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2018), pp. 267–73.

52 Sur ce thème, voir Curtius, *La littérature européenne*, pp. 176–86, qui donne de nombreuses références.

53 Pour la chasteté, voir *P. Dat.* 17; *P. Sals.* 2; *II P. Marc.* II.3, pour la pudeur, voir *P. Dat.* 17 pour Victoria, et surtout *II P. Marc.* II.4–15, où l'hagiographe fait de Marciana l'incarnation de la *pudicitia*. Victoria et Marciana sont aussi des modèles de discrétion et de modération (*P. Dat.* 17; *II P. Marc.* II.17).

Cette typologie reprend les grandes figures de la littérature maccabéenne, femmes, vieillards et enfants, tous des non-combattants[54] et des êtres faibles à cause de leur âge ou de leur sexe. Ces types incarnent le modèle du Juste prêt à donner sa vie pour Dieu, au même titre que les martyrs. Souvent, afin de souligner cette continuité dans le sacrifice, ce rapprochement est renforcé par ce que Van Uytfanghe appelle des typologies nominatives:[55] le personnage est comparé à une ou plusieurs figures bibliques. Or le texte sacré n'aborde que très peu les origines et l'éducation des Justes, et ne contient presque jamais de descriptions physiques. En mettant l'accent sur la conformité des martyrs avec ces anciens héros, les hagiographes doivent nécessairement adapter leur propos, ce qui les éloigne de la structure encomiastique traditionnelle.

Les modèles du sage stoïcien et du héros épique

Dans l'éloquence épidictique, comme nous l'avons vu, les actions (*praxeis*) peuvent être louées en adoptant un plan chronologique ou selon une structure par vertus. Dans le discours hagiographique, puisque les actes sont la manifestation visible de la foi et reflètent les vertus des saints en les menant à la mort, c'est l'ordre chronologique qui est évidemment privilégié. À l'époque impériale, chez les théoriciens de l'éloge domine le classement des vertus suivant la tétrade platonicienne: on évoque la justice (*dikaiosunē*) dont la piété (*eusebeia*) est une partie, la tempérance (*sōphrosunē*), le courage (*andreia*), et la sagesse (*sophia*) du personnage que l'on loue.[56] Même si dans le détail elle peut varier, c'est souvent à l'intérieur de cette trame que l'orateur construit son discours. Dans le corpus africain, ces vertus contribuent à faire du martyr un nouveau sage, un sage chrétien. La tempérance est la moins importante; développée sous la forme de la modération et de la sobriété, elle se perçoit dans le comportement quotidien des personnages, mais ne joue aucun rôle dans le martyre proprement dit; elle est une qualité supplémentaire, mais non nécessaire. La piété envers Dieu est évidemment omniprésente puisqu'elle est la condition du témoignage sanglant. Quant au courage et à la sagesse, ils

54 Sur ce point, voir la très belle étude de Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, pp. 77–78, qui écrit: 'il est notable que le martyre des Maccabées ne mette en scène que des personnages "hors norms", un vieillard, de jeunes enfants et une vieille femme, à l'exclusion de tout homme dans la force de l'âge. Malgré leur âge, ces personnages trouvent la voie de la virilité, qui prend miraculeusement le pas sur leur faiblesse naturelle'.

55 Van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie et son public', pp. 17–21.

56 Voir par exemple Platon, *Le banquet*, 196b–197b; *Phèdre*, 69b–c; *La République*, IV.427e–434d; *Les Lois*, I.630a–631c; III.688a–b; XII.963a–965e; *Protagoras*, 330b (où la piété est une partie de la justice); *Rhétorique à Herennius*, III.3, 10 et 15; Cicéron, *De inventione*, II.159–64; 177; Quintilien, *Institution oratoire*, III.7; 15, qui ne mentionne explicitement que 'fortitudo', 'iustitia' et 'continentia', la 'sapientia' étant comprise dans 'ceterarumque'. On retrouve ce classement chez de nombreux auteurs, recensés par Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge*, pp. 165–68.

se manifestent essentiellement dans la confrontation entre les saints et leurs persécuteurs. Face à leurs adversaires païens ou 'catholiques', les martyrs font preuve de *fortitudo*,[57] mais aussi d'autres vertus, telles que la *patientia*,[58] la *perseverantia*,[59] la *tolerantia* (ou *sustinentia*)[60] et la *constantia*.[61] La *patientia*, qualité évangélique vécue comme une union spirituelle aux souffrances du Christ, réactualisées dans le martyre, est particulièrement fréquente dans les textes hagiographiques. Quant aux autres vertus, elles présentent une coloration très stoïcienne: la constance et le courage sont caractéristiques du sage stoïcien.[62] La persévérance est souvent associée à la première dont elle est une forme.[63] À ces vertus s'ajoute la *sustinentia*, synthèse entre la patience chrétienne et la persévérance stoïcienne.[64] L'évocation de ces qualités dessine le portrait spirituel d'un sage stoïcien, comme le rappelait Fontaine à propos de Martin.[65] Mais ce sage a été christianisé: il n'oppose pas aux passions le calme et l'impassibilité mais la soumission à la souffrance.[66]

Ce modèle éthique est également mis en exergue par la liberté dont fait preuve le martyr. En intervenant parfois avec violence au cours des interrogatoires pour se dénoncer[67] ou répondre à des accusations,[68] il incarne la *parrhēsia*, caractéristique du philosophe hellénistique et charisme biblique.[69] Comme

57 *P. Is.* v.31; *P. Fab.* 3; 5; 9; *P. Vict.* 7. Cette qualité est réservée aux hommes.

58 *P. Sals.* 5. Il faut aussi ajouter toutes les références au verbe *pati*, trop nombreuses pour figurer ici.

59 *II P. Marc.* v.5; *P. Dat.* 16; *P. Marcul.* v.21.

60 *P. Fab.* 6; *P. Dat.* 4. Pour la *sustinentia*, toujours exprimée par le verbe *sustinere*, voir *II P. Marc.* III.3; *P. Fab.* 6; *P. Dat.* 11, 16.

61 *II P. Marc.* IV.4; *P. Fab.* 3; 5; 7; *P. Dat.* 4; 6; 9; 10; 16; 19; *P. Marcul.* IV.16; IV.17; XI.49.

62 Les quatre vertus cardinales du sage stoïcien sont incarnées entre autres dans le portrait de Caton dressé par Sénèque, *Lettres à Lucilius*, Ep. 95. Voir à ce sujet Grimal (1991²: 402–10). Sur ces vertus, voir aussi Rodis-Lewis, *La morale stoïcienne*, pp. 72–78; pp. 104–06, et Voelke, *L'Idée de volonté dans le stoïcisme*, pp. 56–59, 92–94 et 184–85).

63 Voir à ce sujet le témoignage de Cicéron, *Philippiques*, VII.5, 14.

64 Le nom *sustinentia* n'apparaît que dans un contexte architectural (voir par ex. Vitruve, *De architectura*, I.1, 6 ou 7.5, 3) avant Cyprien, qui cite un verset paulinien dans lequel il est utilisé comme un synonyme de *patientia* (*Ad Quirinum*, III.35; *De bono patientiae*, 4). Voir le témoignage d'Augustin, *Sermons*, 359A, l. 26: 'sive patientia, sive sustinentia, sive tolerantia nominetur, pluribus uocabulis eandem rem significat' (PLS 2.759–69).

65 Sulpice Sévère, *Vie de saint Martin*, éd. par Fontaine, p. 1230 affirme: 'Le martyr chrétien y est spirituellement travesti en héros stoïcien'.

66 Voir Auerbach, *Le haut langage*, p. 70, qui écrit: 'Stoïciens et chrétiens ont des façons très différentes de fuir le monde. Le but de l'hostilité chrétienne au monde n'est pas le point zéro de l'absence de passion en dehors du monde, mais la souffrance antagoniste, la souffrance passionnée dans le monde et donc contre le monde; et à la chair, aux mauvaises *passiones* de ce monde les chrétiens n'opposent ni l'apathie stoïcienne ni les "bonnes émotions" (*bonae passiones*), pour arriver à une position aristotélicienne moyenne par un compromis rationnel — mais quelque chose de tout à fait nouveau, d'inédit: la *gloriosa passio* qui provient d'un ardent amour de Dieu'.

67 *P. Dat.* 5; 6; 11; *P. Is.* VI.37–38; *P. Fab.* 4; *II P. Marc.* IV.5–6.

68 *P. Dat.* 7; 16; 17; 18.

69 Voir Brown, *Pouvoir et persuasion*, pp. 91–102; Scarpat, *Parrhesia: Storia del termine*, pp. 76–96; *Parrhesia greca*, et Ronchey, 'Gli atti dei martiri', pp. 789–92.

le sage, le martyr est un personnage déterminé, indépendant, surtout vis-à-vis de son entourage familial et du pouvoir. Comme lui, chaque geste, chaque parole ne prennent sens que par rapport à une doctrine: de même que le philosophe est le représentant d'une école de pensée, le saint est le détenteur et le héraut de sa vérité religieuse.[70] Les confessions de foi sont le cadre privilégié d'affirmation de cette sagesse. Certaines renvoient simplement à l'activité créatrice de Dieu,[71] mais d'autres présentent une inflexion christocentrique faisant écho aux débats des IVe et Ve siècles relatifs à la Trinité: c'est le cas de celle de Fabius,[72] mais surtout de la deuxième confession de Salsa qu'il faut probablement inscrire dans un contexte de lutte contre l'arianisme vandale.[73] La parole du héros chrétien, qui est aussi celle de l'hagiographe, devient alors un moyen d'affirmer l'orthodoxie religieuse et d'assurer sa diffusion auprès du public. Ainsi, le modèle spirituel du sage permet à la fois de valoriser la capacité de résistance des martyrs face aux bourreaux mais aussi de promouvoir la supériorité de la foi chrétienne. L'attitude stoïque du saint face aux supplices, ses propos face aux bourreaux démontrent que la seule philosophie possible, la seule au nom de laquelle il faille se sacrifier, est celle de la vérité révélée.

À la figure du sage stoïcien s'ajoute un autre modèle qui a profondément influencé nos hagiographes: le héros classique de l'*épos* païen. Ce thème recoupe partiellement le moment où l'orateur fait l'éloge des hauts faits militaires du grand personnage (les *praxeis kata polemon*). Il est cependant beaucoup plus développé dans le discours hagiographique que dans l'éloquence épidictique car leurs enjeux sont très différents. Les Passions tardives mettent en scène de véritables guerriers. La confrontation entre les martyrs et le pouvoir oppresseur est un combat[74] et les auteurs développent de nombreuses métaphores militaires. Le chrétien est un *miles Christi*, brandissant les armes de la foi.[75] Ces dernières sont parfois détaillées: Fabius se détourne de l'armée séculière pour se diriger vers des camps victorieux, en brandissant les insignes de la milice éternelle et l'étendard glorieux de la croix du Christ,[76] c'est-à-dire les objets christianisés

70 Voir *P. Dat.* 22; *P. Marcul.* II.6, VIII.35; *P. Sals.* 2.

71 *P. Sals.* 5.

72 *P. Fab.* 3.

73 *P. Sals.* 5. Voir Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2018), pp. 336–39.

74 Cette confrontation est désignée comme 'agōn' (*P. Fab.* 6), 'certamen' (*II P. Marc.* III.1, IV.2; *P. Fab.* 1; 3; 11; *P. Sals.* 1; *P. Dat.* 1; 4; 7; 11; 15; 18; *P. Marcul.* III.10; IV.17: V.24), 'proelium' (*II P. Marc.* II.18; *P. Dat.* 2; 7; 10; 13; 16; 18), *pugna* (*P. Fab.* 2; *P. Sals.* 2; *P. Dat.* 1; 4), ou 'luctamen' (*P. Sals.* 5). Sur ce vocabulaire, voir les remarques de Saxer, *Bible et hagiographie*, pp. 212–14.

75 *P. Fab.* 3: 'fidei armis emicuit'; *P. Sals.* 6: 'coepit cominus armari zelo fidei et amore Dei'; *P. Dat.* 2: 'mox fidei arma corripuit'; *P. Don.* 2: 'Sed quibus praecepta divina semper sunt arma victricia'. Sur le thème du *miles Christi*, la bibliographie est immense; voir avant tout Von Harnack, *Militia Christi*; Capmany Casamitjana, *'Miles Christi'*; Fontaine, *Aspects et problèmes de la prose d'art latine*, pp. 417–18; pp. 458–62; pp. 509–32; Brennan, 'Military Images in Hagiography', pp. 323–45, et Fialon, *Mens immobilis* (2018), pp. 340–47.

76 *P. Fab.* 3: 'qui ex baptismo crucis Christi portas triumphale vexillum?'; 6: 'Signa adprehendi aeternae militiae'.

qu'il a refusé de porter lors du *concilium provinciale*; conformément à l'exégèse paulinienne (Paul, *Épître aux Éphésiens*, 6.14–17), les martyrs d'Abitina sont armés du bouclier de la foi, du casque du salut et du glaive à deux tranchants sur lesquels brille le Christ.[77] Les hagiographes décrivent les interrogatoires sous la forme de duels, de combats au corps à corps. Ainsi, dans la *Passion des saints Dativus, Saturninus et autres*, chaque martyr s'avance au-devant de la scène pour être interrogé: il frappe alors le proconsul par des paroles et les bourreaux ripostent au moyen des instruments de torture.[78] Même la destruction des statues de *Draco* et de Diane par Salsa et Marciana s'apparente au combat singulier dans lesquels les héros font rouler la tête de l'ennemi d'un coup d'épée.[79] On observe une véritable théâtralisation de la violence guerrière, portée par le ton triomphaliste des hagiographes. Cependant, la victoire des martyrs, inéluctable puisque Dieu combat à leurs côtés, passe par la mort: le chrétien triomphe définitivement quand il est tué puisqu'en mourant, il assure la victoire de la foi sur les forces du mal. Le modèle du héros épique est donc l'objet d'une réinterprétation chrétienne marquée par l'image du Juste souffrant: le martyr est un guerrier mais il est aussi et surtout un modèle d'acceptation et de résistance. Sa mort est exemplaire parce qu'elle est consentie d'emblée, ce qui lui confère une valeur sacrificielle indéniable. Elle est d'ailleurs présentée comme un motif de joie et de fierté: le récit de l'inhumation des corps des saints par une population empressée et pleine de piété,[80] loin des gémissements et des pleurs du *planctus* tragique, parachève la transformation du martyre en un acte héroïque, heureux et digne de toutes les louanges.

Conclusion

Les éléments qui précèdent m'autorisent à poser un certain nombre de conclusions. Tout d'abord, une grande partie des textes hagiographiques est présentée par les auteurs eux-mêmes comme des discours d'éloge, prononcés devant un auditoire le jour de la fête du saint. Ces discours sont cependant des discours chrétiens exaltant un type particulier de personnages, les martyrs, ce qui entraîne naturellement une adaptation des structures de l'éloquence épidictique. Ainsi, on observe une sélection dans les indications relatives aux

77 *P. Dat.* 3: 'Hos agmen dominicum sequebatur in quo fulgebat caelestium splendor armorum, scutum fidei, lorica iustitiae, salvationis galea et gladius bifrons sermo Dei'; 16: 'Sed legiones dominicae in quibus Christus, perpetuum lumen, armorum caelestium corusco splendore fulgebat fortius atque constantius in certamina prosilibant'.

78 *P. Dat.* 5: 10: 11: 13: 16.

79 Voir Voisin, 'Les Romains chasseurs de tête', p. 262. La statue renversée de Diane est d'ailleurs qualifiée de cadavre (*II P. Marc.* II.5: 'prosternens confracti metalli liniamenta sibi minuta ad visum confossi cadaveris offerebat').

80 *P. Fab.* 11; *P. Sals.* 12; *P. Is.* XII.80–82, XVI.101–02; *P. Marcul.* XV.70–76.

origines et à l'éducation des saints, un rejet partiel de la description physique du *laudandus* au profit d'une focalisation sur les vertus morales, mises en relief essentiellement dans la confrontation entre le martyr et les autorités persécutrices. De même, au traditionnel exposé thématique de ces vertus, les hagiographes préfèrent la narration de type chronologique, plus adaptée à un récit qui se concentre sur les événements entraînant la mort du héros. Cette adaptation peut trouver à mon sens une explication dans l'influence exercée par d'autres formes littéraires. Le modèle biblique, sensible dans la typologie, est prépondérant: il rattache les *gesta* des martyrs à la longue lignée des Justes et met l'accent sur la valeur sacrificielle de la mort des chrétiens. La biographie spirituelle et, plus largement la figure du sage, jouent aussi un rôle non négligeable sur nos textes du fait de la valorisation des vertus morales et surtout de leur coloration stoïcienne. Enfin, l'épopée a elle aussi été ponctuellement réutilisée, au travers d'un ensemble de métaphores agonistiques et du développement d'une rhétorique de la violence, transformant le martyr en nouveau héros guerrier. En définitive, si certaines Passions africaines sont, pour leurs auteurs, des louanges, si elles en reprennent parfois la structure, elles ne sont jamais que des louanges. De plus, on ne peut, me semble-t-il, les rattacher à un type déjà existant de louange. En effet, comme dans la *laudatio funebris*, on fait l'éloge d'un mort, mais cet éloge est public et toute la communauté en tire un bénéfice, ce qui est plus caractéristique de la louange honorifique. Par ailleurs, certains éléments des prologues rapprochent les Passions de l'éloquence philosophique. Le discours hagiographique est donc sans conteste l'une des formes littéraires dans lesquelles se manifeste le mieux le 'mélange des genres' cher à Fontaine. Sans remettre en cause les classifications au demeurant pertinentes de Delehaye, ce mélange permet de les nuancer et de souligner, du moins dans le cas africain, la vaste et solide culture littéraire des hagiographes.

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Anne Alwis

Listen to Her

Rewriting Virgin Martyrs as Orators in the Byzantine Passions of St Tatiana and St Ia[*]

The Byzantine adaptations of the Martyrdoms of St Tatiana of Rome and St Ia of Persia demonstrate a new, political purpose for the female martyr. They also provide us with the opportunity to understand the significance of rhetoric in the creation of saintly heroism, remarkably, based on conceptions of female intelligence. Tatiana and Ia were allegedly martyred in Late Antiquity. Centuries later, two men, an Anonymous and a monk called Makarios, chose to resurrect these virgin martyrs by revising their Passions, which have never been examined in detail till now.[1] In this chapter, I suggest that Tatiana and Ia are rewritten as skilful orators and acclaimed for their facility for rhetorical discourse, and it is as rhetors that these women defy and overwhelm those in consummate authority. Sexuality, so prominent in virgin martyr accounts, is drastically reduced.[2] Furthermore, the women's voices are raised to further their revisers' interests during times of particular conflict: the rewritten account of Ia's passion (henceforth: the *PI*) promotes Emperor Andronikos II (reigned 1282–1328) whilst the metaphrasis of Tatiana (henceforth: the *MT*) may have been read variously as an iconophile narrative, a text to support the veneration of icons in a time when this was banned, an iconoclastic polemic, or as a reaction to Islamic forces.[3] Thus, not only are the heroic qualifications of a virgin martyr refashioned and we are provided with a

* I would like to thank the editors of this volume and the following readers for their truly invaluable comments and advice: Patty Baker, Mary Cunningham, Laura Franco, Kelli Rudolph and Alice-Mary Talbot.

1 I provide translations, commentaries, and detailed analysis of the rewritten versions of the Passions of Tatiana and Ia, as well as for Constantine Akropolites' *Horaiozele of Constantinople* in Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.

2 It should be noted that in the earlier version of their stories, sexualization is not as prevalent and voyeuristic as in other Passions of virgin martyrs; however, what little there is, is further minimized in the revised versions and the women's voices are accentuated by contrast.

3 I develop the *MT*'s multiplicity more fully in Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.

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new, affirmative model of a female intellectual but the *PI* and the *MT* suggest additional reasons for understanding why Byzantine hagiography is rewritten.

Political roles have never been granted to virgin martyrs in Byzantium; they have always been regarded as a stock figure from Late Antiquity and interest has mainly lain in the performative, gendered, voyeuristic, and theatrical quality of their Passions.[4] These perceptions lie in stark contrast to their western sisters where the comparative richness of evidence, which includes a far greater survival and variety of material, the possibility of secure dating and context, the certainty of female authorship in some cases, or the awareness of co-authorship between future saint and a male author, and the knowledge of a female audience, allow a multitude of sophisticated readings on female sanctity that is denied to Byzantinists.[5] The vast majority of Byzantine hagiographical texts are copied in liturgical manuscripts and thus read in a monastic or ecclesiastical context; the author is usually anonymous or almost always male, and many Lives and Passions are embedded within an ahistorical world. The *PI* and *MT* were copied in the same fourteenth-century manuscript (Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., MS Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214), a compendium of twenty Greek Lives and Martyrdoms of female saints. Interestingly, this codex may point to a non-liturgical use, which could possibly indicate a private audience.[6]

Moreover, until very recently, the rewriting of hagiography in Byzantium is generally regarded as a stylistic exercise in response to a negative perception of the 'model' text. For example, the language of an original text may be regarded as unsophisticated, necessitating a linguistic update.[7] The *MT* initially appears to conform to this category since the revised Passion is a *metaphrasis*, a particular

4 Constantinou, *Female Corporeal Performances*, pp. 19–58 gives the fullest account of virgin martyrs in Greek Passions from the performative and gendered perspectives. See also Frankfurter, 'Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze'.

5 The collection by Bynum and Mooney, eds, *Gendered Voices* gives a good range of the different ways male hagiographers in the West utilized female saints for varied purposes. The women she chooses date from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries: Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schönau, Clare of Assisi, Beatrice of Nazareth, Christine of Stommeln, Elsbeth Stagel, Catherine of Siena, and Dorothea of Montau. The collection falls into three distinct groups: women represented both by themselves and by men; women co-authoring with men; and women whose recorded acts contradict their hagiographers' aims. For the female reader, see Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' Lives and the Female Reader' and *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*.

6 For this manuscript, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 15–20. Thus far, the compendium has been considered most fully by Rapp, 'Figures of Female Sanctity', pp. 317–20. For the other manuscripts in which these narratives are copied, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. xiii–xiv.

7 Hinterberger, 'Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres', p. 40 gives a succinct overview. See also Efthymiadis, 'The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', pp. 68–70 referring to the *Life of Peter of Atroa* by Sabas and the *Life of Euthymios of Sardis* by Methodios. We know that the converse also occurred to correspond to the humble origins of the protagonist, see Rapp, 'Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries', pp. 36–37. Other reasons are outlined by Rapp, 'Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries': stylistic improvement (pp. 34–35); to eliminate objectionable content (p. 38); and to elevate the content with additional material (p. 38).

type of rewritten text known as a rhetorical exercise.[8] Essentially, the reviser (known as a metaphrast) rewrites a text in an elevated style. Thus, we could say that the process *trans-phrases* (*meta-phrazein*) narratives from *koinē* into a more classicizing Greek. Liturgical motives are another explanation. In Late Byzantium especially, a text was rewritten to complement the renewal of a church, the resurrection of a cult, or to exhibit pride in a monastery.[9] Here, the *PI* seems to correspond to the latter since the reviser, Makarios, also includes information on the martyr's cult. He tells us that her relics were found at the famous Mangana monastery (the monastery of St George), in Constantinople.[10]

Such motifs certainly apply to the *MT* and the *PI* but, given the happy chance that various versions of the stories survive, careful comparison of earlier and later versions of texts crucially demonstrates that Byzantine hagiographers were consistent with western practice. They were as creative and vital as any western counterpart. Equally important is the prominent characterization of intellectual ability in a virgin martyr, a female. Although resourceful and eloquent women are found in the Greek literary tradition, they are harder to trace in Byzantium due to the paucity of extant evidence.[11] A notable exception is the remarkable and elusive Katherine of Alexandria, who inspires her own field of study.[12] Furthermore, this restructured female does not languish in a solitary epoch as a singularity: the *MT* was revised at some point in middle Byzantium, between the seventh and eleventh centuries, with some indications pointing to the ninth, whilst the *PI* was adapted in the Palaiologan period (the thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries). Since both

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Finally, there is also evidence that a personal experience, such as a healing miracle bestowed upon the reviser, his relative, or friend, stimulated the reappearance of a saint. This primarily seems to apply in the Palaiologan period: Talbot, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', p. 18.

8 Resh, 'Toward a Byzantine Definition of Metaphrasis', pp. 754–87 provides an excellent overview of *metaphrasis* and its development over time with up-to-date bibliography.

9 Talbot, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', p. 19, and 'Hagiography in Late Byzantium', pp. 176–79.

10 *PI* 52, p. 472: 'ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Μαγγάνων μονῇ τὸ θεῖον ταύτης λείψανον μετετέθη'. All Greek references to the *PI* are from 'Les Versions grecques des actes des martyres persans sous Sapor II', ed. by Delehaye, pp. 461–73. All translations are from Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.

11 Mavroudi, 'Learned Women of Byzantium and the Surviving Record', p. 53: 'Greek narrative sources created or preserved during the Byzantine period seem to convey a significantly greater amount of information about learned women of the Ancient than of the Byzantine period'. Mavroudi goes on to provide an excellent survey. For examples of learned women from Late Antiquity, see Clark, 'Holy Women, Holy Words', pp. 422–24 with her provisos in the following pages. See also Constantinou, 'Women Teachers in Early Byzantine Hagiography' for an account of female teachers in hagiography.

12 There is a prolific bibliography on Katherine and her appeal by western medievalists. A good summary of the variety of interest Katherine inspires is the edited volume by Jenkins and Lewis, *St Katherine of Alexandria*. The best account of Katherine's origins is Chronopoulos, 'The Date and Place of Composition of the Passion of St Katharine of Alexandria', pp. 40–88. Thus far, only Stavroula Constantinou has written at any length on the Greek version of Katherine: Constantinou, 'The Authoritative Voice of St Catherine of Alexandria', pp. 19–38 and *Female Corporeal Performances*, pp. 25–26, 40–41, and 47–48.

narratives continued to be copied in the fourteenth century, the cerebral virgin martyr was not necessarily regarded as an isolated phenomenon but she continued to be circulated, acclaimed, and commemorated.[13]

Words have always featured heavily in the construction of a martyr's heroism since vocal confrontation and/or, paradoxically, a provocative silence frame the Christian's adamant refusal to renounce Christ and sacrifice to pagan deities, showcasing further the martyr's willingness to forfeit life. Augmenting this heroic display of faith is its appearance amidst the threat and reality of harrowing torture. Words remain the weapon for a virgin martyr; however, her heroism is enhanced by a distinct gendered bias.[14] Her torture is usually sexualized, and she is constantly threatened with the violation of her virginity and the unwanted love or lust of her persecutor. Other *topoi* that characterize these women, to differing degrees, are youth and beauty. As a result of these emphases, the audience's attention — both within the narrative: spectators, the persecutor, those who assist with torture; and without: readers/listeners — is constantly drawn to the virgin's resistant body.[15] Consequently, this body and the woman's beauty are intrinsically entwined with the female martyr's words and deeds, and thus, her heroism. The interplay of these five elements created opportunities for the revisers, as we shall see.

The Narratives

For current purposes, it is sufficient to note that Tatiana's anonymous metaphrast undoubtedly employed the extant Passion (BHG 1699) as his model since the latter is painstakingly modified, sentence by sentence. Importantly, this permits the luxury of tracking the metaphrast's thought processes in the *metaphrasis* (BHG 1699b).[16]

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13 Both narratives state that the women were martyred in the third century. Their cults can be traced back to the sixth century for Ia and the seventh for Tatiana; see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 36–38 (Ia), pp. 42–43 (Tatiana).

14 In scholarship, the virgin martyr is understood as female though this is technically not the case.

15 Constantinou, *Female Corporeal Performances* gives brief accounts of fifteen stories with literary and theoretical readings for the texts. Western medievalists have engaged most fully in the construct of the virgin martyr. The bibliography is extensive but some of the most important are Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*; Salih, *Versions of Virginity*, pp. 42–106; Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*, pp. 91–122, and Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?', pp. 187–213. The pornographic/voyeuristic/sado-erotic aspects of the Passion is the focus of Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, pp. 21–41 and Frankfurter, 'Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze' but see the cautionary note, among others, in Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*, p. 67.

16 For the full process involved in creating Tatiana's *metaphrasis*, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom* and 'The Hagiographer's Craft'.

As noted above, Ia's revised account was composed by one Makarios (BHG 762), who, as the title explains, was a monk and presbyter.[17] Makarios helpfully records that he is writing during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos (reigned 1282–1328), which allows us to examine the text within its historical context.[18] Nevertheless, the *PI*'s model is not as simple to ascertain as the *MT*'s. Makarios's rewriting shares little with its five predecessors aside from the obvious use of Ia as a martyr and a very basic shared historical background (the persecutions of Shapur II). Consequently, it is difficult to determine whether he deliberately suppressed, added, or eliminated material. His version is considerably longer than any extant account; in translation, it is roughly 10,000 words longer than the Passion, conforming to the tendency for lengthy Palaiologan hagiographic texts.[19] Makarios's expansion mainly takes the form of speeches, and he either omits, or has no knowledge of, any Persian background, including the other martyrdoms that are reported in the Passion and the *Synaxarion* accounts. For Makarios, Ia is now the clear protagonist.

An abbreviated story for each virgin martyr now follows: Tatiana is a deaconess and hails from a leading Roman family.[20] According to the Anonymous, she was martyred during the regime of Alexander Severus (ruled 222–235), an interesting choice for an antagonist since his reign was relatively peaceful with regards to Christian oppression.[21] When Alexander initiates a persecution, Tatiana is ordered, in turn, to sacrifice to Apollo, Artemis, and Zeus. Her persistent refusals unleash a series of agonizing tortures, which span the account. These include blinding, shaving (of the head), the mutilation of her breasts, and the ravaging of her body. Surviving defiantly, Tatiana is finally condemned to decapitation on 12 January. Her shattered body is placed in an alabaster coffin, which is then buried in a garden in Rome that resembles Paradise. Alexander suffers a heart attack and repents. Nonetheless, he is escorted to the eternal fire of Gehenna, leaving behind 2300 souls who now believe in Christ.

Ia's story begins with Diocletian (ruled 284–305) wresting control of the Roman Empire at the same time as Shapur II (ruled 309–379) commandeers

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17 *PI* 1, p. 115: 'Makarios, who became monk and presbyter, produced the martyrdom of Ia, the saintly and glorious martyr of Christ'. For all details relating to Makarios's reworking process, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 45–52; pp. 55–70.

18 *PI* 53, p. 141: 'It was then that this present account about the holy martyr was written'. Makarios has just supplied a succinct historical timeline ending with the reign of Andronikos.

19 Efthymiadis and Kalogeras, 'Audience, Language and Patronage in Byzantine Hagiography', p. 271. They suggest that the length indicates that these types of texts were intended for private reading rather than public recitation.

20 Her father has been consul three times (*MT* 2, p. 158). All Greek references to the *MT* are from Halkin's edition of the Passion and the *metaphrasis*: *Légendes grecques de 'Martyres romaines'*, ed. by Halkin, pp. 12–53 for the Passion, and pp. 56–81 for the *metaphrasis*. All translations are from Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.

21 See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 155–56 n. 2.

Persia.[22] When Shapur initiates a persecution of Christians and also annexes the citadel of Byzantium, we discover that it is the home of Ia, a beautiful and young virgin, who has lived there all her life. By the time Shapur appears the virgin is seventy years old. In captivity, Ia successfully converts many Persians, causing the leader of Shapur's magi to cross-examine her. The lengthy interrogation lasts for thirty-six chapters wherein Ia is commanded to cease preaching, repudiate Christ, and worship the fire and sun. The intense debate is interspersed by a variety of tortures: Ia is whipped with rods, lifted bodily and pushed down into sharp reeds, and she is also encased within copper bundles that are then compressed, resulting in the dislocation of her joints. Like Tatiana, Ia is eventually decapitated. Unidentified Christians bury her in an unnamed location, presumably in Persia. Her relics are transferred to Constantinople where a church is built to accommodate them. After its destruction, these relics are brought to the Mangana monastery, which, the reviser tells us, is where he lives and where he was inspired to compose his piece.

Tatiana, Ia, and Virgin Martyrs

Both the *MT* and the *PI* comprise elements of a 'classic' virgin martyrdom: a beautiful, young, virtuous, Christian maiden (one of Ia's chief epithets is *kalliparthenos*: exquisite virgin)[23] defies the authorities, endures tortures, and dies. However, there are variations on some *topoi*. For instance, none of the tormentors fall in love with, or lust after, the women. Although Alexander is 'wounded' by Tatiana's beauty and desires to marry her, he is as much motivated by her connections as her beauty whilst his initial reaction to her good looks evaporates as suddenly as it manifests.[24] The emperor only mentions marriage one more time and here the metaphrast discloses that Tatiana 'concluded that the tyrant's deceptive words were nonsense'.[25] Moreover, the metaphrast makes it clear that Alexander associates marriage with power, not love: 'I will proclaim you publicly as queen of all and I will pronounce you most-celebrated empress over all with glory'.[26] Only in one instance is the voyeuristic *topos* present. As one of her punishments, Tatiana is stripped: 'the most blessed Tatiana was displayed to everyone, radiant in beauty, her complexion white'.[27] The metaphrast retains the detail that the whiteness of her skin is such that the spectators are dazzled, ensuring that they cannot linger on her nudity.

22 Makarios ignores the disparity of dates. See pp. 93–94 below for why he uses Diocletian. For an overview of the hagiography of martyrs in Persia, see Detoraki, 'Greek Passions of the Martyrs in Byzantium', pp. 73–77.

23 *PI* 2, p. 117; 4, p. 118; 7, p. 119; 11, p. 121; 44, p. 136; 47, p. 138; 49, p. 139; 55, p. 142.

24 *MT* 3, p. 160.

25 *MT* 15, p. 176.

26 *MT* 15, p. 176.

27 *MT* 8, p. 167.

Makarios's Ia entirely lacks an emphasis on sexuality: there is no voyeurism in her tortures, there is no description of her body, and there are no sexual advances from her persecutors. It must be noted that these elements are also absent from any of Ia's earlier versions. Nevertheless, Makarios maintains this focus and, instead, capitalizes on the virgin's elderly status, a fleeting detail in only one of her five earlier accounts.[28] He specifies that Ia is seventy: 'Not only did she live longer than Christ, but also outstripped the limits of the body, presently reaching the extremity of David's life'.[29] Since the virgin's specific age does not feature in any other account, it is likely that he chose this figure.[30] Her advanced years lie at the heart of the verbal insults she endures: 'old woman' and even 'old hag' are lobbed at her throughout the narrative.[31]

Most pertinently, virginity is not an issue for either Tatiana or Ia in that neither women is threatened with rape nor, as stated above, are they harassed by ardent or belligerent suitors. In fact, Tatiana's metaphrast eliminates the one explicit reference to her virginity. Ia's virginity is specifically celebrated on three separate occasions at the beginning of the story but once she is captured, it never plays a role nor is it mentioned again.[32]

Tatiana's Refutation

What does become startlingly clear is that the revisers deliberately elected to champion the women as compelling orators and accentuate their intelligence. I begin with Tatiana. Comparison of her Passion and its *metaphrasis* reveals several intriguing possibilities about the later work: an interest in characterization,[33] a possible meaning for the rewriting,[34] and the reinvention of the virgin as a rhetor. This procedure begins incrementally. For example, Tatiana and Alexander's speeches are re-framed as a debate. 'He said' is revised to 'he questioned her'[35] and she is now also explicitly said to 'cross-examine' the emperor.[36]

Thematic additions are also utilized. Especially striking is the application of *parrhēsia* and its related factors to describe this virgin martyr. This term essentially signifies candour; having the courage to speak the truth in the face

28 Cf. one of the entries on Ia in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, which mentions that 'she passed into old age' (*Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. by Delehaye, col. 868; own translation).

29 *PI* 8, p. 120.

30 See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, p. 47.

31 *PI* 47, p. 471: 'γραϊδίου' ('old hag'); 13, p. 464: 'γηραιὸν γύναιον' ('old woman'), and 48, p. 472: 'γηραιᾶς γυναικός' ('old woman').

32 *PI* 2, p. 117; 3, p. 117; 8, p. 119.

33 See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom* and 'The Hagiographer's Craft'.

34 See Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.

35 *MT* 8, p. 64: 'ἐπηρώτα'.

36 *MT* 12, p. 69: 'ἐλεγκτικῶς'.

of threats.[37] It has a long and privileged ancestry, most famously in Athenian democracy and the arena of the public assembly.[38] The metaphrast directly attributes *parrhēsia* to Tatiana twice; and once, it is the martyr's own claim: Justin, the eparch, has just threatened her: 'I will tear your insides apart and present you as food to dogs. Then I will see if your God, whom you revere, will be able to help you'.[39] In this minatory context, Tatiana's defiance can certainly be labelled as *parrhēsia*, and the point is emphasized by the martyr's own use of the term: 'She was then inclined to speak more candidly (ἡ δὲ παρρησιαστικώτερον διατεθεῖσα) and replied […] "Yet, behold. I stand in front of you, resisting his order and your wish with greater candour (μετὰ πλείονος παρρησίας). Do what you want"'.[40]

Although *parrhēsia* is certainly a feature of some martyrdoms, the *MT*'s narrative exhibits an extended understanding of the term, including its spatial component. Thus, the first time the term is used, when Justin threatens the martyr, the metaphrast exploits the location of the dialogue, the *praetorium*, where the eparch sits on the high tribune.[41] The exchange is situated within the arena of public discourse; Tatiana is making a bold speech in a public assembly, making her case for God, and thus the Greek court is transferred to the heavenly one.

Both explicitly and implicitly, Tatiana also acquires various mental characteristics associated with *parrhēsia*: courage, confidence, and self-assurance.[42] The metaphrast explains that she speaks *tharsaleōs* (courageously).[43] These traits are reinforced by the additions of *hilaros* (cheerful)[44] and *phaidros* (beaming)[45] to descriptions of her countenance during relentless adversity and during torture. When she is seized, she offers prayers *atarachōs* (calmly)[46]

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37 The PGL gives various meanings of *parrhēsia* and *parrhēsiazomai*: civic freedom, confidence (boldness; liberty of approach), confidence (trust); or to speak freely, openly, assert boldly. In the ODB, Jeffreys defines *parrhēsia* in a religious context as 'a confidence in dealing with God and men that is drawn from faith and a righteous life, and that belongs in particular to saints'. See also Scarpat, *Parrhesia greca, parrhesia cristiana*. Certainly, many readers and listeners of the metaphrastic Passion would understand Tatiana's *parrhēsia* as 'openness' and 'boldness' in relation to God as the term functions in patristic and Byzantine theological texts; however, its usual meaning seems to be expanded here.

38 Plato, *Resp*. 567c. However, see Landauer, 'Parrhesia and the Demos Tyrannos' who examines *parrhēsia* in non-democratic regimes and concludes that it may also be used in autocracies as well as democracies.

39 *MT* 13, p. 174.

40 *MT* 13, p. 174.

41 *MT* 13, p. 174.

42 See, for instance, Dionysios of Halikarnassos's *Roman Antiquities* (9.32.7) and Dio Chrysostom's *Orations* (3.13; 4.15; 11.27; 32.11).

43 *MT* 12, p. 69: 'ἡ δὲ μάρτυς θαρσαλέως ἀνταποκρίνεται'; 13, p. 71: 'ἡ δὲ θαρσαλέως ἀπεκρίνατο'. Both originally had 'Τατιανὴ εἶπεν'.

44 'ἱλαρῷ': *MT* 2, p. 57; 3, p. 57; 4, p. 58; 9, p. 65.

45 'φαιδρῷ': *MT* 9, pp. 66 and 17, p. 75; 'φαιδροτέρῳ': 11, p. 68.

46 'ἀταράχως' (LSJ: 'calmly'): *MT* 2, p. 57. At 15, p. 177, she stands 'calmly' after the roaring lion has miraculously been tamed in her presence.

and when she prays, she often does so *megalophōnōs* (loudly).[47] At one point, the herald cries out with a loud voice, 'confess, Tatiana, that Zeus is god, and be saved', and we are told: 'But that woman pronounced herself a Christian even louder'.[48] Though these adjectives and adverbs could be ascribed to any martyr, their use here is noteworthy since they divert attention from her body or her beauty. The metaphrast could have chosen to heighten her physical beauty but prefers to underscore her behaviour consistently.

Together with spatial and mental aspects, *parrhēsia* can also be conceptually linked to 'pure' (unambiguous) speech, and therefore may be allied with *alētheia*.[49] Tatiana often declares that she speaks with *alētheia* whilst 'true' is adjectivally affixed to *latreia* (worship), *epignōsis* (knowledge), and *theos* (God).[50] In opposition to *alētheia* and *parrhēsia* stands *ekkapēleuō* (adulteration/being impure). According to Photios, a synonym is *panourgos*, bearing connotations of flattery, craftiness, and deceit,[51] each of which are commonly ascribed to Alexander.[52]

Tatiana's verbal prowess is expanded further when the effect of her words is depicted. For example, Alexander is rendered speechless.[53] The message is unambiguous when the metaphrast informs us that she possesses potent 'oratorical skills' (ταῖς τοιαύταις δημηγορίαις), which 'struck the heart of the bestial tyrant with a heavy blow, as if they were a sword'.[54] We are also often told that the martyr responds to Alexander *synetōs*, 'intelligently'.[55] In one of these instances, not only is Tatiana described as replying in such a manner but she is also given the epithet *pansophos* (all-wise).[56] Significantly, the metaphrast again prefers to laud the saint's intellect over her beauty. Her intellect is even given emphasis by a Platonic allusion when the metaphrast refers to 'the eyes of her mind/intellect (τοὺς τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμούς)' although this is not the exact formulation used in *Republic* or *Symposium*.[57]

Irony and sarcasm are also markers of Tatiana's new rhetorical skill. After she disintegrates Apollo's statue, she challenges Alexander to gather the dust and show it to his followers. She dares him to prove to them that

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47 'μεγαλοφώνως': *MT* 15, pp. 73 and 19, p. 79; 'μεγαλοφωνότερον': 17, p. 76.
48 *MT* 17, p. 180.
49 See, for instance, Demosthenes' *Oration* (6.31) and Isocrates' *Oration* (*Antidosis*) (15.43).
50 'λατρείας': *MT* 3, p. 58; 'ἐπίγνωσιν': 6, p. 61; 'θεός': 7, p. 63; 16, p. 74; 17, p. 75.
51 Photios, *Lexicon* (TLG 392).
52 'Flattery' (θωπείας: *MT* 3, p. 58); 'deceitful flattery' (κολακευτικοῖς: 15, p. 72); 'treacherous' (δολιόγνωμος: 18, p. 78); 'crafty' (πολυπλόκου: 9, p. 65); 'beguile' (ὑπούλως: 15, p. 72); 'duplicitous/deceit' (δολιότητος: 3, p. 58; 15, p. 72).
53 'ἀφασίας': *MT* 16, p. 75.
54 *MT* 9, p. 168.
55 *MT* 11, p. 171; 16, p. 178 (twice); 18, p. 181.
56 *MT* 16, p. 177 and n. 105.
57 Plato, *Resp.* 519b ('τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ὄψιν') and *Symp.* 219a ('τῆς διανοίας ὄψις'). The idea is to go beyond what is revealed by sense experience to access true reality revealed by the intellect. See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, p. 175 n. 91.

this dust has power and she adds (referring to the people), 'if they can understand'.[58] The emperor's promise to make Tatiana his consort is scorned with a forthright, 'nonsense'.[59] She also 'ridicules' Alexander and here, the metaphrast uses *kōmōdeō*, which carries strong echoes of lampooning, intensifying her derision.[60]

Tatiana's vocal prowess is lent deeper resonance by the appearance of the technical term *elegchos* (refutation) and its cognates (*dielegchō*, *elegtikos*, and, in this context, *dialegomai*) to illustrate her manner of speaking. One of the goals of elenchic rhetoric is to expose contradictions in the opposition; another is to provide proof (*pistis*).[61] Intriguingly, when utilizing *elegchos*, the metaphrast adheres to *pistis* and in a curious way. In Aristotelian terms, *pistis* has three means: character, emotion, and argument, but in the *MT*, Tatiana's *pistis* is an act, a performance.[62]

The first time *elegchos* is invoked, Tatiana declares: 'I will prove myself (δεικνυμένη) as the refutation (ἔλεγχος) of his (Apollo's) error to souls who hope for Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Lord of all …'.[63] Her statement is echoed by the metaphrast in the following chapter when the confirmation of her statement occurs (Tatiana's *pistis*): 'She appealed to heaven to help her so that she could clearly refute (πρὸς ἔλεγχον σαφῆ) the deceptive worship of idolaters'.[64] After the metaphrast's words, we learn the dramatic result of her prayer: the obliteration of Apollo's temple and cult-statue, and the theatrical appearance of a demon, coated in the figurine's dust, which she then exorcizes.[65]

When *dielegchō* is used to refer to Tatiana's dialogue with Alexander, the metaphrast's understanding of refutation also appears based on deeds. At this point, Tatiana has refused to recognize Zeus. Since being hanged and having her flesh slashed to pieces has had no effect on her mentally, she is shackled and hurled into an inferno where she remains unharmed, defiantly performing the works of God by singing, dancing, and reciting. These actions are all new additions. At this point, the metaphrast states: 'She clearly refuted (περιφανῶς διελέγχουσα) Alexander the destroyer and severely denounced the error of idol-madness'.[66] Thus, the metaphrast's comprehension of 'refutation' seems firmly focused on performance, especially given that Tatiana's original speech comprised five biblical citations (all referring to attributes of God), a plea

58 *MT* 5, p. 162.
59 'ὡς λῆρον': *MT* 15, p. 73.
60 'ἐκωμῴδησεν': *MT* 15, p. 73.
61 Aristotle, *Rh.* 3.17.
62 For this performance helping to read the *MT* as a possible Iconoclast text, see Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.
63 *MT* 3, p. 160.
64 *MT* 4, p. 161.
65 *MT* 5, pp. 161–62.
66 *MT* 17, p. 181.

for help, and the statement that endurance is learned through the *apostolikēs phōnēs* ('apostolic voice'); the reward for which is knowledge of God.[67]

A virgin martyr has been deliberately transformed. Tatiana's verbal prowess now complements her supernatural power and its overwhelming effect. Hitherto, she triggered earthquakes, annihilated temples, and exorcized demons, but now she has been shaped into an even more formidable character. The force of her oratory, her claim to *parrhēsia*, and her intellect all contribute to her overwhelming power. This is supplemented by the paring down of her physical attributes; thus, for example, the reference to her 'luminous beauty' is eliminated.[68] As stated earlier, her virginity, the central tenet of every virgin martyr's text, is simply ignored. It is never mentioned in the *metaphrasis*. Her entreaty to God, 'Protect my virginity … from the wretched and foul Alexander', is jettisoned by the metaphrast.[69]

In trying to determine why Tatiana has been recreated as an orator, the lack of a prologue, the anonymity of the author, the absence of a fixed date, and the narrative's a-historicity are predictable and complicating factors. However, given the *metaphrasis*'s emphasis on idolatry and icons, I have written elsewhere of the possibility of the *MT* being related to Iconoclasm and also how her narrative may convey a variety of meanings for an audience over centuries, including how it may be interpreted as a reaction to Islamic forces.[70]

Ia's Voice

Bearing this in mind, let us now move to the *Passion of Ia of Persia*, where we encounter another reviser who chooses to emphasize a virgin martyr's oratorical expertise. Again, this becomes her overt heroic characteristic and is signified in a variety of ways. Most obviously, Ia is explicitly labelled an orator: '[She] openly displayed an orator's grandiloquence' (ῥήτορος μεγαλοφωνίαν).[71] To support such a pronouncement, Ia is ascribed the ability to argue logically. For example, Makarios relates that she uses 'probable arguments'[72] and at the same time, he and Ia herself categorize her declarations as 'speeches of defence/apologies'.[73]

The reviser also draws attention to her manner of speaking by deploying synonyms for eloquence: 'She clearly articulates (διετράνωσε)',[74] which has a demonstrable effect. Her interrogator laments that: 'It was such a mass of

67 *Passion of Tatiana* 17.
68 *Passion of Tatiana* 2.
69 *Passion of Tatiana* 10.
70 See Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.
71 *PI* 20, p. 126.
72 'πιθανολογία': *PI* 20, p. 126.
73 *PI* 16, p. 123; 16, p. 124; 19, p. 125; 20, p. 126; 43, p. 136.
74 *PI* 15, p. 123.

words that my ears are burdened'.[75] On one occasion, her virtuoso performance inspires Makarios to elevate Ia to unprecedented heights: 'In this way, the exquisite virgin martyr pronounced her personal homily with sharp candour and pious purpose in front of everyone just like someone standing as a victor in the Olympic Games'.[76] Even her conversions are unambiguously ascribed to the power of her words as opposed to, say, a miracle she might execute: 'She changed and corrected the religious belief of some Persians with much teaching'.[77]

Like Tatiana, Ia's responses are described as *intelligent* by both Makarios and one of her interlocutors. Both commend this quality.[78] Makarios also draws attention to the instrument of her voice, with his only use of metonymy: 'Reverently raising her mouth and stirring her divine and hallowed tongue, which had continually declaimed the judgements and decrees of God'.[79] Her compelling tongue is again brought to the fore when her persecutor threatens to cut it off in his desperate wish for the words to stop: 'The sword will curb your tongue completely'.[80] All these features are reinforced by Makarios's extended narrative since the mass of this text is consumed by the interrogation whereas at least one earlier account focused on Ia's numerous tortures.[81]

Ia and Andronikos II

In this case study, evidence within the narrative indicates that Makarios created his rewritten virgin martyr, whose most powerful asset is her voice, to ingratiate himself with Andronikos II and/or to provide propaganda for his emperor. Ia herself symbolizes Andronikos in two ways: with her unerring verbal prowess, she defeats enemies both at home and abroad, and in her unwavering resistance to unorthodox belief, she represents the emperor resolving his father's heavily criticized decision to forge union with the Catholic Church.

As the story draws to a close with Ia's death, Makarios relates that the martyr's remains were transported from Persia to Constantinople, where a church was built to house them and thence became a site of healing miracles.[82] In two subsequent chapters, we then learn that this church was later destroyed and Ia's relics transferred to the Mangana monastery, where Makarios's account

75 *PI* 19, p. 126.
76 *PI* 47, p. 138.
77 *PI* 10, p. 121.
78 She is called 'ἐμφρόνως' by her tormenters (*PI* 20, p. 466); as well as 'συνετῶς μάλα' (28, p. 467) and 'συνετῶς' (30, p. 468) by Makarios.
79 *PI* 15, p. 123.
80 *PI* 47, p. 138.
81 Her Passion (BHG 761).
82 *PI* 51, p. 140: 'Her sorely tried relics were brought back to most blessed Constantinople. A very beautiful church was dedicated to them and they were deposited there, where they faithfully gushed forth many graces of healing to those who approached them'.

was written.[83] Thus, scholars have understandably concluded that the adapted *Passion of Ia* conforms to an accepted template — it has been rewritten to show pride in the monastery's possession of the relics and also because Makarios believes that no other account of her life and passion survive.[84] However, a closer look is warranted at the entirety of this chapter because Makarios chooses to set the translation of the relics against an historical context:

> Ἐπεὶ δὲ κρίμασιν οἷς οἶδε Θεὸς ἡ πόλις ἑάλω τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς, Ἀλεξίου μέν, οὗ ἐπώνυμος Ἄγγελος, τηνικαῦτα τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπειλημμένου ἀρχῆς, τὸν ἴδιον δὲ ἀδελφὸν Ἰσαάκιον ταύτης ἐξοστρακίσαντος, ἅπαν μὲν τὸ κάλλος ἀπέσβη τῆς πόλεως, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις λαμπροῖς, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις ἱεροῖς, ὅσον ἐν εὐαγέσι σεμνείοις· σὺν τούτοις πᾶσι καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τέμενος τῆς μάρτυρος Ἴας διαφθαρέν, ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Μαγγάνων μονῇ τὸ θεῖον ταύτης λείψανον μετετέθη.
>
> Ἡνίκα καὶ αὖθις Θεὸς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τὴν πόλιν ἀπέδωκεν, ὅσα καὶ σπαράκτας κόρακας ταύτης ἐκδιώξας τοὺς Ἰταλούς, τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Παλαιολόγου Μιχαὴλ κατέχοντος τὰς ἡνίας. Τούτου δὲ τῆς βασιλείας διάδοχος, οὐμενοῦν τῆς γνώμης καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸ θεῖον σέβας δόξης, γέγονεν υἱὸς ὁ μεγακλεὴς καὶ μέγας Ἀνδρόνικος, τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας ὡραιότατον στήριγμα, τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀσφαλέστατον καὶ περικαλλὲς ἑδραίωμα, τὸ πάσης ἀρετῆς καὶ καλοκἀγαθίας περίδοξον ἄκουσμα.
>
> At the time when the Italians conquered the city, God knows by which decrees, Alexios, who was named Angelos, had seized the Roman Empire. He banished his own brother, Isaac, and extinguished every possible beauty of the city — everything in illustrious houses, everything in sacred houses, and everything in innocent monasteries. In addition to all these events, the hallowed sanctuary of Ia, the martyr, was utterly destroyed and so her holy relics were transferred to the Mangana monastery.
>
> At the time when God again restored the city to the Romans and chased away the attacking Italian ravens, Michael Palaiologos possessed the reins as absolute sovereign of the Empire. His successor to the throne, or rather the object of reverence, both in his conscience and in his judgement concerning the divine, was his son, the very famous and great Andronikos, the most vigorous supporter of piety and the most steadfast and resplendent pillar of the Church, who had the most famous reputation (for embodying) every virtue and perfection.[85]

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83 The account of the destruction occurs in chapter 52. Makarios describes how he came to write the account in chapter 53, pp. 141–42 ('It was then that this present account about the holy martyr was written. The author (of this account) is found in the exquisite Mangana monastery, since the passage of time succeeded in destroying many official reports that were written about the martyr').

84 Talbot, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', pp. 24–25; Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, p. 253. Makarios has evidently not seen her Passion (BHG 761).

85 *PI* 52, pp. 140–41.

Alexios is obviously Alexios III Angelos (reigned 1195–1203), who infamously usurped power from his younger brother, Isaac II (reigned 1185–1195). And when Makarios writes of the Italians who conquer the city and then refers to subsequent destruction, he can only be describing the disastrous events of the Fourth Crusade and the infamous sack of Constantinople in 1204.[86] Thus, Ia's portrayal is positioned amongst some of the most tumultuous chapters in Byzantium's eventful history.

There is particular need to promote Andronikos II Palaiologos because anti-Palaiologan sentiment was rife during the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade. The thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was a time of political and financial crisis.[87] What follows is a necessarily simplified account and I focus on those events that have relevance for my reading of the *PI*.

When Andronikos inherited the empire, he was embroiled in the sins of his father, Michael VIII Palaiologos (ruled 1259–1282), who created enmity within his own people and deepened the rift with the Latins.[88] First, Michael blinded the legitimate heir, John Lascaris (John IV) so that the boy could not assume the throne legally. He was consequently excommunicated by a horrified Patriarch Arsenios and earned the wrath of John's family, the Lascarids, who formed an opposition party, together with those sympathizers who named themselves Arsenites after the Patriarch.[89]

Secondly, Michael's most notorious decision was to create union with Rome in 1274 at the Second Council of Lyons.[90] It would be hard to overstate the degree of public reaction. Quite apart from the theological issues bound up with the westerners' insertion of the *filioque* clause into the Creed (thus claiming that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son), the union brought to the fore generations of mutual hostility.[91] Andronikos thus spent the greater part of his rule striving to atone for his father and, in addition, the new emperor still had to deal with constant threats from the Latins.

A strong Palaiologan bias is signalled when Makarios gives his potted history of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the quoted chapter. He dwells at length on Alexios III and jumps fifty years to Michael VIII.

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86 Niketas Choniates, *History* 544–82. For the western side, see Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. by McNeal, pp. 91–102. See also Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*.

87 For political events, see Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West*; Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*. For a discussion of imperial ideology and political thought of the time, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*.

88 Macrides, 'The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?'. A revisionist reading of Michael can be found in Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*.

89 Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, pp. 366–69; for Arsenite and anti-Arsenite texts, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, pp. 369–70 with bibliographic notes.

90 Also known as the Union of Lyons. He was excommunicated for a second time around 1281 by Pope Martin IV, who also renounced the Council.

91 Kolbaba, 'Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious "Errors"' and *The Byzantine Lists, Errors of the Latins*.

Essentially, he does not name all the emperors in between, who would be regarded as the opposition.[92] In addition, Makarios also censors the Nicaean Emperors in his fifty-year edit. Whilst Baldwin I and his successors held power in Constantinople from 1204 to 1261, the Byzantines regrouped. The Eastern Empire fragmented into three exiled imperial governments, located in Nicaea, Epirus and Thessaly, and Trebizond. In command were the aforementioned Lascarid family, the so-called Nicaean Emperors.[93] Thus, the *PI* exposes a Palaiologan agenda since Makarios simply does not acknowledge the enemy.

If Makarios intended to flatter Andronikos, and if the *PI* has partly been rewritten for this purpose, one tactic for endorsement would be to recall those who held disastrous leadership whilst elevating the preferred emperor, as Makarios does. This would explain why Alexios is blamed more for the Fourth Crusade than even the crusaders ('Italian ravens').[94] It is Alexios III who is held to account for the extinction of Constantinople.[95] Makarios also maligns Alexios implicitly by cleverly structuring his plot. He develops a parallel between Antiquity and his present day by associating evil potentates from Antiquity (Diocletian and Shapur II) with the current batch (the Latins and Alexios III). The set-up occurs in the first lines of the account. Here, Makarios favours outlining an historical background, before we encounter Ia:

> Ἐπεὶ δὲ χρόνος παρίπτευσε συχνός, συνεστάλη μὲν ἡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχή, ηὐξήθη δὲ ἡ τῶν Περσῶν· ἡνίκα καὶ Διοκλητιανὸν μὲν τὸν κάκιστον συνέβη οἷς οἶδε Θεὸς κρίμασιν ἐπειλῆφθαι τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς, τῆς τῶν Περσῶν δὲ Σαβώριον τὸν μιαρόν.
>
> > After a long time had passed, the Roman Empire contracted while the Persian Empire expanded. […] it happened that the utterly evil Diocletian seized the Roman Empire – God knows by which decrees – while the abominable Shapur seized the Persian Empire.[96]

We are thus introduced to Shapur II, the instigator of Ia's woes, but also, importantly, to Diocletian. There is no need to mention him; he never appears in the story nor is he present in the early versions. Historically, Shapur was

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92 He omits Baldwin I (1204–1205), Henry of Flanders (1205–1216), Peter II of Courtenay (1216–1217), Robert I (1221–1228), Baldwin II (1228–1273) as well as the joint rule of Isaac II, who regained the imperial throne with his son Alexios IV (1203–1204) and Alexios V (1204). His exclusion of the two Alexios' probably occurs because, like many, Makarios did not regard them as legitimate emperors. George Akropolites does not label them 'emperor' for the same reasons: see George Akropolites, *The History*, trans. by Macrides, p. 41.

93 Theodore I Laskaris (1204–1222), John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222–1254), Theodore II Laskaris (1254–1258), and John IV Laskaris (1258–1261).

94 *PI* 52, p. 141: 'ἡ πόλις ἐάλω τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς […] κόρακας […] τοὺς Ἰταλούς'.

95 *PI* 52, p. 140: 'ἅπαν μὲν τὸ κάλλος ἀπέβη τῆς πόλεως, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις λαμπροῖς, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις ἱεροῖς, ὅσον ἐν εὐαγέσι σεμνείοις' (every possible beauty of the city — everything in illustrious houses, everything in sacred houses, and everything in innocent monasteries).

96 *PI* 2, pp. 116–17.

not even alive during Diocletian's reign; he was born in 309, four years after Diocletian abdicated. Although Diocletian (and Decius) are the standard persecutors to utilize when creating a martyrdom, here his presence is unnecessary as he plays no part in the action. Makarios deliberately mentions him and makes the particular point that he 'seized the Roman Empire — God knows by which decrees'.

This phrase, 'God knows by which decrees', is repeated once again in chapter 52 in a similar situation, where unauthorized people are again appropriating empires but this time, it is the Latins ('Italians') and Alexios III: 'At the time when the Italians conquered the city — God knows by which decrees (κρίμασιν οἷς οἶδε Θεός) — Alexios, who was named Angelos, had seized the Roman Empire'.[97] The repetition of the phrase draws attention to the sentence. Makarios is creating a parallel by aligning Diocletian with the Latins and Shapur with Alexios. Makarios thus manipulates Ia's story to deepen his overt condemnation of Alexios, here by associating him with the antagonist Shapur II whilst also making the unambiguous point that the other enemy, the Latins (Diocletian) seized his Roman Empire.

Having provided a suitable negative counterpart for Andronikos, Makarios is free to promote his emperor. This he does explicitly. First, Andronikos is the only named emperor to receive extended praise, as we have seen.[98] Another technique Makarios uses to endorse Andronikos is visible in the prologue:

> Τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς εἰς μέγα δυνάμεως ἀφιγμένης, ἤδη τῆς τῶν Μακεδόνων παυσαμένης, ὡς μὴ μόνον τοῦδε τοῦ ἔθνους ἢ τοῦδε κατάρχειν δυναμένης ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν παγκόσμιον τὸ κράτος κεκτημένης, Ὀκταβίου τοῦ τηνικαῦτα, ὃς καὶ Αὔγουστος ἐκαλεῖτο, τὴν δυναστείαν ταύτης περιεζωσμένου, ἣν δήπου καὶ ῥάβδον σιδηρᾶν ἄνωθεν ὁ θεῖος προεῖπε Δαβίδ, πεντακοσιοστοῦ πρὸς τοῖς πεντακισχιλίοις ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, ἀπὸ δέ γε Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀρχῆς ἑξακοσιοστοῦ ἔτους συμπεραινομένου, ὁ συναΐδιος καὶ παντέλειος καὶ ὁμοούσιος τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ Θεὸς λόγος ὁ δημιουργὸς πάσης ὁρατῆς καὶ ἀοράτου φύσεως […].
>
> By the time the Roman Empire came to great power, the Macedonian empire had already ended. And so the Roman Empire could govern any nation it chose, and had acquired almost absolute sovereignty. Under these circumstances, Octavian, also known as Augustus, girded the empire with this power and (ruled with) *an iron rod*, which, indeed, the divine David foretold on high. This he accomplished 5500 years after the Creation of the world and 600 years after Alexander's domination. At that time, God the Word, co-eternal, perfect, and consubstantial with God and Father, the Creator of all visible and invisible nature […].[99]

97 *PI* 52, p. 140.
98 *PI* 52, p. 141.
99 *PI* 1, pp. 115–16.

At first glance, this is the standard Byzantine perception of the past, as expressed in world chronicles. However, it is certainly very unusual as the start of the Martyrdom of a virgin: Ia receives no attention, and Persia is not even mentioned. Makarios is reminding his audience of Andronikos's antecedents, the might of the empire that he rules and, by extension, Andronikos's global importance. The audience is prepared for a story framed by historical significance. The emphasis seeks to highlight how imperial power was reinforced by biblical authority. We are told that the Romans' power was absolute; that their might had ended Alexander's empire; that Augustus's rule was prophesized by King David and it was during this time that Christ was born.

Thus, Makarios, monk and presbyter, advocates the merits of Andronikos II by denigrating a useful and ill-famed specimen of incompetent leadership. Portraying Alexios III as the embodiment of terrible governance generates the contrast to Andronikos whilst Makarios simultaneously blatantly ignores the opposition. It is Alexios who sustains the blame for the Fourth Crusade whilst his usurpation of the throne from his brother is highlighted. Makarios's critique of Alexios's arrogation of power is sustained. When he describes the act, he emphasizes the fraternal bond, '*idion adelfon*' ('his own brother'), to heighten his condemnation.[100] His last tactic is to compare Alexios to Shapur II. Makarios further specifies that Andronikos did not seize power but, rather, he is a lawful heir. He is designated as Michael's son and legitimate 'successor' (*diadochos*) — definitely not some upstart.[101] An ancestry that stretches back to Augustus is conferred upon him; he is awarded a legitimate pedigree. Andronikos is further elevated as Alexios's diametric opposite. He is the only named emperor to receive a multitude of positive epithets.

Thus, the historical content of Ia's Passion is used to invoke the events of the present and past. Furthermore, it is possible that Ia herself could symbolize

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100 *PI* 52, p. 140. Makarios is not alone in his view. Niketas Choniates, one of two contemporary Greek sources for this period, also connects Alexios's sacrilegious treatment of his brother to the destruction of Constantinople: 'He (Isaac) was deprived of his sight by those whom he had imagined led him by the hand as though they were his own eyes, for what could be closer and more trustworthy than a brother, and he beloved? […] It is for this reason that the barbarian nations regard the Romans with contempt. This they reckoned to be the consequence of all the deplorable events which had gone before by which administrations were constantly overthrown and one emperor replaced by another' (Niketas Choniates, 'Annals', trans. by Magoulias, p. 249). Other evidence comes from the *Registers* of Innocent III, which are translated in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, for instance *Reg*. 6.209 (PL 210), 25 August 1203, Letter from Alexios IV: 'Your Holiness knows full well that with a parricide committed against a brother, the imperial throne was occupied and polluted for a long while […] the detestable parricide, who had defiled the highest office of the empire with the hatching of unheard-of tyranny'. See also *Reg* 5.121 (PL 122), 16 Nov 1202 (to Alexios III).

101 *PI* 52, p. 141. For the importance of kinship in the Palaiologan period, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, p. 4 with bibliography in n. 8. On pp. 116–33 of the same work, Angelov stresses the importance of dynastic continuity. He also notes that Alexios III was Michael's great-grandfather, thus giving another reason for emphasizing Alexios in the narrative and creating another implicit link (Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, p. 119).

Andronikos. The recital of the emperor's qualities includes *aretē* (virtue), a seemingly conventional characteristic, but it is continually listed as Ia's chief feature.[102] Her continual defiance to the chief of the Persian magi, a foreigner, so to speak, and her refusal to yield to his will, could be Makarios equating Andronikos's refusal to yield to constant western threats/Laskarids/Arsenites. Thus, if Ia's story has been rewritten overall to promote Andronikos, Ia performs two functions. She symbolizes Andronikos in her intelligent demolition of her enemies' arguments (Andronikos's wider enemies — at home and abroad) and in her steadfast defence of the true faith, she represents the emperor rectifying his father's vilified agreement with the Catholic Church.[103]

Conclusion

Unsurprisingly, Tatiana and Ia's speech-acts are supported by rhetoric, that bastion of Byzantine education and, as much exciting work has shown, a biddable, instinctive instrument when writing of one's self, one's world, and pretty much anything else.[104] Rhetoric here is exhibited overtly in the revisers' deployment of stylistic devices or when the women are described as orators or as having oratorical skill, and implicitly, in its fundamental meaning; for the meaning of rhetoric is to persuade. If these rewritten texts are indeed political vehicles, then persuasion is the dynamic that must drive them — to convince those reading or listening to the *PI* that Andronikos is a worthy ruler, and for those interacting with the *MT* — that, for example, it is not heretical to worship icons. Unassailable faith reposes at the core of the heroics of the traditional virgin martyr; the function of our rhetorical heroines is also to persuade their audience to their reviser's beliefs. Tatiana and Ia's words thus bear extensive ramifications far beyond each martyr's trial, intruding into the male spheres and activities of dogma and political manoeuvring.

However, granted that Tatiana and Ia may be cast as authoritative subjects who are not assailed by the voyeuristic gaze, and tempting though it may be to hypothesize that they might even reflect actual 'bluestocking' women, such conjectures are clouded by the bias of male authorship.[105] Despite this, I would like to stress that first, men are continuing to use women as their voices in

102 *PI* 3, p. 117; 7, p. 119 (three times); 8, p. 119 (twice); 10, p. 120 (three times). Makarios also devotes an entire chapter to the wonders of *aretē* (4).

103 For the background of the Palaiologan court and Makarios's possible ambitions, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 22–26 and Gaul, 'All the Emperor's Men'.

104 Jeffrey, ed., *Rhetoric in Byzantium* and Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos*, to name just two of the most influential of a raft of publications.

105 Clark, 'The Lady Vanishes' calls for the literary construction of saints' Lives to be re-examined, pointing to Barthes' examination of narrative, to find 'traces' of the words of the holy woman. She too shows how some female Lives illustrate the desires of their male authors rather than the subjects themselves. See also Jacobs, 'Writing Demetrias', especially

the middle and late empire, and thus they realize that to do so must warrant some sort of effect, and secondly, that although the revisers manipulate the virgin martyrs for masculine concerns, Tatiana and Ia are depicted positively throughout the narratives even when they embody masculine traits, resist feminine norms, and subvert patriarchal authority.[106] When the women are scorned and mocked, the audience cannot participate in the abuse. There is no doubt that their antagonists are wrong and there is no ethical debate to be had by the audience about the women's arguments. In some earlier martyrdom accounts, it is possible to see both sides of the argument; here, Tatiana and Ia are unquestionably right.[107]

Moreover, in both Passions, the revisers continually remind us that our protagonists are women and it is as women that they carry agency. When the chief of the magi addresses Ia, it is either to insult her as an *old woman* or a simple *woman* or *weak woman*; Tatiana too is predominantly referred to as *woman*. Even though the *topos* that the woman acts as a man, and is accordingly praised, does feature, it only occurs once in each version.[108] Thus, women are undeniably considered as malleable substance but if so, why choose a woman to embody your personal (male) voice and, additionally, reward her for her transgressive behaviour by allotting her a certified place in heaven and, even further, an undying voice by bequeathing her the role of intercessor?[109] Why not rewrite the Passion of a male martyr? Silence and modesty have long augured the virtuous woman.[110] From Antiquity, the persuasive female is abhorred and feared, a *topos* obviously embodied in Eve.

One interpretation is that the sole occasion in which a Christian woman is allowed to speak up is when she rebukes in an appropriate forum. Leaders of female groups may censure.[111] In our narratives, both Tatiana and Ia are

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pp. 719–24. He argues for examining the 'social logic' of a text — to marry both social reality and discursive mechanisms when trying to recover female voices. 'Bluestocking' refers to Talbot, 'Bluestocking Nuns', pp. 604–18.

106 Even though the sexualization/silencing of virgin martyrs leads to their objectification, the power gained by their mental and vocal resistance allows them to become subjects (Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?'). McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins from Thecla to Joan of Arc* argues that female authors in the West used their virgin martyrs to explore female agency, rescuing them from their silencing by male authors. However, this is too reductive as differences in, say, plot or genre, are credited to the author's gender.

107 See, for example, Alwis, *Celibate Marriages in Late Antique and Byzantine Hagiography*, pp. 52–54 and the *Passion of Julian and Basilissa* where the grief of the pagan governor Markianos when he loses his son, Kelsios to Julian and Christianity is emotively portrayed.

108 *PI* 2, p. 117: 'She ran through the course of martyrdom like a man, for the glory of Christ, and so doubly won the crown of righteousness'; *MT* 17, p. 180: 'The manly minded martyr'.

109 *MT* 20, p. 185; *PI* 55., p. 143.

110 But also see Wilkinson, *Women and Modesty* on how the performance of modesty (including in speech) may provide some agency for women. For 'the modest mouth', see pp. 86–116.

111 To name just a few: the *Life of Melania* 41, 43, 65 (ed. by Clark); *Life of Macrina* 21 (ed. by Maraval); abbesses who rebuke: *Life of Theodora of Thessalonike* 26–27 (ed. by Talbot); *Typikon of the Convent of the Mother of God Kekcharitomene in Constantinople* 49 (trans. by Jordan).

shown to be active in their Christian communities; Tatiana holds the status of a deaconess.[112] Another reading is that in turbulent times, the same rules no longer apply. Both women are intercessors, explicitly besought in periods of troubled Byzantine history: Tatiana may have been invoked during Iconoclasm or during Arab raids;[113] Makarios entreats Ia during the instabilities of post-1204.

The reviser and his needs are a third option. If Makarios and the Anonymous are trying to transmit a message, the very fact that a woman is speaking in such a way could be a method to bring awareness to what they are saying. The audience are startled into paying attention. Finally, if these opinions and ideas are contentious, then using a woman as one's voice would operate as self-protection. If supporters grasp the message and if others are converted or gain a new appreciation of the vision, then the task is accomplished. If not, then the reviser is still protected.[114]

Passions are particularly useful for a personal voice because they provide a convenient arena to air one's views, disguised as the argument between the martyr and his/her persecutor. Contention is the essence of a martyrdom. Debate and dialogue is a given in Byzantine society and thus foregrounded the wider cultural and political background of the *MT* and the *PI*.[115] Moreover, martyrs inevitably mirror the actions of Christ, and given that Christianity's promise of grace is due to Christ's threat to those who held political and social power, some rewritten hagiography of these unsettled periods could be termed the literature of crisis/political hagiography, consonant with their protagonist who represents intercession, salvation, and ultimately redemption.

As both the *MT* and the *PI* show, rewritten Passions need to be examined more closely. Although it has been assumed that most are revised for the purposes of language and style, clearly more is at stake for some. Contrary to expectation, virgin martyrs remain important over the centuries. Even though no new martyrs are created, and indeed other female 'types' — the holy harlot, the cross-dresser — disappear and recur in various periods, the fact that their stories continue to be copied and adapted, some up to the seventeenth century, indicates that it is not so much what we find unusual that gains traction — perceivable transgressive behaviour — but the understanding that hagiography was a living, evolving genre, which could be used to work out all manner of complex issues that affect humanity.[116]

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112 *MT* 2, p. 158.

113 Both these are on-going but nevertheless cause severe anxiety.

114 My thanks to Kelli Rudolph for this suggestion.

115 This is explored further in Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 20–26 where I explore hagiography as double discourse, that is, a forum for lobbying or social engagement. See also Cameron, 'Can Christians Do Dialogue?' for an excellent overview of the various forms of dialogue in Late Antiquity and Byzantium.

116 See Alwis, *Celibate Marriages* for how saints' Lives and Passions ostensibly celebrating celibacy also discuss the negative effects of celibate marriages on families, neighbours, and further explores the bond between husband and wife.

Tatiana and Ia are both subject and object; ideological voice and ventriloquist's figure. Other vocal females are eventually punished for their transgression.[117] Eve has to give painful birth, and virgin martyrs are tortured and must die in order to achieve their goal. But death does not silence them as each is rewarded with a place in heaven. Tatiana and Ia are allowed still more because they are intercessors. Their voice and their purpose continue. They live on as eloquent champions of their respective causes and play an active role in the political and cultural conversation. The heroic voices of Saints Tatiana and Ia are inextricably part of Byzantium's literate, performative, and argumentative society. We no longer have to look at the virgin martyr; she demands that we listen to her.

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Piet Gerbrandy

Fail Again. Fail Better

Notker Balbulus cum suis on the Impossibility of Writing the Life of St Gallus

In the 880s, Notker Balbulus (*c.* 840–912), a monk in the monastery of Sankt Gallen on the southern shore of the Bodensee, was challenged by his friend Tuotilo to write a new Life of the cloister's eponymous saint.[1] Although several Lives were already available, Notker decided to take up the gauntlet. The piece of hagiography he wrote in collaboration with a few younger monks is one of the strangest texts in the history of Latin literature. In trying to analyse and interpret the work it may be helpful to use concepts taken from twentieth-century literary theory, as I hope to demonstrate.[2]

I will argue that the work's strangeness may be interpreted as the expression of literature's impotence to fully match the adventures and accomplishments of so great a hero as Saint Gallus. The authors realize, and repeatedly emphasize, that failure is inevitable. Paradoxically, however, the techniques they use to underline the project's impossibility actually testify to the authors' literary virtuosity and ambitions. Moreover, the text's formal aspects enable both its authors and readers to re-enact the hero's tribulations and eventual triumph.

To begin with, I will briefly introduce the work within its historical context and pay attention to its generic aspects. Next, the crucial literary strategies of iconicity, *recusatio* and *praeteritio*, and alienation are explained. Then I discuss a few significant passages relevant to my interpretation.

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1 This information is given by the eleventh-century preface by Ekkehart IV (Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, pp. 92–93).

2 My interpretation takes its cue from the first chapter of Peter Dronke's profound though highly readable book on prosimetric texts, in which he devotes a few insightful pages to Notker's *Metrum* (*Verse with Prose*, pp. 19–23).

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Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography: Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative, ed. by Koen De Temmerman, Julie Van Pelt, and Klazina Staat, Fabulae, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp. 105–122.
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The *Metrum de vita S. Galli*

Gallus (*c.* 550–640) had been one of Columban's companions when, at the close of the sixth century, this Irish saint travelled to France and Germany to advertise the Celtic creed on the continent.[3] As Columban crossed the Alps to eventually settle in Bobbio, Gallus decided to stay in the country of the Alemanni.[4] After his death, his hermitage evolved into a monastery. Later in the seventh century, a first Life was written, which presumably was adapted and expanded in the eighth century; it is known as the *Vita vetustissima*. At the beginning of the ninth century, two monks from the abbey of Reichenau, Wetti (*c.* 775–824) and his pupil, the prolific writer Walahfrid Strabo (*c.* 808–849), successively tried their hands at new Lives, the latter even planning to compose a poetic version as well, but apparently he did not live long enough to complete it. In addition, by the middle of the century, an unknown poet wrote a *Life of Saint Gallus* in hexameters.[5]

If we may believe a local tradition handed down in the monastery's chronicles, the reason for Notker to compose another Life, which would then be the fifth one, was his disappointment with Walahfrid's style.[6] Assuming the reliability of this record, writing the Life was not so much an act of devotion as of literary bravado. In order to come up with something completely different, Notker decided to share the project with his young friend Hartmann, setting up the narrative as a dialogue centring on the writing process itself. Unfortunately, Hartmann died before the work was finished. Two other monks appear to have taken his place. Its title may have been *Metrum de vita S. Galli*.[7]

The *Metrum* has been poorly transmitted. What remains of it now is a series of fragments handed down as quotations in the works of various authors datable from the eleventh through the sixteenth century, in total amounting to less than twenty-five pages in Walter Berschin's edition.[8] Some of these fragments, though, are sufficiently substantial to reconstruct the narrative structure. The authors appear to expect their readers to be familiar with the Gallus saga already, since they do not tell the story themselves but merely

3 There is some doubt as to Gallus's ethnicity. Hagiographic tradition makes him an Irishman, but it seems more probable that he only joined Columban in Luxeuil. See Walahfrid Strabo, *Vita sancti Galli*, ed. by Schnoor and Tremp, p. 231.

4 There had been a conflict between Columban and Gallus, which is only hinted at in Walahfrid's Life (I. 19).

5 The *Vita vetustissima* and the prose Lives by Wetti and Walahfrid are edited by Krusch, 'Vita Galli Confessoris triplex', pp. 229–337. For Walahfrid the bilingual edition Walahfrid Strabo, *Vita sancti Galli*, ed. by Schnoor and Tremp, is also useful. For the anonymous Life in hexameters, see 'Vita Sancti Galli Confessoris', ed. by Duemmler, pp. 428–73.

6 Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, pp. 92–93.

7 For the composition of the work see Von den Steinen, *Notker der Dichter*, pp. 48; pp. 52–57 and Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, pp. 81–89.

8 The *Metrum* was edited in 'Notkeri Vita S. Galli' by Stecker, pp. 1093–1108. Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin is an improvement upon its predecessor.

refer to the older texts. What they do produce instead is a fascinating, funny, and highly erudite metanarrative in which aspects and conventions of many different literary genres are incorporated and referred to. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether hagiography may be called a distinct genre, seeing that texts pertaining to the thematically defined 'hagiographic discourse', as Marc Van Uytfanghe has it, participate in the traditions of a host of different ancient and late antique genres, but as far as I know no hagiographic work is as inventive in combining these traditions as the *Metrum*.[9] Still, the Life's basic structure seems to follow hagiographic conventions in that the first book of the work related the story of Gallus's life, the second was about his death, while the third comprised a catalogue of *post mortem* miracles. From the second and final parts only one page has come down to us.

Two aspects are essential to the text's effect on the reading process. To begin with, the *Metrum* is presented as a colloquy between (at least) two speakers. Dialogue is, of course, a cherished literary genre in Classical Antiquity, invented by Plato and practised by Cicero, Augustine, and Boethius, just to mention the most obvious authors. In the hagiographic tradition, dialogue has also been a frequently used format: well-known examples are the *Dialogi* written by Sulpicius Severus and Gregory the Great. An important aspect of dialogue, if composed in a convincing way, is the fundamental openness caused by its polyphony. As Mikhail Bakhtin has it, dialogism gives the impression that the author has conceded control over the text to an assembly of dissenting voices.[10] Usually the interlocutors are fictional constructs put together by one author. In our text, Notker and his successive collaborators appear to really have different voices, although we may safely assume that they discussed the set-up of the project before they embarked on it.

To complicate things, our text is a so-called *prosimetrum*, in which passages in prose alternate with poems.[11] The origins of the prosimetric form are contested, but ambivalence may be its most conspicuous aspect, as if the author needed different genres to approach problems or situations too difficult or multiform to deal with in a singular form. In addition, the prosimetric structure enables the author to demonstrate his compositional versatility and to include multiple worlds into his text. Finally, many *prosimetra* seem to foster an atmosphere of irony or satire. Aptly, Peter Dronke uses the theories of Bakhtin on dialogism and Rabelaisian carnival to interpret

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9 Van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie', pp. 148–49. Efthymiadis, 'Introduction', pp. 1–21, focusing on Byzantine texts, also points to the generic variety within hagiographic discourse, as does Hinterberger, 'Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres', pp. 25–60. Huber-Rebenich, 'Hagiographic Fiction as Entertainment' pays attention to the entertaining aspects of hagiography.

10 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, in Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader*, pp. 102–12.

11 The *prosimetrum* in classical and medieval Latin literature is studied by Dronke, *Verse with Prose*; Pabst, *Prosimetrum*; Ziolkowski, 'The Prosimetrum in the Classical Tradition', pp. 45–65; Balint, *Ordering Chaos*.

a selection of classical and medieval *prosimetra*.[12] The most prolific models, both very popular in Carolingian literary circles, are Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (*c.* 500), a highly allegorical encyclopedia of the seven liberal arts, and Boethius's *De consolatione Philosophiae* (*c.* 526), basically a Ciceronian dialogue on the art of dying. Both texts pretend to encompass the entire cosmos within their pages. By choosing these literary ancestors, Notker and Hartmann show the ambition to write a polyphonous, multifaceted, and unsettling work.

Iconicity, Failure, and Alienation

In addition to its generic affiliations, the *Metrum* systematically employs specific rhetorical strategies to influence the readers' response: iconicity, *recusatio* and *praeteritio*, and alienation.

If ritual is an attempt to imitate the cyclic processes of nature in order to participate in them, many literary texts may be said to have a ritualist quality as they, too, strive to capture the movement of life in style and structure. By trying to make form and matter converge as much as possible, they deceptively suggest an almost ontological agreement between the word and the world. In literary studies, the phenomenon is known as iconicity.[13] When dealing with the inexpressible, for instance, a poet may deploy the stylistic devices of ellipsis, aposiopesis, or anacoluthon, compelling his readers or listeners to take part in his experience of embarrassment. In thus manipulating the response of his audience, the writer becomes a magician holding sway over the hearts and minds of the readers who, willingly or even involuntarily suspending their disbelief, may have the temporary illusion to be actors in the story themselves.

Unsurprisingly, the writing process, since it takes time to produce a text or stage a performance, is often represented in metaphors of travelling: to relate a story or to sing a song is seen as an eventful journey of which the outcome is always uncertain. Identifying himself with the adventures of the protagonist by both imitating them in words (iconicity) and explicitly associating the writing process with travelling, the author also provokes his audience, who are supposed to participate in the text's movement, to empathize with the hero's toils and troubles. If this hero finally achieves his goal, the reader will feel relief. As we will see below, Notker and Hartmann repeatedly construct analogies between the saint's adventures and their own struggle in representing them.

On the other hand, as all writers realize, language does not completely match reality. In the end, 'poetry makes nothing happen', as W. H. Auden famously said,[14] and is even defective in saying what has to be expressed.

12 Dronke, *Verse with Prose*, pp. 4–5; p. 7.

13 Discussed by Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse*, pp. 103–07.

14 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats', from his collection *Another Time*.

Many writers complain about their inability to find language sufficiently adequate to represent what is going on in the world, but paradoxically may display stunning virtuosity in expressing their shortcomings. As to the poetics of failure, modernist writers like Samuel Beckett and Paul Celan appear to be the ultimate experts, but the phenomenon may be as ancient as literature itself. Ernst R. Curtius traces back the so-called '*Unsagbarkeitstopoi*' to Homer and Vergil,[15] while apophatic theology confesses its utter powerlessness in approaching the numinous by way of words and concepts.

A particular case of poetic failure is the playful classical motif of *recusatio*, in which a poet apologizes for not being able to write a song of praise or an epic for his king or emperor.[16] At several occasions, the Roman poet Horace refuses to compose laudatory poetry on the achievements of Agrippa, Maecenas, or Augustus, purporting to be unequal to this lofty task.[17] Typically, this refusal is expressed in the form of a *praeteritio*, the stylistic device in which one extensively sums up what is supposed to surpass the linguistic and compositional skills of the speaker.[18] Accordingly, not being able to praise an emperor turns out to be the most effective way of emphasizing his greatness. Below, I will discuss a few instances of *recusatio* in the *Metrum*, one of them directly appropriated from Horace.

If *recusatio* expresses the writer's purported lack of literary resources, another strategy exhibits the necessity to stress the fundamental distinction between object and representation. In *Über eine nichtaristotelische Dramatik* (1933–1941), the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) introduces the concept of alienation (*Verfremdung*), suggesting that drama, or any kind of literature for that matter, in order to be effective should not allow the audience to relax and sit back and let themselves be carried away by a deluding spectacle: the audience are supposed to attend critically. In other words, the ritual of participation in the text's movement is systematically thwarted by elements signalling its illusiveness.[19] *Verfremdung* may be achieved, for instance, by making the actors comment on their own actions or even pronounce the stage directions pertaining to themselves.[20] The poetics of alienation are not limited to conventional drama: Brecht points, for instance, to Joyce's *Ulysses* and the paintings of Cézanne, adding that alienating effects are central to Dadaism and Surrealism.[21] As will be made clear below, the way Notker

15 Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, pp. 168–71.
16 Schmitzer, 'Recusatio'.
17 For an overview of Horace's use of the *recusatio* motif see the commentary on *Ode* 1. 6 in Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace*, pp. 81–83. See Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, pp. 93–95 on 'Affektierte Bescheidenheit', and Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos*, pp. 22–34 on the 'Bescheidenheitstopos' in hagiography in particular.
18 For *praeteritio*, see Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* §§ 882–86, pp. 436–37.
19 Brecht, 'Über eine nichtaristotelische Dramatik (1933–1941)', p. 301.
20 Brecht, 'Neue Technik der Schauspielkunst (*c.* 1935–1941)', p. 344.
21 Brecht, 'Neue Technik der Schauspielkunst (*c.* 1935–1941)', p. 364.

cum suis repeatedly discusses the text's toilsome progress can be construed as a conscious strategy of alienation ultimately intended to highlight the impossibility to evoke the hero's greatness.

In what follows, I will analyse a range of significant passages to illustrate my interpretation. Successively, I will pay attention to the authors' expressions of incapacity, to the text's repetitiousness, to its comprehensiveness, to analogies between the hero and his biographers, and, finally, to reflections on the problems of communication in language.

Recusatio, *Praeteritio*, and Despondency

As we have it now, the text opens with a poem in nine sapphic stanzas in which Notker, after having complimented Hartmann on his poetic skills, exhorts him to sing a song about Saint Gallus.[22] These are the opening stanzas (I.a.1–12):[23]

> Ultima saecli generate meta
> vincis antiquos lyrico poetas
> Pindarum Flaccum reliquosque centum
> carmine maior.
>
> tu prophetarum celebres Camenas
> David Esaiae parili decore
> aemulans tempus sine laude nudum
> scemate vestis:
>
> gesta tu Galli domini beati
> pange decanta modulare psalle;
> munus hoc mandat tibi Christus auctor:
> arripe laetus.

> You, born at the ultimate finish of time, surpass the ancient poets Pindar, Horace, and hundreds more, in lyric song. Rivalling with the beauty of the famous Muses of David and Isaiah, you dress an era devoid of praise in the garments of rhetorical technique. Now compose a work, a song, a melody, or a psalm on the deeds of our glorious lord Gallus. Christ is the authority to give you this assignment – be happy to carry it out.

22 The sapphic metre was popular among Carolingian poets. Walahfrid Strabo, for one, wrote several poems in this metre; among them a hymn on St Gallus, in 'Vita Sancti Galli Confessoris', ed. by Duemmler, p. 411.

23 In indicating the fragments' position I follow Berschin's system of numbering (adding line numbers for the poems), in which roman numerals represent the three books. I also use his text, slightly adapting his typography. All translations are mine.

If Hartmann should think this burden too heavy, Notker promises to help him. After a short pause between the fifth and the sixth strophe,[24] in which Hartmann is supposed to have rejected Notker's proposal, the latter insists that Hartmann's erudition and literary prowess are utterly useless if he does not rise to the occasion. In the end, in order to persuade his young friend, he adjusts his request: let us do it together (1. b. 16: 'psalle vicissim').

Any Latinist will immediately recognize the allusions to Horace, in particular to the second poem of the fourth book of odes, also written in sapphics. It is one of his most famous *recusatio* poems:[25]

> Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari,
> Iulle, ceratis ope Daedalea
> nititur pinnis vitreo daturus
> nomina ponto.
>
> Whoever attempts to emulate Pindar, dear Iullus, relies on waxen wings made by Daedalus' art, bound to give his name to a glassy sea.

The Roman poet argues the immense risks of attempting to imitate Pindar, purporting to be too modestly endowed to be able to praise the emperor Augustus. By alluding to this ode, Notker and Hartmann simultaneously do at least four things. First, they select their audience, since only an elite of scholars will be able to play the intertextual game. Second, by evoking a context of *recusatio*, they suggest that writing the *Life of St Gallus* requires the talents of the greatest poets of history; the hyperbolic statement that Hartmann equals Pindar and King David is, of course, an ironic joke. Third, by taking up the burden, they actually do try to surpass Horace in emulating the masters of lyric. And finally, the Horatian intertext invites the reader to compare Gallus with Augustus, implying the saint's epic stature.

In the meantime, a subtle hint of eroticism is given, in that Notker reproaches his young friend for not exploiting his virility (1. b. 4: 'pointlessly virile' (frustra virilis)) if he remains reluctant to use his tongue (1. b. 1: 'why do you hide your tongue in silence' (quid linguam taciturnus abdis)).[26] This is not the place to analyse the remainder of the poem and Hartmann's reply, both referring to a sexually explicit Horatian ode,[27] but it seems important to point out that the occurrence of erotic overtones is symptomatic of the *Metrum*'s playful nature. It may be difficult or even impossible to write the *Life of St Gallus*, but at the

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24 Like Strecker, 'Notkeri Vita S. Galli', p. 1098, I do not believe the two parts of the poem should be separated, as Von den Steinen, *Notker der Dichter*, pp. 52–53 and Berschin, in Balbulus Notker, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, p. 94 do. It seems better to compare the poem's narrative with, for instance, Horace, *Ode* 1. 19, where preparations to a sacrifice are made as the poet is speaking.

25 Wimmel, 'Recusatio-Form und Pindarode'.

26 Von den Steinen, *Notker der Dichter*, p. 56: 'Nur aus dem Feuer des Eros Uranios konnte das erstehen'.

27 Hor. *carm*. 2. 5.

same time it is an occasion to have some fun. This entanglement of pleasure and seriousness appears to be typical of prosimetric texts.

Having agreed to embark on the project, the two narrators take turns in referring to the well-known facts of the saint's life, but they consistently appear to avoid telling the story in full. A stunning instance of this technique of *praeteritio* is an extremely long sentence which I quote in its entirety, in order to illustrate the text's humorously hyperbolic quality; it may be one of the longest sentences in all of medieval Latin literature.[28] This is Notker speaking (1. f):

> Since, my dearest son, affected by tedium or rather moved by indignation over the fact that the holy stones meant to be used in constructing the celestial building continually roll hither and thither,[29] you requested me, petty creature that I am, to allow Gallus to finally find a permanent resting place, and a safe one at that – because as it is, he is bound at numerous occasions to severely endure all these instances of agitation, circulation, and reversal, all this climbing and descending, these Alpine hardships, these dangers at sea and all these wars on demons and – something which he must experience as extremely difficult and unbearable – this cruel and tumultuous turmoil of human commotion – I beseech you, Hartmann, confirmed by the nature of our relationship that allows me to venture a behest, to permit me to approach the universally wealthy abbot Walahfrid, who owns horses bred in an opulent atmosphere and accustomed and trained to undergo any kind of trek or danger, and who also abounds in small and big ships, the ones, of course, in which he used to transport all the riches of the Hebrews, the Athenians, and the Romans to this most beautiful of islands he inhabits,[30] hoping that somehow I may be able to convince his benevolence that he himself, whether coursing over land or by ship, follow after Gallus as the saint was summoned to cross the lake in order to free the duke's daughter from the demon that had taken possession of her as vengeance for injuries inflicted upon the saints; but, for the sake of his humility, by rocky ravines secretly hastened to his refuge in the Alpine wilderness where only the caprine species may walk its walks; and there secluded himself in the narrowest cave; whose whereabouts were, when the girl could not be liberated by the highly reputed bishops, revealed by the demon itself, although nobody but the deacon John, a neighbour to those premises who used to support him, imagined this could be his hiding place; and as John betrayed this to the

28 Cf. Balbulus Notker, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, p. 84: 'Dieses vielleicht längste lateinische Satzgebilde des Mittelalters, das erst durchschaubar wird, wenn man in der Folge der Partizipialkonstruktionen den Ariadnefaden erkannt hat, der durch das Labyrinth führt, ist ein Stück ironischer Prosa'.

29 The 'holy stones' metaphorically represent Gallus.

30 The island is Reichenau.

> priest Willimar and the saint, unwilling and resisting, was brought over meadows and waves to Überlingen where the girl was vexed; and as he, after she had quickly been cleansed by his prayer and his meritorious actions, hurried back to his cell by oar or by cane, his lengthy exile past; and not much later was invited to Konstanz because of the election of a new bishop – that Walahfrid, out of compassion for my fragility, riding with slack reins follow after Gallus who from his earliest childhood had to drift and was driven hither and thither.

The sentence, which is as awkward, tortuous, repetitive, and cyclic as the saint's ramblings, is a *praeteritio* in the truest sense of the word: Gallus's adventures are literally passed by and while Notker pretends not to dispose of the resources to properly tell the story, he actually does tell it, even with a lot of evocative details.

The episode hinted at is extensively dealt with in Walahfrid's Life (1. 15–19, 24–25). Fridoburga, the daughter of Duke Gunzo, is possessed by a demon that invaded her in order to punish the duke for persecuting Columban and his retinue (who had demolished the sanctuaries of pagan deities, which for obvious reasons had upset the locals).[31] On the duke's request, the Frankish king Sigibert, whose son was Fridoburga's fiancé, sends two bishops to Überlingen to carry out an exorcism, which fails because of the envoys' depraved morals. The demon, though, speaking through the mouth of the crazy girl, is stupid enough to reveal that only Gallus will be able to heal her.[32] The saint, who had been asked to help the girl before, had retired to his cave south of the Bodensee, but now the priest Willimar is ordered to bring him to the duke's court at the opposite side of the lake. The deacon John helps Willimar to find the saint, who eventually cures the poor girl. Subsequently, the grateful duke offers Gallus the vacant episcopate of Konstanz, which he humbly declines.

Quite funny is the quip addressed at the immense but apparently old-fashioned erudition of Walahfrid who is credited with a complete mastery of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin traditions. But Walahfrid had been dead for at least three decades, so Hartmann's desperate wish to allow the saint some rest had already been fulfilled long ago in the Life written by the monk of Reichenau. It is by Notker's and Hartmann's doing that Gallus's wanderings are revived.

Significant in the passage quoted is the imagery of travelling. Here, Walahfrid's writings are represented as journeys on horseback and by boat. In the next sentence, an almost full identification of Notker and Hartmann on the one hand and Gallus on the other takes place. The authors' bodies

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31 Confrontations with demons are an important motif in hagiography. See e.g. Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos*, pp. 164–65, and Scheibelreiter, 'Gegner, Feinde, Gegenspieler', pp. 55–57.

32 The authors of the Lives appear not to be bothered by the devil's paradoxical behaviour, in that he first supports the holy men against the pagans and later gives away the name of his exorcist.

are worn out by endless tribulations on the road (the writing process), and their little boat (the text) has incurred so much damage that the holy man refuses to step on board. 'Believe me', Notker says (at the close of the long sentence), 'we will never be able to keep up with Gallus, tried as he was by all kinds of labours, even if we joined all the energy available' (mihi crede, Gallum omnimodis laboribus exercitatum numquam, licet cunctis viribus adiunctis, coequare poterimus). If Gallus is a true hero, Notker and Hartmann are his most devoted companions, although Notker is old and feeble, toothless, nearly blind, and trembly ('partim morbo, partim senio iam edentulus, caeculus et tremulus'), while Hartmann is still too young and tender to endure the hardships of the quest. The self-mockery is evident and effectively contrasts the saint's epic heroism with the comedy of the authors fumbling their way to inevitable failure.

Not only do they leave it to Walahfrid to elaborate on the exorcism but they also suggest that the 'noble and learned' (nobilissimo atque scolastissimo) Ruodpert, then bishop of Metz, should write a sequel to Fridoburga's story, since it is in his diocese that the girl, having refused to marry the Frankish prince, had entered a monastery. This second *recusatio*, too, is formulated in a very long sentence that actually enumerates the relevant events.

To Notker's stylistic acrobatics — the three sentences together take one and a half page in Berschin's edition — Hartmann responds with a reference to the founders of the genre of hagiography:[33]

> Nimium, Notkere, progrederis, et timeo quia dum Gallum nostrum laudare conamur, cum Gallo en Martino et Hieronimo haberi mereamur odio.
>
> > Your progress is already excessive, Notker, and I'm afraid we'll incur not only Gallus's but Martin's and Jerome's disgust as well while attempting to praise our Gallus.

Notker and Hartmann claim that they lack the energy and the literary skills to adequately write hagiography. Consequently, at several instances they express their despondency. Notker in particular is prone to fits of weariness. 'I invite you to enter the field again because I'm very tired', he says, 'while you have been relaxing for quite a long time, so your strength must suffice to drive your swift wheels over any plains the story will entail' (nunc te diu quiescentem et longo torpentem odio ad narrationem gestorum Galli volubilitate rotali per plana quaeque valentem incedere iam defessus ego reinvito, I. g. 1). Further along he complains of fatigue and again asks Hartmann to continue (I. h: 'fessus abibo'). And when, in the second book, Hartmann believes he is still

33 Hartmann appears to refer to Sulpicius Severus's *Life of St Martin* and the Lives written by Jerome. Both authors set the standard for hagiographical writing in Latin.

too young to speak about the lofty subject of Gallus's decease, Notker answers in hexameters (II. c):

> Si me respirare parum sineres, tibi cuncta
> sponte mea ferrem, prece quae tam supplice poscis.
>
> If you would allow me one little moment of rest to recover my breath,[34] I'd enthusiastically bring up everything you beg for so insistently.

Note that Notker expresses himself in the modus of *irrealis*: he would love to go on but is not sure he will ever make it to the end of the story. Writing hagiography, in sum, is an exhausting occupation.

Try Again: Repetitiousness

While proclaiming that their story does not meet the standards of hagiographic narrative, Notker and Hartmann at several occasions even increase their plight by repeating what has already been told. In fragment I. k, for instance, Notker takes his time to expand on Columban's adventures in France and his travels by boat at sea and on the Rhine, episodes preceding the settling of the monks on the shores of the Bodensee. The same story, taken from Walahfrid's Life (I. 2–4), had been related, albeit in condensed form, in a sapphic poem at the beginning of the first book (I. d). Notker explicitly refers to that part of the work (I. k):

> Quo vero honore ibi sint habiti, dulcisona tua Musa satis expressit. porro qualiter inde ad Brigantium venerint et quid aut fecerint aut passi fuerint, partito inter nos carmine demonstravimus.
>
> How they have been honoured there your sweet-sounding Muse has sufficiently expressed. And how they came to Bregenz and what were their actions or sufferings there, this we made clear in the songs we sang in alternation.

Apparently, to adequately shed light on the saint's illustrious endeavours it is necessary to take different perspectives that manifest themselves in a variety of literary forms. Some events are told twice, in different genres. Apart from the case just mentioned, the most conspicuous instance is Gallus's sermon to the people of Konstanz. Reproduced (or composed) by Notker, it fills twelve pages of sophisticated prose in Berschin's edition (I. h). But Notker only agrees to give the entire text if Hartmann consents

34 The unusual caesura in the first line, between *parum* and *sineres*, may be interpreted as iconic as it underlines breathless Notker's failure to forge a compact hexameter.

to produce a metrical version afterwards, a mere dozen of lines of which have come down to us (1. i).

This technique of repetition, of trying and failing again, is fundamental to the project in general, as the authors take up material that has been dealt with in at least four earlier Lives of St Gallus. However, while Wetti, Walahfrid Strabo (in both prose and verse), and the anonymous poet of the Life in hexameters indubitably believed to improve upon their predecessors' work, Notker and Hartmann give the impression to utterly lack confidence in the feasibility of their literary enterprise.

Comprehensiveness

Needless to say, the authors' display of trial and error cannot be taken at face value. Inevitably, the work's effort to tentatively approach the saint's life from different perspectives results in dazzling multifariousness, which makes it an ambitious caleidoscope of both form and matter. As to form, the *Metrum* may be seen as a catalogue of literary genres. It comprises poems in seven different metres, ranging from lyrical sapphics to epic hexameters and from the iambic dimeters of Ambrosian hymnody to trochaic tetrameters.[35] Each of these forms carries its own generic associations. In its prose sections, the authors playfully exploit the conventions of hagiographic narrative, dialogue, and the biblical elevation of homiletic literature. The mixing of prose and poetry, as mentioned above, is borrowed from Martianus Capella and Boethius.

The formal polyphony mirrors an astonishing desire to encompass the entire cosmos between the covers of the book. This ambition is best exemplified by Gallus's sermon to the people of Konstanz — assuming that it was really part of the work written by Notker and Hartmann, which seems plausible.[36] Instead of offering pastoral advice, the preacher takes his time to extensively summarize the course of biblical history from creation to apocalypse. Including the history of the world in the story about St Gallus, the authors not only suggest that their hero is a man of universal wisdom but even seem to pretend that in order to know the essentials of life and death it suffices to read this book, since it contains everything worth considering. Moreover, they effectively outclass all the other Lives, none of which reproduces the sermon.[37] It is a pity, to say the least, that Hartmann's version in trochaic tetrameters is all but lost to us.

The work's thematic comprehensiveness further manifests itself in its participation in a host of literary modes. We already mentioned dialogue,

35 For an overview of the metrical forms, see Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, p. 119.

36 For convincing arguments to include it, see Notker Balbulus, *Metrum de vita S. Galli*, ed. by Berschin, pp. 86–88.

37 Walahfrid 1. 25 gives only a summary.

Horatian *recusatio*, eulogy, and erotic lyrics (I. a–b), Ambrosian hymn (I. c), as well as travel literature (I. f), and mild satire (I. f), but we may add Prudentian lyric (I. g. 3), elegy (on St Gallus's death, II. a), and even a piece of comedy in elegiac metre (III), to which I will come back later. Accordingly, any monk perusing the book would acquire a broad overview over the forms and modes of Latin literature. In that respect, the *Metrum de vita Sancti Galli* can be seen as a didactic project in the playful vein of Martianus's *De nuptiis*.

Analogies Between Hero and Authors

St Gallus may be the story's protagonist, but at several instances the authors construct a subtle analogy between themselves and the hero, or heroes, about whom they write. Of course, to suggest that eternal fame presupposes the activity and success of singers or writers is nothing new in classical and medieval literature. To mention just one example from a poem featuring in most medieval reading programmes, in the ninth book of Lucan's *Bellum civile* the poet, at the occasion of Caesar's sightseeing trip to the ruins of Troy, apostrophizes his character exclaiming that Caesar does not need to worry about his future reputation since posterity will never cease reading 'me and you' (IX. 985: 'venturi me teque legent').[38] This analogy is prominent in hagiographic texts as well, where authors tend to imitate their saints' ascetism by stressing their own humility.[39]

Notker and Hartmann (or the latter's successors) modestly leave the connection between narrators and protagonist implicit. We already examined the iconic sentences in which they express their weariness at even imagining having to follow the saint on his endless ramblings, imitating them in a jerky and exasperating syntax that makes the reader desperately look forward to the first full stop. So even the audience, participating in the text's movement, will have to experience the hero's adventures here, a phenomenon I consider ritualist, as explained above.

Another example of analogy between *laudator* and *laudandus* is what happens in the sapphic poem on the wanderings of Columban (I. d). As the *Metrum* opens in sapphics celebrating the poetical genius of Hartmann, repeatedly using metaphors of walking and competition,[40] it is remarkable that the story proper begins with a poem in the same metre, the first strophe of which concludes with 'they (i.e. Columban and his companions) rival each other in zeal to move on' (I. d. 4: 'pergere certant'). In other words, the Irish characters do what the narrators did just a moment before.

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38 Another example is Horace's *carmen* 4. 9, which also refers to the importance of poetry for the remembrance of the heroes of the Trojan War.

39 Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, p. 11; pp. 94–109.

40 Walking: *titubas*, *erras* (I. a. 13), *curro festinans*, *celerans* (I. a. 14), *pedes firmans*, *praeibo* (I. a. 15), *currere* (I. c. 2), *gressibus* (I. c. 4). Competition: *vincis* (I. a. 2), *aemulans* (I. a. 7), *certamine* (I. c. 5).

A third instance can be seen in the opening poem of the second book, an elegy on the imminent death of the holy man. It is a very long sentence, again, saying that the poet had attempted to postpone the inevitable moment when he would have to relate how the saint died. Both the narrator and the hero approach a crucial threshold they had thus far been able to avoid but in the end are forced to cross (II. a):[41]

Circuitu longo vitans contingere limen,
quod calcant pariter dives inopsque simul, […]
Galle, tuam maestus cogor describere mortem,
quem cuperem nostris vivere temporibus.

> In a long cyclic movement avoiding to attain the threshold that both the rich and the poor will have to tread, […] Gallus, it is sad that I am forced now to describe your death, although I wished you could still be alive in our times.

As a final example I point to the only fragment remaining from the third book, a gross anecdote concerning Sidonius, bishop of Konstanz in the eighth century (746–760), who had tried to deprive the monastery of Sankt Gallen of its independence. The story is told in the context of St Gallus's posthumous miracles. As Walahfrid gives the story in his Life (II. 17), when Sidonius enters the church of St Gallus, he is seized by a terrible fit of diarrhoea which makes his followers turn away in disgust and eventually causes his death. Needless to say, it was the saint himself who had defended his heritage effectively.

In the version by Notker and his companion, unsavoury details are suppressed to the extent that the story is utterly incomprehensible to readers who do not remember Walahfrid's account.[42] Punning on the saint's name, which in Latin means both 'Celt' and 'rooster', his intervention is described as a cock-fight resulting in the winner's triumphal crowing. That Sidonius's demise is due to intestinal illness is only hinted at by a reference to Judges 3. 20–25, where Aoth (Ehud) kills King Eglon, which first is not noticed by his servants because they think he has retired to empty his bowels.

What makes the poem an instance of analogy between the poets and the hero is the emphasis on the saint's 'singing' (III. 11–14):

Gallus ut ad culmen sedit cantumque peregit,
huic alacri famulae garrulitate favent,
ut Solomone pio in solio residente paterno
Nathan cum populis laudibus insonuit.

41 In the six lines left out of the quotation, Notker explicitly refers to, and quotes part of, Horace, *carmen* I. 4, and Psalm 88.

42 The phrase 'miseri viscera fudit humi' (he made the poor man's entrails flow all over the floor) could easily mean that he wounded him severely.

> As soon as Gallus perched on the roof beam and performed his song, his female servants (i.e. the chickens) cheered him in lively cackling, just like Nathan and his people burst into songs of praise when Solomon sat down on the hallowed throne of his father.

The analogy is a double one. First, the cock is applauded by his hens, which puts the poultry in the same position as the poets find themselves in towards the saint whose accomplishments they celebrate. Both parties are singing, so the hens'/poets' response is presented as similar to the rooster's/saint's cries of victory. Then, Gallus is compared to King Solomon who was praised by the prophet Nathan,[43] which implies the comparison of Notker and his fellow poet to the latter.

Linguistic Confusion

Singing the praise of Gallus, to sum up, is presented as equivalent to the endeavours of the saint himself.[44] This brings us to a final motif in the text. Seeing that Notker and Hartmann are constantly discussing the difficulties of their literary project, time and again complaining about weariness and exhaustion, it must be significant that problems of communication by speech are repeatedly thematized.

In Gallus's sermon, the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) is told and, possibly alluding to the ancient myth of Gigantomachy, interpreted as humankind's attempt to conquer heaven.[45] But the Almighty destroyed the seemingly invincible structure 'by separating the tongues of all involved in complete confusion or a totally dissimilar similarity', so that 'nobody could understand the tongue of his kinsman or brother' anymore, which resulted in the dissipation of mankind and the emergence of different kinds of idolatry. The implication of this historical reconstruction must be that a universally comprehensible language or at least the competence to communicate in different languages is an indispensable prerequisite for Christian orthodoxy.

The linguistic problem is solved in the episode of Pentecost referred to later in the same sermon (1. h. § 21), when the Holy Ghost taught Christ's disciples to speak in a variety of tongues. At first, pagan peoples all over the world persisted in idolatry, but now at last, according to Gallus himself, the Creator commissioned his apostles to teach us the correct way to revere God (1. h. § 22). Implicitly, of course, the saint appoints himself the apostle of the Alemanni, since the apostles' proficiency in speaking different languages corresponds with Gallus's skills as mentioned in a passage announcing

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43 The reference is to 1 Kings 1. 34–40.

44 On this dynamic (in other hagiographical narratives), see Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, pp. 94–109.

45 1. h. § 3.

the sermon (I. g. 3): 'After having heard the gospel, they (i.e. the citizens of Konstanz) asked Gallus to preach to the ears of all assembled, since he knew how to speak both Latin and German' (post evangelium petunt / ut verbum faciat Gallus in auribus / cunctorum quia scit Romulee et Teutonice loqui).[46]

Apparently, Gallus was able to preach in both languages, but the authors give us only a Latin version — or rather, two Latin versions, one in prose, one in verse. The suggestion may be that this Latin was perfectly comprehensible to the entire audience, notwithstanding the fact that most people would not have had any education in the language of Rome. Anyway, to stress the saint's linguistic ability at the outset of his sermon points to the all-importance of communication skills.

I believe this to be a key motif in the text, since it coincides with its properties as a dialogic prosimetrum. First, the generic complexity of the *Metrum de vita Sancti Galli* in itself emphasizes the necessity of employing a multitude of voices when attempting to tell a story like this, while at the same time it suggests the unattainability of the goal: in the end, the saint's holy heroism may be inexpressible. That must be the reason why our text is highly repetitive, covering single events in different modes, as if the authors — to quote Samuel Beckett — 'Try again. Fail again. Fail better'.[47] The *Metrum*, then, represents a Babel of voices hardly harmonized by the communication powers of the saint himself. Second, Notker and Hartmann are as fluent in Latin and German as was Gallus. Moreover, they demonstrate an astounding inventiveness in incorporating in the text a diversity of voices from the past, ranging from the Bible and Horace to Walahfrid Strabo, as becomes a work in the prosimetrical and encyclopedic tradition of Martianus Capella. The authors appear to have done their utmost to forge it into a meaningful whole.

Conclusion

Although the fragmentary state of the text as it has come down to us makes it impossible to assess its original coherence in full, its remains allow for a tentative conclusion. Its final effect seems to be a fundamentally ambivalent one. On the one hand, the text may be said to iconically invite the reader to participate in its movement as it tries to re-enact Gallus's life; in this respect, the text can be experienced as a ritual. On the other hand, this ritual is upset by *Verfremdung*, humour, and the permanent risk of disintegration inherent to generic diversity; as Ezra Pound has it: 'I cannot make it cohere'.[48] By

46 In Walahfrid's Life (I. 25), Gallus's sermon appears to be in the local language and simultaneously to be translated into Latin by Bishop John. However, the ambiguous syntax of the sentence allows an interpretation in which Gallus preaches in Latin and John translates into Alemannic ('episcopus vero ad utititatem barbarorum bene prolata interpretando transfunderet'). Cf. Walahfrid Strabo, *Vita sancti Galli*, ed. by Schnoor and Tremp, p. 207 n. 155.

47 Beckett, 'Worstward Ho (1983)', p. 471.

48 Pound, *Canto* 116 in *The Cantos*, p. 796.

problematizing the act of writing hagiography, however, Notker and Hartmann paradoxically manage to magnificently glorify Gallus. The *Metrum de vita Sancti Galli* succeeds in comprising the full complexity of the world, as does, in its own — rather conventional — way, Gallus's sermon, covering the whole of history. Even if Notker and Hartmann failed, as they maintain themselves, they are the veritable heroes of the tale.

The intentional strangeness of the text was bound to preclude its circulation among an audience wider than the learned and apparently open-minded monks of Sankt Gallen: what we know about the text's transmission points to the assumption that there has never been more than one copy, that was kept in the monastery's library. By consciously producing a work aimed at its readers' perplexity, Notker and his co-authors condemned it to fragmentation and oblivion. Its current state, in sum, is the ultimate consequence of the writers' ambitions.

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Markéta Kulhánková

Character Types and Characterization in Byzantine Edifying Stories

It has been argued that the aim of hagiography is to provide Christian audiences with examples of heroes they can imitate.[1] Specific techniques, such as the saints' characterization and specifically assigned functions in the text, help to achieve this goal and, together with other features such as the repetitive use of similar plots and narrative structures, and the extensive use of *topoi*, hagiography approximates oral traditions of storytelling, such as myth[2] and folktale,[3] but also modern popular literature. One example of a modern genre that also employs such techniques and displays parallels to hagiography in both the narrative structure and the work's effect on the reader is crime fiction.[4] Alison G. Elliott has suggested a relationship between hagiography and crime thrillers, with the help of Eco's structural analysis of James Bond thrillers:[5]

1 See Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography'; 'The Origins of Hagiography and the Literature of Early Monasticism', and Papavarnavas, 'The Role of the Audience in the Pre-Metaphrastic Passions'. I would like to thank Christodoulos Papavarnavas and Jeffrey Wickes for reading earlier versions of this chapter and giving me useful suggestions for improving both the content and the language.

2 In his seminal structuralist-psychoanalytic study of the hero in myth, Joseph Campbell devotes only a brief section to hagiographical heroes (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 354–56), although many hagiographical works conform to the paradigms he proposes. See also Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, p. 10.

3 For the typical narrative structure of folktales, cf. the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp's influential work *The Morphology of the Folktale*.

4 Cf., e.g., Todorov, 'The Typology of Detective Fiction'.

5 Eco, 'James Bond: une combinatoire narrative'.

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> [t]he reader (or listener) knows perfectly well the outcome […] – after all, the hero is a saint, and that fact alone ensures a 'happy' ending to the tale. As a result, attention is focussed more on the way the story was told, and on small variations of detail.[6]

These small variations in detail, and more precisely, the techniques of characterization, are the focus of this chapter. I explore them in one of the minor genres of Byzantine hagiography: edifying stories. These stories emerged together with apophthegms and saints' Lives as a written form of eremitic storytelling at the end of the fourth century AD, and the genre became most popular during the sixth and seventh centuries. Towards the end of this period, the genre can be considered to form part of the so-called Byzantine early vernacular literature.[7] After a hiatus of three centuries, specifically in the tenth century, it enjoyed a revival, as can be seen in the collection of Paul of Monembasia and related texts, in a somewhat changed, more sophisticated form.[8]

In spite of its similarity with other hagiographical genres, such as the Lives and Passions, the edifying story has one specific feature, conciseness. This shapes the characterization of its heroes, because the possibilities for constructing characters are rather limited.[9] The genre relies almost exclusively on *diēgēsis* (the narration of action), while *ekphrasis* (description) is absent or extremely limited. Thus, the direct characterization of a hero usually consists of a list of attributes, while the introduction of a character to a scene, and indirect characterization via the hero's actions and speeches, is limited altogether.

Some important studies have been written on the construction and perception of saints, mostly in the context of religious studies or social history. These studies have typically looked for common features in various hagiographical genres and aimed at general conclusions.[10] My aim is different: I devote attention to literary techniques and survey the presentation of well-known types of characters as a comprehensive or deliberate construction of a narrative. In addition, I will search for differences between individual collections rather than their similarities.

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6 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, p. 8.

7 Hinterberger, 'Δημώδης και λόγια λογοτεχνία', pp. 159–60.

8 For these later tales, see *The Spiritually Beneficial Tales of Paul*, ed. by Wortley, pp. 25–53. For an overview of the development of the genre, see Wortley, 'The Genre of the Spiritually Beneficial Tale'; Binggeli, 'Collections of Edifying Stories', and Kulhánková, *Das gottgefällige Abenteuer*, pp. 13–33.

9 As Rapp, 'The Origins of Hagiography and the Literature of Early Monasticism', pp. 125–27 has shown, the genres of the *apophthegm* and the edifying story comprise the Christian implementation of *chreia*, an ancient rhetorical form known from *progymnasmata* collections that is characterized, among other things, by its brevity.

10 See, e.g., Cox Miller, 'Desert Asceticism and the "Body from Nowhere"' and Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes*; these highly important contributions to scholarship on the peculiarities of the cult of the desert fathers both analyse groups of collections of edifying stories and draw many interesting sociocultural conclusions from their analyses.

For the purpose of this study, I have chosen three collections which, in my view, distinguish themselves through a coherent use of distinct literary techniques: the *History of the Monks in Egypt*, the *Lausiac History*, and the *Daniel of Sketis Dossier*. Within these collections, I analyse and compare three types of heroes who emerge either as protagonists or as secondary characters. These types are common and also often present in saints' Lives: the desert father, the fool, and the restored sinner. In each section, I first examine the direct characterization of heroes, especially in their introduction to the scene; next, I concentrate on the way the characters are presented in action and the roles they play in events; and finally, I investigate how and to what extent insight into the heroes' minds is offered.

The Corpus

The *History of the Monks in Egypt* (*Historia Monachorum*, henceforth: *HME*)[11] is the very first, one might even say the genre-creating, Greek collection of edifying stories. It is a travel narrative[12] describing the journey of seven Palestinian monks through Egyptian monastic communities (from Lycopolis to Diolcus) along the Nile in 394. As we learn from the prologue and the epilogue, the anonymous author was one of the pilgrims. The collection's twenty-six chapters contain apophthegms, the travellers' observations, and *c*. forty tales.

Circa two decades after this book was written, Palladios (364–431), a disciple of John Chrysostom and the future bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia, who had lived as a hermit in Egypt, composed an outwardly similar collection: the *Lausiac History* (*Historia Lausiaca*, henceforth *HL*),[13] which also contains *c*. forty tales, many of which are variants of the tales in the *HME*. However, the two collections differ substantially. They were primarily addressed to different audiences:[14] while the author of the *HME* addresses his fellow monks at the monastery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem,[15] Palladios's work is commissioned by Lausos, the grand chamberlain of Emperor Theodosios II after whom the collection was named. His work was primarily addressed to a secular, elite audience.[16] Furthermore, as has been argued by others, Palladios's

11 *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, ed. by Festugière.

12 On the conception of early monastic collections as travelogues, see Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes*, pp. 35–78. For a recent, thorough analysis of the *HME* see Cain, *The Greek Historia monachorum in Aegypto*.

13 Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, ed. by Bartelink.

14 In the context of literary theory, this is the *auctorial audience*, i.e. the audience the author had in mind while writing the text. On different types of audiences, see Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction'.

15 *HME*, prol. 2.

16 See the prologue to the *HL*.

purpose was to reach, via Lausos, the emperor's sister Pulcheria (one of the most influential persons at the imperial court) and the aristocratic women in her circle.[17] The audiences[18] apparently influenced the style, choice, and treatment of material significantly, as well as the fact that Palladios owes more to literary sources than the author of the *HME* does.[19] Other differences originate from the different personalities of the two writers, whom William Harmless aptly characterizes with the following metaphor:

> [b]oth authors are portrait painters, similar in frame but different in accent. Palladius is a miniaturist with a taste for morality plays, while the anonymous author of the *History of the Monks* is an iconographer with a taste for magical realism.[20]

Based on these differences between the two collections, I will identify what role each of these factors played in the construction and choice of their characters. The trio of works to be analysed is completed by a considerably more recent collection, the so-called *Daniel of Sketis Dossier* (henceforth *DS*),[21] which dates from the last three decades of the sixth century. For the purposes of this analysis, I regard the group of texts edited by Britt Dahlman a consistent collection.[22] Like the other two works discussed here, the *DS* is geographically connected to Egypt, specifically the region of Sketis and the city of Alexandria. Unlike the aforementioned collections, this one does not have a prologue from which any certain information about either the author or the audience of these tales could be learned. Abba Daniel appears in the text as a character (sometimes as the protagonist, sometimes

17 Rapp, 'Palladius, Lausus and the *Historia Lausiaca*', p. 284.

18 The present study is based on the Greek version of the *HL* and does not take the Coptic version into account, which draws on the same material and sometimes provides more extended narratives and a different narratorial perspective. It might have been written by Palladios himself, several years before the Greek version was written, and intended for a different audience. For a short account of this version, with further bibliography, see Harmless, *Desert Christians*, pp. 303–08. Minets, 'Palladius of Helenopolis' has recently offered an insight into Palladios's careful choice of narrative strategies in two different works that were intended for different audiences in a comparative analysis of the *HL* and the *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom*.

19 Hunt, 'Palladius of Helenopolis', pp. 459–60.

20 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 299.

21 *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, ed. by Dahlman. See also the earlier edition *Βίος τοῦ ἁββᾶ Δανιὴλ τοῦ Σκητιώτου*, ed. by Guidi, Clugnet, and Nau.

22 In fact, Dahlman edits only one of many different versions of the texts associated with Abba Daniel which appear in four related manuscripts, see Dahlman, *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, pp. 90–109. Based on my previous study of several literary categories (Kulhánková, *Das gottgefällige Abenteuer*, pp. 73–75; pp. 103–07; pp. 119–24; 'Scenic Narration in the Daniel Sketiotes Dossier of Spiritually Beneficial Tales') and the present analysis of character construction, I consider Dahlman's choice also justified by the consistency of the literary technique. This implies that the entire dossier may well be the work of a single author, or that the copyist had such a strong influence on its form that he could be considered the author.

as a secondary character, and sometimes simultaneously as the narrator). There are, however, several aspects that connect the stories into a coherent collection: the character of Daniel's disciple, whom several scholars consider to be the actual author of the texts;[23] the theme of secret holiness;[24] and the distinctive style of narration that implies that the texts were probably written by a single individual.[25]

The Desert Father

The character of the desert father (πατήρ, πρεσβύτερος, ἀββᾶς, γέρων) is a crucial one in the story collections with which this chapter deals, although it gradually declined.[26] In the *HME*, this character type is by far the most frequent. Except for Chapter 5, in which the city of Oxyrhynchus is described, all of the *HME*'s twenty-five chapters are dedicated to one or more desert fathers, and typically begin with the phrase '[w]e also saw another father in the desert not far from the city' (εἴδομεν δὲ καὶ ἄλλον οὐ μακρὰν τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τὴν ἔρημον).[27] The presentation of the desert fathers in the *HME* is an excellent example of necessary pieces of information being condensed into minimal space: the reader typically learns how old the father was; how long he had been living in the desert; for how long he had not spoken, eaten, or met others; and so on. Often the author further adds an account of the father's appearance, which combines idealization and specificity. First, the father's charisma is described by means of biblical allusions.

> Εἴδομεν δὲ καὶ ἄλλον Ἰωάννην ἐν Διόλκῳ, πατέρα μοναστηρίων καὶ αὐτὸν πολλὴν χάριν ἔχοντα τό τε Ἀβραμιαῖον σχῆμα καὶ τὸν πώγωνα τὸν Ἀαρών, δυνάμεις τε καὶ ἰάσεις ἐπιτελέσαντα καὶ πολλοὺς παραλυτικοὺς καὶ ποδαλγοὺς θεραπεύσαντα.[28]
>
> We also visited another John in Diolkos, who was the father of hermitages. He, too, was endowed with much grace. He looked like Abraham and had a beard like Aaron's. He had performed many miracles and cures, and was especially successful at healing people afflicted with paralysis and gout.[29]

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23 *Witness to Holiness*, ed. and trans. by Vivian and others, pp. 18–22; Bonnet, 'Review of Clugnet', p. 167; Skaka and Wortley, 'The Tale of Daniel's Sister', p. 194.

24 See Dahlman, *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, pp. 70–89.

25 See footnote 22.

26 In Paul of Monembasia's stories (*Les récits édifiants de Paul*, ed. by Wortley; *The Spiritually Beneficial Tales of Paul*, trans. by Wortley), for example, this character type does not occur.

27 *HME* 6. 1; *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Russell, p. 68.

28 *HME* 26.

29 *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Russell, p. 117.

At the same time, there is often much emphasis placed on the close connection between the hermit's surroundings and character, as expressed explicitly in the chapter about the monastic settlement in Sketis:

> εἰσὶ δὲ ἐκεῖ πάντες τέλειοι ἄνδρες· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀτελὴς ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόπῳ δύναται παραμεῖναι, ἀγρίου ὄντος καὶ ἀπαραμυθήτου πάντων τῶν ἐπιτηδείων.[30]
>
> > All the monks there have attained perfection. Indeed, no one beset with imperfection could stay in that place, since it is rugged and inhospitable, lacking all the necessities of life.[31]

In short, the *HME* places the hero into a specific space and at the same time adopts a more open, 'biblicized'[32] depiction of his outward appearance by using biblical tropes.[33]

In the *HL*, the range of character types is much more colourful, and 'only' about half of the book's seventy-one chapters have desert fathers (or even desert mothers)[34] or respectable monks as their protagonists. While Palladios also mentions the hero's age or the amount of time he has spent in the desert, this information is not of great importance to him.[35] Occasionally, he provides information on the hermit's outward appearance, but in his stories this is usually realistic and far removed from the idealization and biblical allusion that we have seen in the *HME*.

> Ἦν δὲ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ὑποκόλοβον, σπανόν, ἐπὶ τοῦ χείλους μόνον ἔχον τρίχας, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ πώγωνος· ὑπερβολῇ γὰρ ἀσκήσεως οὐδὲ αἱ τρίχες τῆς γενειάδος αὐτοῦ ἐφύησαν.[36]
>
> > In appearance he was small of stature, beardless, with hair only on his lip and the point of the chin. Through his excessive spiritual discipline no hair grew on his cheeks.[37]

Palladios is more interested in his characters' origins and their familial and social circumstances (e.g. *HL* 14. 1, 35. 1, 46. 1, 55. 1, 56. 1). In most cases, Palladios also provides more detail than the author of the *HME* does. For example, regarding John of Lycopolis, the father to whom the first and by far longest chapter of the *HME* is dedicated, we learn from the *HME* that he is 'a truly holy and virtuous

30 *HME* 23.1.
31 *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Russell, p. 113.
32 I have borrowed this term from Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes*, p. 163.
33 For a systematic analysis of biblical allusions in the *HME*, with many examples, see Cain, *The Greek Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, pp. 149–81.
34 More on the female element in the three collections below, particularly in the section titled 'The female fool'.
35 E.g. *HL* 4. 1.
36 *HL* 18. 29. By comparison, see below for the passage describing a similar appearance of John of Lycopolis in the *HME*, in a substantially more euphemistic way (*HME* 1. 17).
37 Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 47.

man', that he has 'the gift of clairvoyance',[38] and that he 'does not perform cures publicly';[39] a little further on we find the expected information about his age as well as a few words about his outward appearance and table manners.[40] All of this occupies almost three times the amount of space that Palladios dedicates to the same person.[41] However, Palladios almost entirely avoids the *topoi* used in the *HME* and instead informs the reader that John had been trained to be a carpenter, that his brother was a dyer, and that John renounced the world at the age of about twenty-five and then spent five years in various monasteries before withdrawing to Mount Lykos. In addition, we learn exactly where he lives on Mount Lykos and how his home is disposed and arranged.

Having introduced the various desert fathers, both collections proceed to present them either as narrators or as protagonists. The *HME* contains dialogues between pilgrims and the father, and even long monologues by holy men. Staying with the example of John of Lycopolis: several tales detail his prophetic character and skills as a healer, a short dialogue between the saint and the pilgrims is given, and there is an extended monologue into which three other edifying stories are embedded. Most chapters in both the *HME* and the *HL*, however, contain a shorter or longer sequence of stories in which the father acts either as a character or the narrator,[42] and both books embody the concept of characterization via a series of snapshots.

If we now shift our attention to the *DS*, the type of the desert father is employed to characterize Daniel himself. He is introduced in a way resembling that in the *HME* and *HL*.

> Οὗτος ὁ ἀββᾶς Δανιὴλ ἐκ παιδόθεν ἀπετάξατο ἐν Σκήτει. καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἐν κοινοβίῳ ἐκαθέσθη ἐπὶ ἔτη τεσσαράκοντα, ὕστερον δὲ κατὰ μόνας ἠσκεῖτο.[43]
>
> This Abba Daniel became a monk at Sketis as a child. At first he lived in a community for forty years; then he practised asceticism in solitude.[44]

This is followed by a substantially different scenario: there is neither praise nor are there exalted epithets, and there is no mention of Daniel's outward appearance. Instead, the narrator immediately begins to tell a relatively complex story, and Daniel is characterized almost exclusively by his actions. Within *c.* forty lines, the reader witnesses three abductions, one accidental murder, a journey through the entire Roman Empire from Rome through Constantinople and Antioch to Alexandria, Daniel's imprisonment and release,

38 *HME* 1. 1.
39 *HME* 1. 12.
40 *HME* 1. 17.
41 *HL* 35.
42 In the *HL*, only some prominent personalities, including Makarios of Egypt (17), Makarios of Alexandra (18), John of Lycopolis (35), Evagrios of Pontos (38), and Melania the Elder (10, 46 and 54), receive the more extensive treatment of being the subject of more than one story.
43 *DS* 1. 1–3.
44 *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, ed. by Dahlman, p. 115.

and his search for a leper. The final section describes how Daniel takes care of the leper by feeding him. It occupies *c.* one third of the entire story and ends on a panegyric note in honour of God. The hagiographer alludes to those aspects of the hero's character that may be worthy of imitation, such as his endurance in seeking a way towards repentance and his modesty, as manifested in his concealment of his holiness.

The character of Abba Daniel also emerges as an important secondary character in all other stories in the collection.[45] If we apply Algirdas Greimas's actantial model,[46] Abba Daniel is an 'actor' accepting different roles — often that of a 'helper', rarely that of an 'opponent', sometimes that of a 'sender', and in all cases that of a 'receiver', in the sense that he draws spiritual benefit from the events which he observes or takes an active part in. In all these cases, this character contributes to the story's spiritually beneficial effect, but it is in the last role that he is taken the closest to his audiences: they share in the beneficial effect, and moreover, the character's behaviour and reactions serve as a model for its proper reception.[47]

The Female Fool

Only a few women feature in the *HME*, and they are secondary characters. Women appear in two types: first, as passive secondary characters ('objects' and 'receivers' in Greimas's terms), for example as a girl who is turned into a mare;[48] and second, as opponents — sources of temptation and the devil's aides.[49] There is also one anchoress who acts as a secondary helper in the story about Patermouthios,[50] which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. The presence of women in the *HL* is much stronger: of the 177 individuals featured, about a third are women. They appear both as protagonists and secondary characters, in positive and negative roles, and as monastic and secular characters. In the *DS*, the female and male heroes are equally present — four stories have a man as protagonist and four a woman.[51] In this case, all female characters serve as positive examples,[52] while the male

45 Although the protagonist represents an essential figure in hagiography, it is not uncommon to find significant secondary characters with a strong influence on the development of the plot, see e.g. Papavarnavas, 'The Role of the Audience in the Pre-Metaphrastic Passions', pp. 72–76, and Efthymiadis in this volume.

46 Greimas, *Structural Semantics*, pp. 196–221.

47 This role is more distinct in the character of Daniel's anonymous disciple.

48 *HME* 21. 17. Palladios also provides a variation of this tale (*HL* 17). For other examples of women as passive secondary characters, see *HME* 1. 4–9 and 1.12.

49 *HME* 1. 32–36; 13. 1–2.

50 *HME* 10. 3–24.

51 I also include tale no. 7, 'Andronikos the Money-Dealer and his Wife Athanasia', where the woman is as active or even more so than her male counterpart.

52 One exception is a passing mention of Theodora in no. 8.

characters include both the ambivalent (Eulogios in no. 6, see below) and the negative examples (the monk fallen into temptation in no. 4).

I will now take a closer look at two versions of a story about a female fool (*HL* 34 and *DS* 5). Although the holy fool was a popular character type in Byzantine hagiography, its female version occurs exclusively in these two tales.[53] The two texts provide examples of different ways in which the authors maintain the genre's basic feature, i.e. its conciseness, while still providing a clear characterization. Palladios uses the technique of telling, while the author of *DS* uses that of showing.[54] In the *HL*, the nun's secret holiness is revealed in the first sentence: '[i]n this monastery there was another sister who pretended to be insane and [possessed by] a demon' (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μοναστηρίῳ ἄλλη γέγονε παρθένος ὑποκρινομένη μωρίαν καὶ δαίμονα).[55] By contrast, the author of the *DS* introduces the heroine as follows:

> μία δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔκειτο εἰς τὸ μέσαυλον κοιμωμένη περιεσχισμένη καὶ ῥακοφοροῦσα. καὶ λέγει ὁ γέρων· τίς ἐστιν αὕτη ἡ κοιμωμένη; λέγει αὐτῷ· μία τῶν ἀδελφῶν. μεθύστριά ἐστιν, καὶ τί ποιῆσαι αὐτὴν οὐκ οἴδαμεν.[56]
>
> > One of them lay sleeping in the courtyard, dressed in rags and tattered clothes. The elder said: 'Who is the one sleeping?' The *hegumene* said to him: 'She is one of the sisters. She is a drunkard and we do not know what to do with her'.[57]

Palladios's audience is told that the heroine is a holy fool, while that of the other tale is shown the nature of the heroine's foolishness. Likewise, in the *HL* it is the anchorite Piteroum to whom the holiness is revealed. He, in turn, reveals it to the saint's fellow-nuns directly ('It is you who are fools: this one is your amma').[58] In the *DS*, Daniel and his disciple secretly observe the nun's prayers and weeping, and subsequently show the scene to the *hēgoumenē* ('and all the night they observed what she was doing').[59] And, finally, when the heroines' sanctity is revealed, both escape the monastery. Palladios, again, tells the reader: '[a]fter a few days, unable to tolerate the esteem and respect of the sisters and weighed down by their excuses, she went out from the monastery' (καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀλίγας μὴ ἐνεγκοῦσα ἐκείνη τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν

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53 See Constantinou, 'Holy Actors and Actresses', p. 346 as well as, primarily, Ivanov's seminal analysis of this type of hagiographic hero, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*.

54 On these concepts, see Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, pp. 154–55 and Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 163–64. A survey of the concept and its development was done by Klauk and Köppe, 'Telling vs. Showing'. For a detailed analysis of the use of the showing mode in *DS*, see Kulhánková, 'Scenic Narration in the Daniel Sketiotes Dossier of Spiritually Beneficial Tales'.

55 *HL* 34. 1; Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 79.

56 *DS* 5. 53–57.

57 *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, trans. by Dahlmann, p. 143.

58 *HL* 34. 6; Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 80.

59 *DS* 5. 90; *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, trans. by Dahlman, p. 147.

τιμὴν τῶν ἀδελφῶν, καὶ ταῖς ἀπολογίαις βαρυνθεῖσα, ἐξῆλθε τοῦ μοναστηρίου).[60] The author of the *DS* shows the heroine entering Daniel's bedroom, stealing his staff and cowl, opening the door to the monastery, writing a note, and putting it through the keyhole. Afterwards, the reader again follows the people searching for her, coming to the porch, and finding the door open with the note fixed to it.[61]

There are more differences between the two narratives than their modes of narration. The two desert fathers, Abba Piteroum and Abba Daniel respectively, play an active and important role in their stories; they both have a tendency to take control of the action and become protagonists in some sections of the stories.[62] Assessed with Greimas's actantial theory, however, the roles of the fathers are different. In the *HL*, the Abba is sent by an angel to seek a woman more pious than himself. Thus, the principal relationship between the Abba and the nun is one of subject and object. In the *DS*, Abba Daniel acts mainly in the role of the receiver, first of the nuns' hospitality, then, during dinner, of spiritual favours from the abbess, and finally, in a similar way as in the collection's first story, of the story's main spiritual benefit; by comparison, the nun combines the roles of a subject that seeks to connect with the divinity with that of the helper who aids surrounding people in obtaining spiritual benefit.[63]

The Penitent Sinner

Sinners repenting their sins constitute another popular type of hagiographical characters.[64] Representatives of this type appear in all three collections dealt with in this chapter: the *HME* has Patermouthios (a former pagan, brigand chief, tomb robber, and later honourable desert father),[65] the *HL*

60 *HL* 34. 7; Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 80.

61 *DS* 5. 92–102. Of course, as in every literary text, one or the other mode of presentation are not used exclusively. There is one passage in the tale of Palladios, the 'Cinderella scene', in which multiple elements of 'showing' are present: there, Piteroum demands that the nuns bring him the fool hidden in the kitchen (*HL* 34. 5; see Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, p. 53).

62 See esp. *HL* 34. 3–5 and *DS* 60–75.

63 For a complex interpretation of the two tales, see Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, pp. 55–59.

64 This type, again, appears in both male and female forms. For occurrences of the male type in edifying stories other than those discussed here see, e.g., John Moschos's *Pratum spirituale* 77, 78, 143 (PG 87. 3. 2929–36 and 3003–06) and *Apophthegmata patrum series alphabetica*, Apollo 2 (PG 65. 133–36). For the female form, see the well-known type of the holy harlot, the most famous representative of which is Mary of Egypt; see, e.g., Coon, *Sacred Fictions*, pp. 71–94. In the edifying stories, this type can be seen, e.g., in *Pratum spirituale* 31 (PG 87. 3. 2879–80). The collections analysed herein do not contain any noteworthy female representatives of this type.

65 *HME* 10. 3–24.

has Moses the Black (a former slave, brigand, possibly a murderer, and eventually a monk and priest in the desert),[66] and the *DS* has Eulogios (originally a stonecutter and a protector of poor pilgrims, then a prefect in Constantinople, next a conspirator against Emperor Justinian, and finally a stonecutter again as well as a repenting ascetic).[67] I will concentrate on the spiritual transformation of these characters. Of the three tales, the story of Patermouthios is the most typical of the genre. The sinner's conversion is presented but his psychological development is not documented. There is almost no insight into the character's thoughts, any fight with temptation, or doubts. Only the first four paragraphs out of the twenty-two dedicated to Patermouthios focus on his conversion: trapped overnight on the roof of a hermitage that he had intended to rob, he remains in thought, and then has a dream in which 'someone like an emperor' encourages him to change his life, which he accepts (*HME* 10. 4). Patermouthios wakes up, and the anchoress who lives in the hermitage and whom he had intended to rob takes him to the church, where he asks to become a Christian and 'to be given an opportunity for repentance'.[68] Patermouthios then requires only three days to prepare for his return to the desert as an anchorite. The remaining paragraphs in the section depict his quick advance in *askēsis* and relate a couple of tales with Patermouthios as the protagonist.

The repentance of Palladios's hero is depicted in a much more tortuous fashion. The relevant chapter is somewhat shorter than that in the *HME*, but it is almost entirely dedicated to the process of the protagonist's change. In contrast to the *HME*, only the exact moment of conversion is passed over without any special attention.

> Οὗτος ὁ τοσοῦτος ὀψέ ποτε κατανυγεὶς ἐκ περιστάσεώς τινος, ἐπέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν μοναστηρίῳ καὶ οὕτως προσῆλθε τῷ πράγματι τῆς μετανοίας.[69]
>
> > Somewhat later in life, the kind of a man he was notwithstanding, he became conscience stricken as a result of some eventuality. He surrendered himself to a monastery and thus proceeded to the business of repentance.[70]

A story subsequently relates how thieves break into Moses' cell and, moved by his example, renounce the world. But Moses still has a long path ahead of him before he reaches holiness: demons try to tempt him into *porneia*. Encouraged by his patron, Isidore the Great, he perseveres in his spiritual discipline and practises it even more severely, and yet the dreams do not cease to haunt him. He takes advice from another father and

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66 *HL* 19.
67 *DS* 6.
68 *HME* 10. 6; *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, trans. by Russell, p. 83.
69 *HL* 19. 3.
70 Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 48.

> ἀπελθὼν ἐν τῇ κέλλῃ ἔδωκε λόγον μὴ κοιμηθῆναι διὰ πάσης νυκτός, μὴ κλῖναι γόνυ. Μείνας οὖν ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ ἐπὶ ἔτη ἕξ, τὰς νύκτας πάσας εἰς τὸ μέσον τοῦ κελλίου ἵστατο προσευχόμενος, ὀφθαλμὸν μὴ καμμύων· καὶ τοῦ πράγματος περιγενέσθαι οὐκ ἠδυνήθη.[71]
>
> he went to his cell and resolved not to sleep all night long or to bend his knee. For six years he stayed in his cell, not closing an eye, but he did not succeed in overcoming the problem. So he proposed another way of life to himself.[72]

He then leaves to reside close to the cells of the desert fathers, who live at some distance from water, and he fills their water pots secretly every night. One night the demon loses his patience and attacks Moses, who is left lying close to the spring and appears to be dead. The next day, another monk coming to draw water finds him there and brings him to the church, where he remains and is ill for one whole year. Eventually, he is liberated from the demons.

Palladios's attention to Moses' psychological combat is somewhat unusual in the context of the genre, but not surprising in this collection. There are many passages in the *HL* that depict a hero's fight with temptation in detail, whether this is more or less successful: there is Pachon fighting his sexual desire over many years and in different ways,[73] Eliah's release from the same temptation by a dream in which angels remove his testicles,[74] and Nathanael's fight against his own desire for sleep.[75] Yet another feature specific to Palladios's collection is its focus on ascetics who do not manage to overcome temptations. The theme of inappropriate pride is central to the construction of these characters, and Palladios elaborates on this type so often that it can be considered one of the significant character types of his collection.[76] Characters who practise *askēsis* in many different ways fall into haughtiness and are punished, after which the narrator often makes explicit their inner thoughts.

The story about Eulogios the restored sinner in the *DS* also deviates from the basic form of a beneficial tale, but in a different manner. Its rather complex plot embeds factual historical events within it, has three narrative levels, changes the setting often (from the Sketis Desert to Eulogios's home village, Constantinople, a ship, and even, in Daniel's dream, Jerusalem), and the secondary 'actants' ('helpers' to the 'actors' of Abba Daniel and the Virgin Mary) play a strong, active part. The narrator, however, pays little attention to the dual change in the hero's character (from a holy man to a rich Constantinopolitan, a prefect, and a conspirator without any spiritual virtue, and finally back to a holy man). By contrast, an internal monologue is used to guide the reader through the protagonist's thoughts.

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71 *HL* 19. 7–8.
72 Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 50.
73 *HL* 23.
74 *HL* 29.
75 *HL* 16.
76 See, e.g., *HL* 26–28.

[Εὐλόγιος] εὑρίσκει σπήλαιον μεστὸν χρημάτων. ἔκθαμβος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ Εὐλόγιος λέγει ἐν ἑαυτῷ· τὰ χρήματα ταῦτα τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν εἰσι· τί δὲ ποιήσω; ἐὰν λάβω αὐτὰ εἰς τὸ κτῆμα, ἀκούει ὁ ἄρχων καὶ ἔρχεται καὶ λαμβάνει αὐτά, κἀγὼ κινδυνεύω· μᾶλλον οὖν εἰς τὴν ἔξω χώραν, ὅπου οὐδείς με γινώσκει, ἀπέλθω. καὶ μισθωσάμενος ζῷα, ὡς ἵνα κομίσῃ λίθους, νυκτὸς ἐκόμισε τὰ χρήματα παρὰ τὸν ποταμόν. καὶ καταλύσας τὸ καλὸν ἔργον ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἐποίει βαλὼν αὐτὰ εἰς πλοῖον κατέλαβε τὸ Βυζάντιον.[77]

> [Eulogios] found a cave full of money. Eulogios was astounded, and said to himself: 'This is the Israelites' money; what am I to do? If I take it into the village, the governor will hear about it and come and seize it, and I will be in danger. I had better go to a foreign country, where nobody knows me'. He hired beasts, as though he were going to carry away stones, and by night he carried the money off to the river. He abandoned this good work which he performed, and taking the money on a ship he reached Byzantium.[78]

Similarly, after many escapades and Abba Daniel's attempts (guided by the Virgin Mary) to convert him, Eulogios returns to his village and his previous way of life in order to obtain an even higher degree of holiness, and encourages himself: '[w]retched Eulogios, get up, take your stone-cutting gear and go to work! There is no royal court here, but neither will you lose your head!' (καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς ἑαυτόν, καὶ λέγει· ταπεινὲ Εὐλόγιε, ἔγειρε λάβε τὸ λατομικόν σου, καὶ ὕπαγε κάμε· ὧδε παλάτιον οὐκ ἔστι, μήποτε καὶ τὴν κεφαλήν σου ἀπολέσῃς).[79] Although we encounter here, for the first time in this genre, a technique that enables the reader's immersion into a character's thoughts, it is noteworthy that neither the narration nor the internal monologues of the *DS* focus on the hero's psychological development, his repentance, or his attitude towards God and faith, but that they focus almost exclusively on practical matters: the best way for Eulogios to disappear from the village with so much money in hand in the first example, and the best way for him to persuade the villagers that he had not lived in Constantinople as an important dignitary in the second. The change of the sinner into the penitent is exclusively credited to Christ and the Virgin Mary, who first appeared in Abba Daniel's dreams, showed him Eulogios's false way of life and his own guilt, and in the end helped Eulogios to hold on until the very end of his atonement:

> καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν μικρὸν κατέστησεν αὐτὸν τὸ ἅγιον μειράκιον καὶ ἡ Δέσποινα ἡμῶν Θεοτόκος εἰς τὴν προτέραν τάξιν. οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ Θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τῶν πρώτων αὐτοῦ καμάτων.[80]

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77 *DS* 6. 96–106.
78 *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, trans. by Dahlman, p. 155.
79 *DS* 6. 196–98; *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, trans. by Dahlman, p. 161.
80 *DS* 6. 203–06.

> And little by little the holy young man and our Lady, the Mother of God restored him to his former position. For God is not an unrighteous one who would forget his previous labours.[81]

Conclusion

The three authors' different approaches to character construction begin with their choice of characters. The *HME* predominantly focuses on one character type: the desert father. The narrator addresses his narrative to his fellow monks and aims to give them examples of monastic virtue that are worth following. Therefore, these stories do not concern themselves much with the lives of their protagonists prior to their arrival in the desert, but focus almost exclusively on their ascetic achievements, which are often closely connected to their place of residence. Secondly, the texts clearly aim to transmit not the individual features of their characters but the charisma of holiness. Palladios handles a similar selection of material from a substantially different point of view. He aims to show his predominantly secular audience that there is no single path to holiness, and that even a monastic career might lead those astray who are not strong enough.[82] He therefore chooses a colourful set of heroes, and even anti-heroes, and places special focus on their psychological profiles.

A yet different approach is that of the *DS*. If we consider the group of texts edited by Britt Dahlman as a consistent collection, as I have done, we can argue that the characters are carefully selected so as to present a range of well-known hagiographical types — I have discussed the desert father, fool, and restored sinner, but there are also a chaste virgin, a cross-dresser, and a secular couple renouncing the world — which are in themselves distinct but still strongly connected with each other through the theme of secret holiness. The author's reason for choosing well-known types is — perhaps a little counterintuitively at first sight — that his aim was not to provide portraits of holy persons: in contrast to the previous collections, here the plot is more important than the hero. It is not the hero, but the plot and its denouement that generate a spiritually beneficial effect.

Other parts of the analysis confirm this suggestion. We have observed that the narration in the *DS* shows a strong tendency towards the showing mode of presentation: for the most part the events are not commented upon or interpreted, but simply shown. By contrast, we have seen that the *HL*, and also the *HME*, predominantly employ telling, while showing is usually reserved for those points in the narrative that are not crucial. Moreover, the

81 *Saint Daniel of Sketis*, trans. by Dahlman, pp. 161–63.

82 In his own words, 'it is better to drink wine rationally than to drink water with conceit' (*HL*, prol. 10; Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, trans. by Wortley, p. 4).

fact that the *DS* focusses on action rather than on portraits was also evident in the last section of our analysis. When internal monologue, a device which, by its nature, enables insight into the character's mind, is introduced, it concerns almost exclusively practical matters crucial to the development of the plot. By contrast, Palladios, who does not use internal monologue, devotes far more attention to his characters' psychological development.

In summary, although all authors of the selected collections equally adhere to the same emphasis on action and conciseness, they choose different devices and strategies to construct their central character types. Consequently, they accomplish their edifying purpose in different ways by emphasizing different elements of the saints' characters.

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Christian Høgel

Money and Sainthood

Doctor Saints as Christian Heroes

The practice of Christian saints flagged up a number of ethical issues connected to money in Late Antiquity. In centuries that saw a profound restructuring of beliefs and society on the basis of Christian dogma, norms for ethical behaviour in the economic sphere changed dramatically, especially as pagan ideals of evergetism gave way to ideals of not accumulating material wealth, or at least of not being rich or not making a display of it.[1] Giving away money to the poor or using it to redeem one's soul would become new ways of spending money ethically, diverging substantially from the former ideal practice.[2] Some things seemed to stay the same — money continued to be issued in much the same way, and economical misuse and foolish monetary recirculation remained targets of reproach — but the new norms led to a fundamental reshaping of social monetary circulation, especially through the rise of the Church as a receiver and redistributor of wealth, led by bishops who were also expected to take part in the ideal of not accumulating material wealth.[3] However, the new ideals also led to the intrinsic dilemma of not demanding and yet expecting gifts or remuneration with doctor saints, i.e. the saints who were either practising physicians or marked out as the Christian heirs of this profession, as a case in point.[4] As shown by Vincent Déroche, many of these heroes of the new faith soon acquired — at least in the Greek tradition that will be the subject of this exploration — the epithet of the *anargyroi*, the 'moneyless', but in many cases other types of remuneration (conversion, loyalty, etc.) were expected or implied in the form of voluntary gifts and donations. In the end,

1 Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque*.
2 Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*.
3 Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*.
4 On these dilemmas, see Déroche, 'Vraiment anargyres?'.

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Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography: Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative, ed. by Koen De Temmerman, Julie Van Pelt, and Klazina Staat, Fabulae, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp. 141–155.
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the sanctity of the *anargyroi* came to be more closely tied to economic issues than for most other saints, and with time they would become examples for new ways of handling money ethically. The present chapter deals with these men — apparently there were no female doctor saints — as well as with the narrative problems in the Lives that were written to document their deeds, and with the specific developments that the focus on money would produce in tenth-century Lives and the iconography of doctor saints.

Cures, whether miraculous or based on training, were part of Christian life from its outset. Christ performed exorcisms and other miraculous healings, and many saints followed his lead. Medicine in its various forms also continued to be practised by Christian physicians, and together, these various activities led to Christianity being viewed as a religion of healing in many ways.[5] Texts and archaeological finds strongly testify to this, and saints play a major role either as performers of cures, or as posthumous miraculous healers working through their institutions or relics. Some saints, although they were never associated with healing while alive, could even perform miraculous cures posthumously. One such example is the saint Artemios.[6] In his active life in the fourth century, Artemios was not a healer or a doctor, but a high-standing military man, and appears as such in historical sources. He seems to have been a Christian and died under Julian the Apostate, but we have no firm information on the manner of his death. At some later point, martyr acts celebrating him as a saint were composed, again without any mention of healing abilities. And it is only from the account of the translation of his relics to Constantinople onwards, which took place probably around the year 500, that Artemios is portrayed as a performer of cures, and in later texts as a specialist in curing diseases of the male genitals. According to the account of his martyrdom, the torture that Artemios endured included that his testicles had been squeezed. In this way, his life experiences were connected to the particular type of illness addressed by his later healing powers, but not to the healing powers themselves. Artemios's story is a good example of how cures in the Christian world were sometimes effected by persons not associated with any formal training, while other cases show us Christian physicians, who continued in the tradition of their pagan predecessors and contemporaries, and some of them even attained sainthood. It is the narratives of these Christian doctor saints that will be the subject here.

Anargyroi

As in almost all hagiography, the Lives of doctor saints, i.e. saints who were either doctors by profession or who took over the role of that profession, also

5 Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity*.

6 The collection of Artemios's miracles has recently been edited, with a full discussion and references in *The Miracles of St Artemios*, ed. by Crisafulli and Nesbitt.

tend to present their protagonists as heroes of the true faith. As practising doctors, this specific type of saints may seem to be obviously qualified for such a role, and the Lives praise the beneficial qualities of medical practice, in some cases with reference to Matthew 10 and other central biblical passages (as will be detailed below). Yet, the hagiographers of doctor saints often found themselves caught in a dilemma when presenting their protagonists as heroes of holiness on the basis of their medical training. To spell out the fundamental problem, doctors were as practitioners expected to heal the sick, and the cures they offered might therefore easily be viewed as deriving exclusively from this professional competence. One might therefore ask whether they were really to be considered saints just for performing such professional tasks successfully. In this light, these doctor saints' miraculous cures were at risk of being reduced to a daily routine due to their professional training. Hagiographers and those who revered these saints could, of course, choose to understate the issue of medical training and present the cures as dependent only on spiritual strength, like those performed by so many other saints and by Christ himself. Many Lives and collections of tales of miraculous cures refer only to the power of Christ, of the heavens, or of the true faith when accounting for the healing powers of a saint.[7] However, by mentioning — or even highlighting — their basic professional requirements such as medical knowledge or some training, some texts make sure that we recognize the saints as actual doctors — an issue that would probably also have been of some importance in real life to those seeking medical assistance.

Over the centuries, many saintly doctors appeared and were revered as such, with accounts detailing their medical training or how they took over from trained doctors. The Christian community clearly felt a need to show its ability to include, and in some cases also to surpass, the acknowledged field of (pagan) physicians, including by marking out the sainthood of some Christian doctors.[8] In the interest of the hagiographical discourse, however, it was necessary that the doctors were also presented as devout Christians, and ideally as Christians with miraculous powers.[9] Consequently, these Lives often find a fine balance between acknowledging the doctors' initial training in medicine, which is then ascribed to the true faith or to the Holy Spirit in some cases, and insisting on a purely divine origin of the cures. The professional deeds of doctor saints did not, of course, conflict with Christian values in any way, in contrast to those of harlots (who needed to repent before becoming

7 The examples are many, beginning with the earliest Christian hagiographical accounts; see e.g. *Life of Antony*, ch. 55–59 in *Athanase d'Alexandrie*, ed. and trans. by Bartelink.

8 Maas, *Readings in Late Antiquity*, pp. 297–310 has a very useful overview of the various aspects of medical theory and treatment across the period, without special consideration of the religious affiliations of authors or physicians. An introduction to late antique medicine is given in Westerink, 'Philosophy and Medicine in Late Antiquity', pp. 169–77.

9 Van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie', pp. 148–49 still offers the most concise definition of hagiographical discourse.

saints) or soldiers, whose violent killings would long be viewed with unease by Christian thinkers, even if they were performed for the true cause.[10]

Although some of those treated by doctor saints perhaps viewed their healing as miraculous, it was still difficult to fit the story of a practising doctor to that of other saints, because doctors were specifically paid for every act of their art, i.e. for every treatment, unlike other professionals like bishops and emperors, who could more readily be raised to sainthood. This made the correlation between money and (miraculous) performance much more visible in their case, and the idea of a reward for saints performing miracles, other than joining the heavenly choir of saints in heaven, was not really acceptable in the Christian tradition. Some doctor saints may have been able to restrict themselves to that, but medical education, and especially more institutionalized communities of doctors, could not operate without economic support or an income. And since medical training continued, just as new institutions, among them hospitals, emerged, money continued to be involved.[11] Saints' Lives would only incidentally include information on such worldly matters, and in order to make the Lives of doctors conform to that of other saints' Lives several narrative twists had to be introduced, to circumvent these predicaments. To avoid the initial problem that these saints' cures could be seen as mere professional acts, a further condition is then added to their miraculous cures. Doctor saints — especially the most famous, Kosmas and Damian — are consistently presented as *anargyroi*, the moneyless, stressing that their cures are completely dissociated from any earthly reward or payment. In a sense, readers of hagiographical accounts likely never imagined that saints were paid, even in the case of sanctified soldiers (military saints), bishops, or emperors. Therefore, to avoid the wrong conclusion that doctor saints constituted an exception, the epithet of the *anargyros*, or at least the notion of non-payment, was tied to all doctor saints.

Kosmas and Damian

To my knowledge, no study has been undertaken on doctor saints as a new heroic type of saint.[12] Much attention has been paid to the information on medicine, social life, dogmatic controversies, and heresies, as well as topography, etc. in hagiographical Lives, and especially in miracle collections, which are often appended to the ends of Lives. But the generic or narrative features of doctor saint narratives appear not to have been studied as a specific hagiographical

10 On harlots, see ch. 4 in Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*. A good overview of Christian attitudes to warfare and warrior saints is given in Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World*, pp. 13–33.

11 Risse, *Mending Bodies* offers a full history of hospitals from the ancient world to the present day.

12 Déroche, 'Vraiment anargyres?' comes closest to offering an analysis of the praxis of Christian doctor saints.

sub-genre, although they clearly have traits of their own. One consistent feature is their episodic nature. Very few of these Lives show any thematic progression, and a doctor saint's progressive narrative that marks some gradual ascension, as e.g. in the model of St Antony, is really only seen in the *Life of Pantoleon*. Most other Lives of doctor saints are in general episodic, often including episodes appended to the saint's Life, whether as mere additions to the tales narrated in the Life or as posthumous miracles. Texts on doctor saints may present the protagonists either as martyrs or as confessors (who suffer a non-violent death), but the narrative difficulties remain the same.

For an overview of the narrative possibilities, we may take a look at the best-known Life (or rather, Lives) of doctor saints, that of the brothers Kosmas and Damian. Browsing through their *dossier*, we find a plurality of texts which fall into three main types, and no single version clearly emerges as primary in a historical or narrative perspective. Since the publication of Ludwig Deubner's edition, the three types have been known as the Asian, the Roman, and the Arabian Lives respectively, named after the places from which the saints originated or in which they spent their lives according to the texts.[13] These three quite different accounts, with their three different dates of commemoration and with divergent dating under various emperors, all suggest that some original version must have multiplied two- or threefold. If so, this must have happened before the 820s, when the future patriarch Methodios noticed the existence of three differing versions during his stay in Rome.[14] Deubner believed that the Asian version, which is the longest and by far the best witnessed, is the oldest version, but his arguments are not conclusive. Activities from the fourth to the seventh centuries indicate that much work was done on the Lives and Miracles in Constantinople.[15]

But no matter which of these versions is the oldest, the core accounts of the lives of the two saints offer very little narrative. The two short versions, i.e. the Roman and the Arabian versions, present the saints as martyrs. The Arabian Life has come down to us in two recensions, and in both the medical side of the saints' practice is downplayed; recension 1 makes their profession apparent when the saints identify themselves during the questioning (1. 15), while in recension 2 they carry the epithet of *anargyroi* in the title,[16] but apart from this they just seem to be Christians with no specific importance given to their profession. In the Roman version,[17] Kosmas and Damian are doctors (but apparently not brothers), and it is as Christians and as practitioners of an illegal art that they are brought before a judge and condemned to martyrdom. Several passages ascribe the doctors' knowledge of medicine to Christ or to the

13 The texts were edited, with commentary, in *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner.

14 *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner, pp. 3–37.

15 Booth, 'Orthodox and Heretic in the Early Byzantine Cult(s) of Saints Cosmas and Damian', pp. 114–18.

16 *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner, p. 220.

17 *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner, pp. 208–18.

heavens (1. 17–18 and elsewhere), but only a few sentences sum up their acts of healing humans and animals (1. 17–23) and provide no actual description or narrative. Instead, the text proceeds like an ordinary martyrdom account, describing how evil tongues reported the two men as Christians (2. 9), and how they were brought before a judge for questioning. In this case, however, they do succeed in converting their interrogator to Christianity (chs 8–10), and it is only after their release that the Evil one catches up with them while they are collecting herbs and they are stoned to their death (chs 11–12). In various manuscripts transmitting this story, the final section of the text shows multiple attempts to repair the somewhat abrupt ending of the account (see the extensive apparatus).[18] Despite the narrative difficulties, some endeavours have been made to present the saints' medical activities within a biblical frame. That the saints take no payment is made dependent on the words of Matthew 10. 8 (7. 4). Their collecting of herbs is a parallel with the story of Cain and Abel (12. 6–7), with a direct quotation from Genesis 4. 8. Nevertheless, most of the drama is contained within the generic frame of a martyrdom account.

Finally, in the Asian version,[19] which was the version commonly read in the Greek world and normally followed by numerous self-contained miracle stories appended to the main text, we hear that the saints' mother was a Christian and that she taught them how to read, and that they learnt the art of medicine from the Holy Spirit (1. 1–12), thus emphasizing the issue of education. But not much is made of their medical abilities after this account of their training. As a short summary of their activities as healers of humans and animals, the two brothers perform only one actual miracle (ch. 2): a woman is cured of an unspecified disease, and although she knows that the two saints would not accept payment, she nevertheless secretly implores Damian to accept three eggs. Her implorations include her swearing on the power of God, and Damian feels obliged to take the three eggs. Despite her discretion, news of the incidence reaches Kosmas, who is dismayed to hear that his brother accepted the gifts. A very short dialogue follows, in which Damian explains his reasons for accepting the three eggs, and a final short sentence states: 'After the two had performed many miracles, the holy Damian died and attained the crown together with the other saints'.[20] Then, a few sentences tell of Kosmas's miracles, which include the curing of illnesses in animals, an important topic in the text, before it is announced that he, too, has died. The rest of the Life (chs 3–5) is a sequence of posthumous miracles, which are supplemented with a varying number of miracle stories appended to the Life in almost all manuscripts.

What the account of the *Life of Kosmas and Damian* offers then is a dramatic explanation of how the two men became *anargyroi*. It arose from an issue threatening to force the two doctors to stop working together. In dramatic

18 *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner, p. 217.
19 *Kosmas und Damian*, ed. by Deubner, pp. 87–97.
20 Translation by the present author.

terms, Damian emerges from this story slightly impaired, while Kosmas appears to be the morally stronger of the two, but in the end the short narrative and the reassuring final prayer leave little room for questioning their portrayal as saints. Other stories of cures — both during and after their lifetime — are appended to the narrative and chosen by producers of manuscripts according to their own preferences and needs, but add little to the saints' life stories. Consequently, no substantial progression in the depiction of the brothers takes place in any of these accounts, and it is the story of the eggs that dramatizes their lives most fully by offering a narrative basis for their status as *anargyroi*.

Pantoleon, Kyros, and John

An actual dramatic sequence in a doctor saint's Life is then found in the *Life of Pantoleon*, the only hagiographical account of a doctor saint — at least in the Greek tradition — with a truly narrative progression.[21] This Life thematizes the transition from pagan learned medicine to Christian miraculous medicine in various ways, and points out that the transition is also generational when professional competence is handed from father to son. In the version edited by Vasilii V. Latyshev, Pantoleon is presented as the handsome son of a now-deceased Christian mother and a pagan father who wants to secure a medical career for his son. Pantoleon is trained by Euphrosynos, the arch-doctor (*archiatros*) at the court of Emperor Maximianos, and his proficiency in the art is supported by the fact that ancient heroes of medicine (Hippocrates, Galen, and others) are mentioned (2. 12–25). Pantoleon's master's name, Euphrosynos, resembles that of his father, Eustorgios, closely, and the text generally brings the issue of fathers to the foreground by repeatedly having characters ask about the identity of Pantoleon's father or mentioning him, either because they find the young man handsome (ch. 1); or because they want to convert him (ch. 2); or when a cured man identifies Pantoleon's father as his healer, mentioning also his name (ch. 10). The son's professionalism is thereby safely connected to his father's, as was common in pre-modern and even (early) modern societies.

Since he was initially a pagan, Pantoleon's conversion to Christianity is briefly accounted for, as caused by a meeting with Hermolaos, a *presbyteros* who has secret meetings with other Christians in a cell. Hermolaos soon becomes a witness of some kind, attesting to the first miraculous healing performed by Pantoleon (ch. 4). In this way, Hermolaos becomes the one authority who can confirm to Pantoleon — and to us as readers — that his new powers to cure are truly the result of his conversion.[22] In a way this leaves the issue of the importance of Pantoleon's medical training an open matter.

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21 An edition of the Life is found in *Neizdannye grecheskie agiograficheskie teksty*, ed. by Latyshev, pp. 40–53.

22 On the figure, and also the saint, Hermolaos, see Boyd, 'Ex-Voto Therapy', pp. 18–19.

The initial training does mark him out as an aspiring doctor, but when asked about the source of his healing powers by the emperor under the questioning which will eventually lead to his martyrdom, Pantoleon is quick to indicate — hyperbolically — that his attachment to the Christian community is the only reason (ch. 12). Yet the text does not offer any explanation as to why not all members of that community — including, for example, Hermolaos — are then also endowed with such powers. Thus, we see a strong tension in the Life between the professional ambition originally signalled by Pantoleon's father (whose importance was even highlighted in the narrative) and a kind of denial of the importance of an actual medical training. The narrative tells us that Pantoleon is a trained doctor, but important voices in the narrative (Hermolaos and Pantoleon himself) insist that his powers are exclusively indebted to God.

Other Lives of doctor saints display similar features. In the *Life of Kyros and John*, as in the case of Kosmas and Damian, we are presented with a pair of saints.[23] Kyros is a hermit, whereas John is a soldier, and it is their common faith and martyrdom as well as the combination of their different professions or praxis that endow them with healing powers (3392C–3393A). In fact, comparing this Life to the *Life of Kosmas and Damian*, which was also built upon the basis of one simple dichotomy between two protagonists, we may start wondering whether saintly pairs are so common among the Lives of doctor saints by coincidence. In iconography Kosmas and Damian, and even Pantoleon and Hermolaos, are repeatedly paired up with each other.[24] The idea of their mutual dependence, and perhaps even of their mutual acceptance, seems to form the basis of the narrated portrayals, and the recurrence of the pairing could be seen as yet another way of avoiding a narrative predicament.

On the question of medical training, we see a similar predicament here, but a gradual development is also noticeable. While education is not mentioned in the old version of the *Life of Kyros and John*, the tenth-century metaphrastic (redacted) version singles out Kyros as the son of a doctor, and the bulk of the text narrates the construction of the building that housed Kyros's medical practice, which is then transformed into a church at some point.[25] When the narrative moves on to Kyros, we hear that he is forced to go to Arabia due to persecution, and there — the metaphrastic text explicitly states this — he ceases to be a doctor (1240B). He then meets John, who is attracted to the medical knowledge that Kyros no longer practises. In this way the text, while retaining the old version's frame of martyrdom, thematizes Kyros's medical aspects; also as a doctor's son, he is finally turned into a doctor saint, not least through building up a medical institution.

Thus, as obvious as the pious and beneficial doings of Christian doctors are, their performance is difficult to fit into hagiographical narrative. Medical training is not easily combined with saintly practice. The necessary professionalism,

23 The edition can be found in PG 87. 3388–3421.

24 Boyd, 'Ex-Voto Therapy', p. 19.

25 The metaphrastic text is in PG 114. 1232–49.

which is in part associated with a pagan practice as well as with the issue of money, whether evaded or introduced in the topos of the *anargyros*, makes this difficult. Professionals are normally paid, so the hagiographers' strategy to insist on training and professionalism is in opposition to the traditional way of presenting miraculous deeds and even cures. The theme of unremunerated work becomes a way to counter the problem of professionalism, and the fact that this conception became a standard notion can also be seen in the *Life of Antony the Younger*, where the protagonist, by asking for payment for a cure, shows how he has not yet reached saintly perfection.[26] Not least due to these fixed perceptions, the Lives of saintly doctors contain a lot of important information for modern historians of the late antique and medieval economy.[27] Also, somewhat ironically, the creation of the figure of the *anargyros* caused the Lives of doctor saints to focus more on money than any other type of hagiographical text — this was at least the case in Constantinople by the tenth century. Prominent examples may be seen in the stories appended to the *Life of Sampson the Hospitable* and in a tenth-century manuscript depiction of Kosmas and Damian.

Sampson the Hospitable

The *Life of Sampson the Hospitable*, or the *Xenodochos*, is known in two versions, one of which is thought to be the old version and of an unknown date, and the other is the metaphrastic rewriting from the end of the tenth century.[28] In both versions, Sampson arrives in Constantinople as an experienced doctor and cures none other than the emperor Justinian the Great (reigned 527–565) of a hernia; later sources provide a number of references for the existence of the hospital founded by Sampson, which continued to be active beyond the end of the tenth century. The appearance of Justinian as Sampson's patient dates the latter's lifetime to the sixth century, but as shown by Timothy S. Miller, the institution of Sampson must date back quite a lot further, probably even to the reign of Constantius II in the fourth century.[29] Miller bases this dating among other things on the distinguished position occupied by the director of Sampson's hospital among the leaders of humanitarian institutions in Constantinople in imperial processions, according to the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*.[30] The connection with Justinian may be a later narrative construction intended to gloss over a possible Arian origin of the hospital, and consequently much of the historical information given in the two versions of Sampson's Life can be cast into doubt.

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26 Kazhdan, 'Byzantine Hagiography and Sex', p. 134.

27 On hagiography as source for economical history, see e.g. Laiou, 'Economic Thought and Ideology', p. 1131.

28 The old text is in 'S. Samson le Xénodoque de Constantinople (VI siècle)', ed. by Halkin; the metaphrastic text is in PG 115. 277–308.

29 Miller, 'The Sampson Hospital of Constantinople'.

30 See also Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogennetos*, p. 173.

From a narrative point of view, it is notable that the issue of medical training is clearly emphasized, not least in the metaphrastic version. Here we see the recurrence of features from other doctor saints' Lives. Sampson's medical training is highlighted from the beginning: serious studies had prepared him for his profession, though his training also had the purpose, as the text says, to conceal the grace he had received (281A). Upon the death of his parents Sampson is keen to give away his belongings, and he does so repeatedly and 'with both hands', according to the hagiographer. But despite relinquishing his inheritance, Sampson insists on not taking any payment for his cures (281–284). The early phase of Sampson's life takes place in his birthplace Rome, and he then moves to Constantinople. Here the emperor Justinian is searching for somebody who can heal him, in growing desperation about those doctors who talk much but offer no cure. Following a dream in which he sees Sampson, Justinian is able to single him out in a crowd, and with Sampson's help he finally gets rid of the disease. After curing Justinian and despite his fervent implorations, Sampson refuses to accept any recompense. He too is an *anargyros*, a moneyless (288–289). Yet, eventually he suggests that Justinian might have a hospital built. Sampson then becomes the first director of this *xenodocheion*, a term which means 'hostel' rather than 'hospital', but the medical use of the institution is made clear (289–292). The Life then ends with the note that Sampson died after many years as head of the institution.

The *Life of Sampson* repeats many of the features relating to doctor saints that we have noted before. Like other Lives of doctor saints, this also really tells of only one miracle, in this case the healing of the emperor Justinian. Other miracles are appended at the end, following the saint's death, and emphasize imperial connections which may be historically correct, although perhaps with Constantius II, not Justinian, as the first benefactor of Sampson's institution. Sampson's hospital continued for centuries, in close proximity to the imperial palace. Sampson shares this imperial connection with Kosmas and Damian, whose cult had also been promoted by emperors.[31] In fact, it is possible that these doctor saints were repeatedly portrayed as having received medical training — i.e. as *real* doctors, even though this complicated the narratives of their Lives — because they functioned as protectors of (imperial) institutions that employed trained doctors.[32] It was in the interest of these institutions that a genuine professional status was reflected in the Lives, despite the difficulties that this created in explaining the sainthood of their doctors.

However, as stated above, the *Life of Sampson* also offers a new development within the genre. Among the miracle stories appended to the Life we find a new

31 See the various evidence of activities undertaken by emperors Justin II and Justinian, given by the Oxford Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity: http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=S00385.

32 Booth, 'Orthodox and Heretic in the Early Byzantine Cult(s) of Saints Cosmas and Damian', pp. 114–17.

type of story, not so much intended to prove the saint's miraculous abilities but rather to instil proper ideas about money in believers: Sampson's posthumous miracles, which have received little attention in scholarship, display a curious interest in money and resources as well as new lessons that were to be taught to listeners and readers, especially those in possession of some money. The leading characters depicted in the posthumous miracle tales which form a postlude to the Life are highly positioned administrators of the Byzantine state, two of them *logothetēs tou dromou*, others *drungarioi* or *protospatharioi*, and it turns out that their social standing is of central importance here. As told in the appended tales, these individuals experience minor health incidents: Theodoritos, a friend of the *drungarios* Leo, falls down some stairs from excitement after having reconciled Leo with one of his influential and high-ranking friends, and severely sprains his ankle. At night saint Sampson comes to him in a vision or dream, touches the swollen foot, and the next day the man is fully cured and able to walk to the saint's grave and thank him (293–296). At a later point, the *drungarios* Leo is unable to walk due to pain in his knees. After being cured by Sampson, in his gratitude, he suggests to an unnamed emperor that he might pay for the renovation of Sampson's institution, which had fallen into disrepair (296–297). As is made clear in the text, Leo becomes the director of the institution at the same time. An earlier director, the *protospatharios* Eustratios, is cured from an eye disease in the following passage, but he forgets to pay thanks to Sampson as promised, by donating oil to his institution to be used in treatments (301). Sampson then appears to Eustratios in a dream, asking: 'Are you playing with me?' (ἐμοὶ ἐμπαίζεις) (301), and promptly the latter offers to supply the institution with the necessary ointment.

What we see in these amusing miracle tales is more than just proof of Sampson's healing powers. Another message conveyed here, which is just as important, is that directors and people within their circles ought to make sure that they offer gifts to this humanitarian institution, regardless of its support by the emperor or of the moneyless status of its patron saint. When it comes to people of this kind, Sampson has no difficulties to ask for recompense. It seems likely that these stories were recorded as part of this class of imperial employees' self-presentation, a class to which the redactor of the hagiographical collection belonged himself. Symeon Metaphrastes was *logothetēs tou dromou*, and although we do not have any information on his relationship to Sampson's institution, the very inclusion of Sampson's Life into the metaphrastic *mēnologion* suggests that there was a connection — a suggestion that seems to be supported by the almost personal way in which the Life is singled out in its prologue.[33] In any case, it is in the appendix to a Life that deals with a saint who does not want any money that we find the clearest message to (specific) readers that payment of money is actually expected. Otherwise saint Sampson might think that you are playing with him.

33 Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, pp. 102–09.

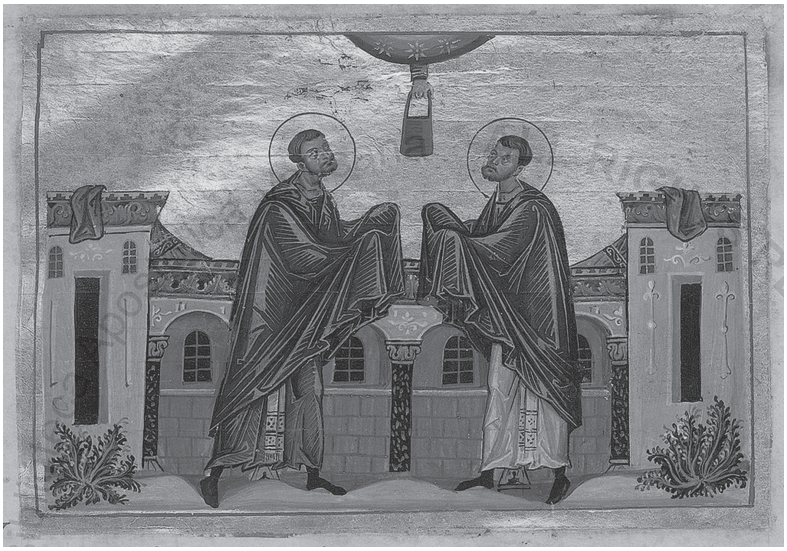
Kosmas and Damian Again

That doctor saints were closely connected to the issue of money in this way around the turn of the tenth century also appears in other sources. The so-called *Mēnologion of Basil II*, which is actually like an illuminated *synaxarion* for the first half of the church year (i.e. the beginning of September to the end of February), contains 430 abridged versions of saints' Lives which each take up half a page in this luxurious manuscript.[34] The other half of the same page contains an illumination portraying the saint(s), sometimes above, sometimes below. Text and image are thus nicely balanced on every page, and so is the number of martyrs and confessors. Apart from the *circa* forty pages dedicated to feast days of Christ, Mary, and the apostles as well as of councils, no fewer than 242 pages depict and describe martyrs, who are normally shown in the images at the moment of execution by sword, fire, water, or other means. Some 129 pages each contain the Life and image of confessors (the distribution prioritizing martyrs is almost ubiquitous). Here, four are stylites or pillar saints, forty some kind of eremite (based on the predominance of a 'wild' landscape behind them), while eighty-five are depicted standing erect in front of a building or at least some connected columns or similar, indicating a man-made background rather than a natural landscape. Though miracles and divine intervention form part of almost all saints' Lives, little attention is paid to this, except for a few images in which the hand of God is visible (on twenty-six of the 430 images).[35] In a single page depicting doctor saints, Kosmas and Damian are shown standing and facing each other in front of a large building, thereby marking their institutional association (see Figure 1 below). Their hands are holding out their cloaks ready to receive something, and what they receive is a purse that is being handed down from heaven by the hand of God. In none of the other twenty-five images with God's hand does the hand hold an object. In the image depicting John the Baptist and the baptism of Christ (no. 299) a dove, presumably depicting the Holy Spirit, is shown between the Father and the Son. Accordingly, Kosmas and Damian are the only ones to receive anything from God in all these depictions. Of

34 Vat. gr. 1613, now available online on the website of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSSVat.gr.1613. Further on this, see *El Menologio de Basilio II*, ed. by D'Aiuto.

35 The hand of God is shown clearly protruding from a small semi-circle in the following depictions (the number in brackets refer to the page number): *megalomartyr* Nikita (37); bishop Eumenios (47); martyrs of Neilos (51); John, father of Theodore and Theofanes the Confessors (60); the big earthquake (65); Ananias, bishop of Damascus (75); Theophilos the Confessor (81); Zenais and Philonille (109); Abramios (146); Kosmas and Damian (152); Ioannikios (158); Gregorios, bishop of Akragas (203); Aikaterina (207); Alypios the Stylite (208); Abibos (220); Ambrose of Milan (227); John, a bishop (230); Stephanos, a *protomartyr* (275); John the Baptist and the baptism of Christ (299); Dometianos, bishop of Melitene (306); Domnika (308); Bendimanos (364); Klaudios (370); Parthenios, bishop of Lampsakos (380); Martinianos (395); Athanasios (418). In a similar number of images a small (blue) semi-circle is seen at the top.

Figure 1. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Gr. 1613, p. 152.



course, what they receive symbolizes that which they were not meant to and refused to receive in their earthly life. Nevertheless, these *anargyroi*, whose activities were supposed to be completely dissociated from money, are more clearly identified iconographically via the money that they did not have than through the cures they performed. The best way of depicting the saints, whom the accompanying text identifies as *anargyroi* despite the problematic story of the three eggs, was to show that they were in fact eventually given the money they were not meant to receive.

Conclusion

Greek Lives of doctor saints do not present a Dr Doolittle or a Dr Zhivago. Those texts that feature actual doctors as protagonists present little in terms of a life story, and miracle stories appended to the end often carry the bulk of information, while we see hardly any narrative progress in the Lives. Despite the clear humanitarian potential of their protagonists, the Lives of doctors proved to be difficult material for hagiographers. Doctor saints became a new type of Christian hero, and their importance as heirs to a long-standing tradition of trained physicians is clear. But their saintly features are often lost in the hard choice between ascribing their performed healings to faith, i.e. the traditional ultimate source for miracles performed by saints, and emphasizing the doctors' medical training, which would be expected of medical institutions at the least. On top of this, medical training and an ordinary life as a doctor

made payment necessary. To solve this dilemma, a new type of miracle was invented, the non-payment, so that this — and only this — type of saint became the *anargyros*, the moneyless.

But since doctor saints were the only saints that would have to refuse payment, due to the professional background to their miracles, money would become a recurring theme through the term *anargyros* and other expressions, and this would allow some texts to dwell emphatically on money or the obligations of the rich. We therefore see heroes who are determined not to receive any money becoming the conveyors even of ethically complicated reflections upon proper ways of spending riches, namely in support of the new, well-trained doctor saints and their institutions.

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Virginia Burrus

An Unstable Heroine

The Life and Lives of Constantina

Four tenth-century northern Spanish manuscripts preserve, in part or whole, a little-known Latin text, the *Life of Constantina*, daughter of the fourth-century Roman emperor who so famously converted to Christianity.[1] In three cases, the text is transmitted as part of a female hagiographical anthology that also includes the Lives of Helia, Melania, Castissima (Greek: Euphrosyne), an anonymous virgin, Egeria, Pelagia, and Mary of Egypt.[2] In the fourth case, the *Life of Constantina* is paired with the *Life of Melania* in a manuscript that includes works especially relevant to female monasticism.[3] We can guess that its scribe, one Leodegundia, might have been interested in these two female Lives in particular because they both depict aristocratic women who became leaders of monastic communities. As that last statement already suggests, the *Life of Constantina*, likely written in the mid-sixth century, tells us nothing

1 BnF, MS lat. 2178; Escorial a.I.13; Escorial a.II.9; Madrid, Bibl. Acad. Hist. 13. An edition based on the Paris manuscript is published in *Supplément aux Acta Sanctorum pour des Vies de Saints de l'époque mérovingienne 2*, ed. by Narbey, pp. 131–52. A new critical edition based on all four manuscripts with facing English translation, introduction, and commentary is published in *The Lives of Saint Constantina*, ed. by Conti, Burrus, and Trout, pp. 50–115; all references are to this new edition and translation.

2 The anthology is discussed by Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins*; in *The Life of Saint Helia*, ed. by Burrus and Conti, pp. 2–15, and in *The Lives of Saint Constantina*, ed. by Conti, Burrus, and Trout, pp. 5–6; pp. 41–43. Note that Salisbury's summary of the plot of the *Life of Constantina* includes some inaccuracies, repeated in *The Life of Saint Helia*, ed. by Burrus and Conti, p. 10. Regarding the *Life of the anonymous virgin*, see Burrus and Conti, 'Between Fragment and Compilation', pp. 201–23.

3 A description of the Leodegundia manuscript, with bibliography, is conveniently available at http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/manuscripts/Escorial-a-I-13.html.

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Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography: Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative, ed. by Koen De Temmerman, Julie Van Pelt, and Klazina Staat, Fabulae, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp. 157–172.
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about the fourth-century empress whom it purports to depict. Instead, it presents us with a fictional character — a dazzlingly beautiful queen who, having been healed of leprosy by Saint Agnes, converts to Christianity and dedicates herself to a life of celibacy, transforming her palace into a convent of virgins. This fictional Constantina appears more or less simultaneously in more than one literary text, moreover, and this dispersion deserves attention. Here I want to consider how a literary heroine emerges within a fluid field of hagiographic textuality that yields no single, stable authoritative Life — hence no single, stable, authoritative Constantina. Rather, a set of complexly interrelated, mutually confirming, and contesting literary depictions are produced through a process of textual fragmentation and recombination, constriction and expansion.

The *Life of Constantina*: Textual Constriction and Expansion

Let me begin by placing the Life in its most immediate and concrete intertextual contexts. The *Life of Constantina* is closely related to two works that are among the novelistic martyrologies known collectively as the *Gesta martyrum romanorum*, generally held to have been composed in Rome in the late fifth or early sixth century.[4] The first is the *Passion of Agnes*, to which is appended the story of Constantina's miraculous healing and conversion. According to the Passion, Constantina (or Constantia, as she is named in this text and others) is covered head to toe in terrible sores; in her desire to be cured, she yields to advice that she visit the virgin martyr's tomb at night, in the time-honoured practice of incubation. Her disease is not explicitly named as leprosy in this text, but it seems implied. Though she is not yet a Christian, she is rewarded with a vision of the holy Agnes, who proves to be an effective recruiter to the faith, as well as a mediator of healing. 'Be constant, Constantia', the saint urges her, 'and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, is your saviour, through whom you shall attain healing of all the wounds from which you suffer in your body'.[5] Upon waking, Constantina discovers herself free of disease. Her father, brothers, and indeed all of Rome rejoice with her; the Passion even hints that Constantina's cure wins

4 It is a bit misleading to speak of the *Gesta* as a distinct corpus. As Cooper, 'The Martyr, the *Matrona*, and the Bishop', p. 306 notes, 'The *gesta* as we know them are anonymous hagiographical romances, each spun around the death of one or more saints, and by no means constituting an official or even integrated corpus. Each text bears its own complex relationship to a variety of sources and often to other texts in the group. Each has its own independent manuscript tradition. Although various of the *gesta* can be found together in the medieval liturgical books known as *legendarii* and *passionarii*, there seems to have been no convention whatsoever of treating them as a fixed corpus'.

5 *Passion of Agnes* 13; AASS Jan. II, 353. All translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.

the city to Christianity. 'The city was decorated with wreaths, and delight filled the hearts of both soldiers and civilians and all of those present: faith overcame the poison of faithlessness'.[6] Constantina then asks that her father and brothers have a basilica built in honour of Agnes, and that a mausoleum for Constantina herself be constructed in the same location.[7] Henceforth the emperor's daughter lives a life dedicated to virginity, modelling herself on her saintly patron and inspiring others to do the same.

We note that the *Passion of Agnes* preserves distinctly locational memories:[8] Constantina is remembered as the one who had a vision of Agnes at the saint's tomb, and who subsequently requested the construction of a basilica and mausoleum nearby. And here history and fiction do converge. Constantina's memory was largely preserved through its attachment to particular Roman places that were, of course, no mere figments of fantasy. As Dennis Trout argues with respect to the *Gesta martyrum* in general, the 'creative elaborations' of the later Roman martyrologies are 'tightly anchored to concrete places of memory within the Roman cityscape',[9] a cityscape initially constructed through the buildings, monuments, and inscriptions of the Constantinian period. The historical Constantina did not have leprosy and did not dedicate herself to virginity: she was married twice. However, sometime in the 340s,[10] following the death of her first husband and preceding her marriage to her second, she did commission the construction of a massive ambulatory basilica (approximately 98 by 40 metres) as well as a mausoleum in the vicinity of Agnes' tomb on the *Via Nomentana* in suburban Rome. It is in the latter that Constantina was buried in 354 in a magnificent porphyry sarcophagus currently housed in the Vatican museum. The basilica is now in ruins, having been replaced by a smaller church in the early seventh century, but the mausoleum still stands, preserving much of its original mosaic adornment.[11]

The Life alludes in opening to the tradition associated with the Passion, yet it completely ignores its sites — tomb, basilica, mausoleum. Apart from a somewhat oddly intruded narrative depicting 'Saint Silvester, pope of the church of Rome' as Constantina's tutor (about which, more anon), the Life makes no mention of Rome and could be imagined to take place anywhere. There are other hints as well that this text may be positioning itself as a somewhat resistant epitome or abridgement of the traditions transmitted by the Passion, redirecting attention away from its Roman story of miraculous

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6 *Passion of Agnes* 13; AASS Jan. II, 353.

7 Cf. *Liber Pontificalis* 1. 180–81, where under the entry for Silvester it is said that Constantine constructed a basilica and also a baptistery at the request of his daughter.

8 The phrase 'locational memory' is Mary Carruthers', see 'The Poet as Master Builder'.

9 Trout, 'From the *Elogia* of Damasus to the *Acta Martyrum*', p. 313.

10 See Trout, 'Vergil and Ovid at the Tomb of Agnes', pp. 264–67.

11 On Constantina's biography, see Jones, Martindale, and Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, p. 222. On her building project, see Pietri, *Roma christiana*, pp. 47–51, and Brandenburg, *Roms früh-christliche Basiliken des 4. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 93–115.

healing and toward Constantina's career as an ascetic virgin and monastic leader. Consider the opening lines:

> Constantine uirginis sacratissime gesta mirabilia, que longo sermone uix explicari possunt, quanta possumus breuitate artantes, ad edificationem uirginum conscribimus, ut ex paucis multa noscantur, et per parua que memorata noscunter; ea que intermissa sunt non negentur. Hec namque, recuperata sui corporis sanitate, seipsam obtulit Christo. (1.1)
>
> > We are recording the marvellous deeds of the most holy virgin Constantina for the edification of the virgins of Christ, compressing with as much brevity as we can material that even a long speech can barely set forth. In that way, many things may be known from a few and, through the few things that, once recalled, do become known, those matters that have been omitted may not be denied understanding. For after recovering her bodily health, she offered herself to Christ.

This passage can surely be read as an expression of mere rhetorical convention, as the author protests that he or she cannot possibly do justice to the saint; however, the emphasis on constriction and the seemingly defensive assertion that 'matters that have been omitted may not be denied understanding' might also suggest that the author is not only aware of the Passion (or at least of its traditions) but is deliberately minimizing the Agnes-related narrative, even knowingly omitting parts of it. The virgin martyr is named only twice in this roughly twenty-five-page text and there are only three brief references to the healing, two at the beginning of the Life, and another at the beginning of Constantina's prayer — the latter imported from another text, as we shall see. The ultimate effect of this constriction is that the Constantina of the Life emerges as less a grateful recipient of healing than an aristocratic, well-educated, and authoritative holy woman.

The text goes on to sing her praises as the leader of a convent and an *exemplum* for the virgins who follow her, describing the monastic lifestyle that she fosters. The virgins fast until the ninth hour on Wednesday and Friday, we are told. During meals, passages from the prophets and wisdom literature are read (but not the rest of the Old Testament, which might give the false impression of advocating unchaste living); the entirety of the New Testament is also read in order. Times of prescribed rest — in particular, the rest following the meal at the ninth hour (approximately 3:00 pm) — are to be strictly observed, so that times of prescribed wakefulness may be observed with equal strictness. The first, third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day are set apart for prayer and praise of God, along with the twelfth hour of the day, the third hour of the night, midnight, dawn, and morning — a whopping nine daily offices, making emphasis on an afternoon nap understandable (1. 2).

Where does Constantina receive knowledge of this *regula vivendi*? From none other than the Roman Pope Silvester (314–335), we learn — a man who has never studied grammar or rhetoric but who has made himself the disciple

of the martyr Timothy. The moral of the story — and it is made explicit — is that even someone as erudite as Constantina, schooled in both Latin and Greek letters, has need for instruction in the teachings of the Church and its holy scriptures, lest she fall into the errors of heresy. Yet the introduction of the figure of Silvester serves not only to humble Constantina but also to exalt her, by interpolating her into a chain of apostolic succession: she 'learned what to do and how to read after being instructed by pope Silvester, by him, that is, who had been instructed by Timothy, whom James, apostle of Christ, had instructed. And she was so learned in everything, that nothing in the scriptures of the lord escaped her' (1. 3). The Silvester narrative may reflect the influence of the early sixth-century edition of the *Liber pontificalis*, which reports not only that Silvester was a disciple of Timothy but also that he, Silvester, baptized Constantina as well as her aunt Constantia. In the Life, which is much more interested in pedagogy than in sacraments, baptism is replaced by instruction, it would seem.

As Hannah Jones notes with reference to the *Liber pontificalis*, 'The attempt to link Constantina and Silvester is testimony to a relationship of some kind between the legend of Constantia's cure by Agnes and the tangle of traditions about the conversion of Constantine'.[12] That tangle of traditions includes the account of Silvester's baptism of Constantine, which the *Liber pontificalis* also transmits, here dependent on the (probably fifth-century) *Acts of Silvester*.[13] Silvester is said not only to have baptized Constantine, following the emperor's receipt of a vision of the apostles Peter and Paul, but also thereby to have cured the emperor of leprosy; subsequently, the emperor funds basilicas on the Vatican hill and in the Lateran palace, among others. (This legend will, of course, have an infamous subsequent history as part of the later forgery known as the *Donation of Constantine*.) A tangle indeed: it is hard to imagine that the author of the *Passion of Agnes* did not know the narrative of Constantine's baptism, but it is also easy to see why he or she fails to mention it. In mimicking Constantine's story, with its elements of vision, miraculous cure of leprosy, conversion, and building projects, the Passion effectively displaces the emperor. 'In the *Passio*', argues Jones, 'Constantia acquires a role very close to the legendary role of her father — transformer of the Roman Empire — as she completes Agnes' efforts to purify the Roman city. At the same time, in her building projects, she offers a paradigm of how the citizens of this new city of devotion may honour the martyr's memory'.[14]

If the *Life of Constantina* might be said to strategically condense the *Passion of Agnes* (or its tradition) in its opening, its strategy is one of

12 Jones, 'Agnes and Constantia', p. 19.

13 Note that the *Acts of Silvester* were also incorporated into the so-called *Symmachan Forgeries*, roughly contemporaneous with both the *Gesta martyrum* and the *Liber pontificalis*. The dating, origins, and evolution of the *Acts* have been much discussed and debated. Canella, 'Gli Actus Silvestri tra oriente e occidente', n. 1 provides a thorough bibliography.

14 Jones, 'Agnes and Constantia', p. 135.

expansion with respect to the *Passion of Gallicanus, John, and Paul*, another text associated with the *Gesta martyrum* and also dated to the late fifth or early sixth century.[15] Indeed, in the lengthy Part I of our Life, which constitutes about 80 per cent of the text, the expansion envelops and overwhelms the narrative from which it apparently takes its start. (Parts II and III, in contrast, are entirely excerpted from the Passions of Gallicanus and of John and Paul respectively.) Excerpted and embedded in Part I, the beginning of Gallicanus's Passion narrates how Constantine's general leads the Roman army to victory over the Persians in Syria and subsequently asks Constantine for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Given that the Scythians are now also pressing the Roman borders, Constantine himself feels pressed to comply; yet he fears that his daughter 'could be more easily killed than overcome', i.e., forced to marry (I. 6). However, Constantina proves surprisingly amenable, comforting her distressed father and proposing that he consent to the engagement, on the condition that Gallicanus be asked to send his two daughters, Attica and Artemia, to stay with Constantina while receiving two of Constantina's most trusted palace attendants, the eunuch brothers John and Paul, in their place. 'And all of these things were accomplished just as they were arranged by the virgin of Christ', we read (I. 6). Constantina subsequently offers a prayer that Attica and Artemia as well as their father Gallicanus might be converted to lives of chastity (I. 7) — a prayer that is eventually answered.[16]

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15 The narratives of Gallicanus and of John and Paul are conjoined in the majority of manuscripts, although they also appear separately. The *Life of Constantina* is, in effect, a radical expansion of a composite version — specifically (it would seem) of BHL versions 3237 and 3239. It appears from the BHL electronic database (http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/) that six manuscripts, all located in Italy, transmit these two versions together: Naples, BN, cod. XV.AA12 (976–1025), fols 106–08; Rome, BN, Sessor., cod. 5 (1001–1100), fols 157–59; Rome, Casanat., cod. 719 (1001–1100), fols 7^{v}–9^{v}; Vatican, Barb. lat. 586 (1051–1150), fols 179–81; Lucca, Bibl Cap, cod. B (1176–1200), fols 194^{v}–97^{v}; Turin, BN I.II.17 (1351–1450), fols 304–08. Perusal of the first four of these confirms that this family of manuscripts is closely related to the *Life of Constantina*. Note that the Life may depend on a fairly early copy of the composite Passion, based on its use of the name Constantina rather than Constantia, with whom Constantina was confused at a fairly early point. The so-called *vetustissimus* manuscript of Corbie (*c.* AD 600), which transmits a separately circulating version of the *Passion of John and Paul*, is one of the few that also refers to our saint as Constantina (Leyser, '"A Church in the House of the Saints"', p. 148 n. 46).

16 Note that while Gallicanus is a fiction in his role as Constantina's suitor, he is perhaps not entirely fictional: Edward Champlin makes a strong case for identifying the Gallicanus of the Life with both the benefactor of the Ostian basilica of Saints Peter, Paul, and John the Baptist mentioned in *Liber pontificalis* 34.29, and the Ovinius Gallicanus who was consul in 317 and prefect of the city of Rome in 316–317. On this account, Ovinius Gallicanus becomes a significant figure in the momentous history of the Christianization of the Roman aristocracy. As Champlin also points out, the legendary Gallicanus has also become confused with Caesar Gallus, to whom Constantina was married from 351 until her death in 354, and who was supposedly defending Rome against Persian incursions into Syria (Champlin, 'Saint Gallicanus', pp. 71–76).

A comparative look at the closing lines of this section as they appear in the majority tradition of the *Passion of Gallicanus*, in a minority version, and in the Life itself is suggestive. In the majority version, the passage reads as follows:

> Qualiter autem ad Dominum Atticam Artemiamque convertirit, studio celeriter narrandi Martyrium Gallicani, praetereo.[17]
>
> > But how she [Constantina] converted Attica and Artemia to the Lord I pass by, out of eagerness to swiftly relate the Martyrdom of Gallicanus.

A minority version of the Passion tempers this impatience somewhat:

> Qualiter autem Attica et Artemia a beata Constantia sint susceptae et informatae, atque ad hoc adductae ut et mundum contemnerent et diuinis se studiis traderent, et multas alias uirgines secum ad dominum traherent, **sequens lectio manifestat**. Quae ideo compendioso tramite decurro, quia tam ad passionem martyrum Iohannis et Pauli quam et Gallicani gloriam studiose festino.[18]
>
> > But how Attica and Artemia were received and educated by the blessed Constantia, and were led to despise the world and devote themselves to divine studies, and drew many other virgins to the lord with them, **the following reading shows**. I run through it in abridged form because I hurry as eagerly to the passion of the martyrs John and Paul as also to the glory of Gallicanus.

Part 1 of the *Life of Constantina* follows this minority version up to a point but then diverges:

> Qualiter autem Attica et Artemia a beata Constantina sint susceptae et informatae, atque ad hoc adductae ut et mundum contemnerent et diuinis se studiis traderent, **ipsarum epistola loquitur** … (1. 8)
>
> > But how Attica and Artemia were received and educated by the blessed Constantina, and were led to despise the world and devote themselves to divine studies, **their letter clearly demonstrates** …

Here the Life defers mention of how Attica and Artemia attract other virgins: this is a tale to be recounted subsequently and at greater length. At the same time, the Life opens a gap in the text of the Passion, in which to insert letters exchanged between Attica and Artemia and their aunt Octavia (offered as

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17 *Passion of Gallicanus* 4; AASS Jun. v, 38.

18 Vatican, Barb. lat. 586, fols 179^{r}–81^{r}. Cf. Naples, BN, cod. XV.AA12, fol. 106^{v}; Rome, BN, Sessor., cod. 5, fol. 157^{v}. Rome, Casanat., cod. 719, fol. 8^{r}, offers a variant on the second sentence: 'Quae commemorans idcirco praetereo ut passionem martirum et calligani gloriam memorem, quae in ultima parte hui lectionis scripta expectatione audientium fastidioso morarum spatio velut impediunt dum et legimur quae solis Christi virginibus perfutura noscuntur'.

proof of how Constantina has instructed them), as well as an extended dialogue between Constantina, Attica, Artemia, and ten other assembled virgins on the topic of the 'highest good' and 'worst evil'. Following the dialogue is a summary statement reporting that Constantina and the other virgins devote themselves henceforth to prayer, fasting, scriptural study, and works of charity (1. 25). The Life thus seems to take up the implicit challenge of the Passion's explicit omission (in one version) or abridgement (in another). In so doing, it allows the Passion also to be read as an implicit suppression or constriction of the Life's exuberant excesses: intriguingly, the agonistic relation seems to run both ways.

With the insertion of the epistolary exchange and dialogue, a kind of performative intertextuality is mobilized, even if the intertexts are entirely fictive. Aunt Octavia's letter attempts to persuade the girls not to forsake their plans to marry. Octavia suspects her nieces of 'having been deceived by some kind of trick' (1. 8). (Love spells come to mind, if we think of the ever-popular *Acts of Thecla*, for example.) After all, Octavia argues, the Bible supports marriage, 'for Abraham had Sarah, and Isaac Rebecca, and Jacob Ruth, and Joseph Aseneth, and Moses Zipporah, and David Michal' (1. 8).[19] The girls resist, assuring their aunt of the empress's graciousness and urging her to send their cousins and any other noble virgins she might know to visit Constantina. 'For it is quite pleasing to her piety when virgins come to pay homage to her' (1. 8). In a surprising capitulation, given her prior suspicion of 'tricks', Octavia yields to her nieces' request and sends her two daughters and four others. Upon receiving the girls, the empress insists that they stay with her for the whole day; moreover, she begs that they bring even more girls to her. A 'multitude of virgins' subsequently arrives, and Constantina 'orders' them to stay with her for three days. Her aim, we are told, is 'through meals and conversations and intimacy (*per conuiuium, per conloquium, per affabilitatem*) to guide the mind of each and make them her friends through her tender affection (*amicabili affectu*)'; she kisses them 'as her sisters' (*ueluti germanas*); and finally she sends them away 'loaded with gifts'. She also asks for a gift in exchange: namely, 'that they, according to the capacity of their mind, would write down their personal opinions about the "highest good" and the "ultimate evil", and then present this gift to her after five days' (1. 9).

The virgins are so suffused by love (*amor*) for Constantina that the five days seem like a year to them (1. 10). But eventually they return, texts in hand. Again, the Life creates fictional intertexts, palpable in their materiality: we are told that the *sententiae* are handwritten by each one. The virgins make up a swelling crowd of 120 or so, all of whom 'had become so intimate with

19 Such an argument resonates intriguingly with that put forth by the virgin Helia's mother in the exegetically dense *Life of Helia* that appears in the same medieval hagiographical anthology as the *Life of Constantina* (Burrus and Conti, *Life of Saint Helia*).

her (Constantina) that they were like her chambermaids, since the love of God alone had united them in their love for the Augusta' (1. 10). And now the performance as such begins. Twelve girls step forward to read their brief *sententiae* aloud. Some are very short: Artemia, for example, proposes that 'The highest good is life and the worst evil is death' (1. 11). Nonetheless, it takes more than one day to hear all twelve, for as Attica (the first to read) asserts, their little texts require interpretation. Constantina agrees to respond to each, telling the girls what their own words really mean: as Attica puts it, Constantina's discourse will allow them to comprehend fully what they themselves have written (1. 10). Their brevity is matched by her loquacity, then, and her scripturally larded speeches get longer and longer, becoming virtual sermons. It is as if she can unfurl the mature wisdom enfolded in their innocent words, making women of the girls, through her own eloquence. Despite Attica's initial framing, Constantina's speeches are ultimately less interpretive than performative and productive; her words make something new of theirs. Textual expansion itself becomes part of the drama, in other words. When she finishes her last discourse, the assembled virgins applaud and joyfully declare her victory complete (1. 25). Constantina's performance is, then, simultaneously a textual expansion, a virginal seduction, and a triumph of rhetorical and theological virtuosity. What she says may matter less than the sheer fact and force of her speech itself. Like Constantina's virgins, readers of the text may find themselves submitting to the power of the empress's persuasive theatre, joining the swelling crowd of her virginal lovers, at least in fantasy.

On the Feast of Constantia: Textual Fragmentation and Recombination

As I have already intimated, the *Life of Constantina* is not the only hagiographical text dedicated to the empress to survive from Late Antiquity. A second text, *On the Feast of the Virgin Constanti(n)a*, dubbed somewhat misleadingly by the Bollandists the *Epitome of the Life of Constantina*, stands in uncertain relation to the Life. While it may be taken as a summary of Part 1, none of its material derives directly from the Life, and it seems more accurate to view it as a parallel or alternate version, epitomizing common sources — minimally, the *Passion of Gallicanus* and the tradition of Constantina's healing of leprosy and consequent conversion to a life of virginity.

Although neither the *Passion of Agnes* nor the *Life of Constantina* mentions Constantine's baptism and cure, *On the Feast* does:

> In the eighteenth year of his reign, having been baptized by the blessed Silvester and through baptism cleansed of the disease of leprosy, he honoured the supreme pontiff with imperial insignia, enriched the Roman church with properties and strengthened it with privileges, and built numerous

> temples for the God who had healed him. Moreover, he appointed his sons, namely, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, as Caesars and consecrated them with royal insignia. He even had Constantia so thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of secular literature that the philosophers admired her intellect. She was indeed a queen but so covered with sores from head to toe that no part of her limbs remained unaffected. And it is believed that this surely happened through divine providence, namely, so that as the same disease had been the reason for her father to receive baptism, so it might be the reason for her to preserve her virginity (I. 1–2).[20]

Rather than ignoring or even suppressing the narrative tradition surrounding Constantine's cure in favour of Constantina's, *On the Feast* betrays awareness of both and pulls them into tight symmetry. An excerpt from the *Passion of Agnes* follows, along with another from the *Passion of Gallicanus* — the latter being the same one that is the core of Part I of the *Life of Constantina* (though *On the Feast* summarizes rather than cites Constantina's full prayer, which occurs at the end of the excerpt). The final section of *On the Feast* consists of a very brief summary of the rest of Gallicanus's narrative (corresponding to Part II of the Life), followed by an account of Constantina's death (not mentioned in the Life), which includes the detail that Constantina was 'buried in a precious tomb of porphyry, and as she had asked her father and brothers, a church adorned with columns, mosaics, and stones was built in the same place in her honour'. The author of *On the Feast* was familiar not only with the *Passion of Agnes* but also with the Roman site, it would seem, though now the mausoleum is referred to as a 'church'.

Indeed, *On the Feast* is, like the Passion, a very Roman text. Jones argues that the *Passion of Agnes* appeals 'to the concerns of a civic-minded lay patronage class', reflecting an assertion of both civic and family values.[21] Whereas earlier depictions of Agnes by Ambrose, Damasus, and Prudentius represent the girl as choosing martyrdom in opposition to her family's wishes, the Passion re-embeds her in a family network: Agnes' parents rejoice at her martyrdom and provide for her burial on the *Via Nomentana*, where she appears to them in a comforting vision.[22] *On the Feast*, which unlike the Life directly excerpts the Passion, appears to reflect a similar ethos. Its introduction situates Constantina in a family context and the closing line re-emphasizes familial relations as well as Roman places. Constantina is, moreover, depicted as deferring to her father and brothers, even as she also asserts her role as patron. The Life, in contrast, depicts a saint who is detached from Rome's places and its families, and who defers to no one. Her context is also aristocratic, it would seem, but it is less civic and cultic than monastic, pedagogical, and erotic.

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20 All references are to the critical edition and translation published in *The Lives of Saint Constantina*, ed. by Conti, Burrus, and Trout, pp. 142–51.

21 Jones, 'Agnes and Constantia', p. 137.

22 Jones, 'Agnes and Constantia', pp. 132–33.

The existence of both the Life and *On the Feast*, neither of which seems to derive directly from the other, demonstrates how the flexibility of literary practices of recycling in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages could allow for the assemblage of multiple Constantinas out of the resources of a shared and multifarious literary tradition. In such a case, the literary invention of a saint is clearly an open and unfinished process, as well as a complexly intertextual one. Uri Margolin notes, with respect to literary characterization more generally, that 'any given character may be amenable to a whole range of alternative individuations, all of which are nonetheless compatible with the original'.[23] But what if there is no 'original'? Not, for example, a Life and its condensed version, but a mesh of intertextuality — epitomes all the way down and across. Marco Formisano has recently emphasized the significance of what he calls the 'epitomatory dimension' of late ancient and early medieval literature. He hypothesizes that the performatively intertextual or dialogical character of 'epitomatory' texts may convey competition, contradiction, or subversion of the very textual authorities that are cited and excerpted, summarized and constricted, interpolated and expanded, broken and fragmented, and then recombined.[24] I would add that those 'authorities' themselves constitute a fluid and shifting textual field — what Roland Barthes describes eloquently as a weave 'of quotations, references, echoes: cultural languages […] antecedent or contemporary, which traverse (a text) through and through, in a vast stereophony'.[25]

Conclusion

Writing or reading Constantina as a literary 'heroine' will not, then, yield a stable portrait but rather a kaleidoscopic array of shifting portraits that both collude and compete with one another. The Constantina of the *Passion of Agnes* and *On the Feast* models the time-honoured virtue of piety toward divinity, the dead, and family, expressed through the exercise of patronage and the imitation of her own patron saint; convertible, she is at the same time marked (not least nominally) as 'constant' in her unchanging faithfulness. This is a portrait both distinctive with respect to the post-classical Rome that produces the *Gesta martyrum*, as Jones has shown, and also recognizable from the perspective of earlier Roman *exemplum* literature. Pliny the Younger praises his wife's aunt Calpurnia Hispalla as *pietatis exemplum*, remarking on her loving devotion to both her brother and her niece (*Ep*. 4. 19. 1); in general, within classical Latin literature, a woman 'could become honoured

23 Margolin, 'Character', p. 69.

24 This is work in progress, and I thank Marco Formisano for sharing with me a copy of his project proposal for Ghent University, entitled 'The Epitome in Late Latin Literature'.

25 Barthes, 'From Work to Text', p. 60.

as a daughter, from a famous father, as a mother, from famous children, and as a wife, from a famous husband', and loyalty was her most striking virtue.[26] In partial contrast to this conservative, family-oriented portrait, the Constantina of the *Passion of Gallicanus* and the *Life of Constantina* is characterized by her striking beauty and her resourcefulness in the face of a threat to her chastity. Such a depiction recalls virgin martyrs of prior Christian tradition, from the famous Thecla to Agnes herself; it recalls, as well, the heroines of both epic and romance whose portraits so strongly influence those of their late ancient Christian sisters, from Virgil's Polyxena to Achilleus Tatios's Leukippe.[27]

Finally, the lengthy expansions of the first part of the Life display yet another face of the saint. Here Constantina is narratively framed by a literary type established as early as Jerome's epistolary portraits of holy women: as Andrew Cain sums it up, the ideal holy woman is 'student of Scripture; ascetic Christian *par excellence*; monastic revolutionary; and champion of orthodoxy'.[28] As such, she models the values of the men who write her life. Yet Constantina, like other heroines of hagiography, also exceeds such a frame. Her dialogical performance in particular demonstrates both her rhetorical and her erotic power, characteristics that hark back to virgin martyrs and the heroines of Hellenistic romance but are here intensified and unlinked from contexts of persecution or misadventure. Like the Byzantine accounts of female martyrs discussed by Anne Alwis in this volume (chapter 4), the Life depicts Constantina as not merely erudite but heroically triumphant precisely by virtue of her facility with language; and she is no less alluring for all of that. Indeed, in her very eloquence, Constantina invites erotic submission rather than moral imitation, as her own desire is turned not primarily toward Christ but toward the virginal followers whom she hopes to persuade and transform. This raises questions about whether exemplarity adequately defines the heroism of a saint: Constantina may be heroic precisely to the extent that she is *in*imitable, set apart from the normal run of humanity; she is a saint not to be imitated but to be *enjoyed*, as Peter Brown puts it.[29] Alternately, exemplarity may be more complex than we tend to think (as argued extensively by Irene E. Harvey),[30] and imitation may turn out to be a matter of erotic responsivity as much as ethical conformity, as desire — in all of its vulnerability and audacity — answers, and thus mirrors, desire.[31]

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26 Parker, 'Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives', p. 169.

27 I discuss allusions to Polyxena in Prudentius's *Hymn to Agnes* in Burrus, 'Reading Agnes', pp. 25–46, and resonances between Thecla and Leukippe in Burrus, 'Mimicking Virgins', pp. 49–88.

28 Cain, 'Rethinking Jerome's Portraits of Holy Women', p. 53.

29 Brown, 'Enjoying the Saints in Late Antiquity'.

30 Harvey, *Labyrinths of Exemplarity*.

31 These are possibilities that I also explore in Burrus, 'A Saint of One's Own' and Burrus, 'Wyschogrod's Hand'.

An empress, the Constantina of the Life is at the same time a most imperious lover — a *domina* to her virgins and also an erotic *dominatrix*, in a feminine monastic context strongly shaped by pedagogical roles and relations. Perhaps we may detect in the *Life of Constantina* lingering echoes of Sappho's classroom, in which, as Henri Marrou once imagined it, 'education, like the men's, was lit up by a blaze of passion that united mistress and disciple in bonds forged by its heat'.[32] We may detect as well anticipations of a convent like that founded by the Frankish queen Radegund (520–587), who appointed as abbess 'my lady and sister Agnes, whom I had raised and educated from an early age in the place of a daughter', as she recounts (*Ep. ad episcopos*). In a verse epistle addressed to Radegund on the occasion of Agnes' birthday, the poet Venantius Fortunatus (530–607) celebrates the love of the queen for her younger friend and spiritual sister Agnes — quite likely the namesake of Constantina's own patron saint.[33] In the same letter, Fortunatus also celebrates the queen's role as monastic educator: 'teaching virginal choirs holy governance, may you distribute the riches of perpetual life!' (*Carm. ep*. 11. 3).

It is easy to imagine that Constantina's Life might have been composed and read in circles that included women like Radegund and Agnes, who would recognize in her a model of monastic patronage and leadership, as well as friendship and love nourished in a culture of teaching and learning. Yet this heroine refuses to be fixed. Subsequent literary portraits seem to take their cue from the *Passion of Gallicanus* rather than either the Life, with its innovative performances, or *On the Feast*, with its tight linking to Agnes traditions. Yet these later portraits, however novel, display affinities with both the Life and *On the Feast* nonetheless, pointing to intertextual matrices both shared and shifting. For the seventh-century poet Aldhelm (639–709), Constantina is the cherished and docile daughter of a royal father who loves her 'with a wonderful tenderness'; divine intervention saves her from marriage (*Carm. de virginitate*). For the tenth-century playwright Hrotswitha (935–1002), she is a holy virgin ready to defend her chastity fiercely against any threat. When Constantine tells her of Gallicanus's desire to marry her, she responds succinctly: 'I would rather die' (*malim mori*). She adds: 'No tortures will ever be able to force me' (*Gallicanus* 1. 2). Would-be virgin martyr, Hrotswitha's Constantina is also a romantic heroine, harkening back not only to Hellenistic romance but also to Roman comedy: Terence is this author's model. Though they have been separated on earth, Constantina assures Gallicanus that the two of them will 'proceed into eternal joy joined'. 'Fiat, fiat', he urges (1. 13). In the meantime, Gallicanus must distance himself from carnal temptation, leaving Rome for Ostia because, as he tells Constantine, 'It is not wise for me to gaze too often on the maiden whom you know to be loved by me more than my family, more than life, more than my very soul' (1. 14). For her part, Constantina remains in Rome with her 'sisters' Attica and Artemia, whose bond to her has

32 Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, p. 35.

33 Jones, 'Agnes and Constantia', p. 138.

been sealed with an *osculum amoris* — a kiss of love — demanded by the queen and offered by the supremely acquiescent girls (1. 5). In the classicizing medieval drama staged by the Saxon nun and poet, an echo of the desiring *domina* of the late ancient Life is still heard.

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