Ch. 2: The Hagiographer as Holy Fool? Fictionality in Saints' Lives[1]

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> He played all sorts of roles foolish and indecent, but language is not sufficient to paint a portrait of his doings. For sometimes he pretended to have a limp, sometimes he jumped around, sometimes he dragged himself along on his buttocks, sometimes he stuck out his foot for someone running and tripped him. Other times when there was a new moon, he looked at the sky and fell down and thrashed about. Sometimes also he pretended to babble, for he said that of all semblances, this one is most fitting and most useful to those who simulate folly for the sake of Christ. For this reason, often he reproved and restrained sins, and he sent divine wrath to someone to correct him, and he made predictions and did everything he wanted, only he changed his voice and (the position of) his limbs completely. And in all that he did, they believed that he was just like the many who babbled and prophesied because of demons.[2]

A hagiographer can be described in the most basic terms as a person who writes hagiography, as the author of a hagiographical work.[3] Even if we cannot establish his (or her)[4] historical

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[2] Πάντα δὲ διὰ σχημάτων σαλῶν καὶ ἀσχήμων ἐποίει, ἀλλ' οὐ δύναται ὁ λόγος τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων εἰκόνα ὑποδεῖξαι. ἦν γὰρ ποιῶν ἑαυτὸν ποτὲ μὲν κοξαρίζοντα, ποτὲ δὲ πηδῶντα, ποτὲ δὲ συρόμενον εἰς τὰ καθίσματα, ποτὲ δὲ βάλλοντα πόδα τινὶ τρέχοντι καὶ ῥίπτονα αὐτόν. πάλιν δὲ κατὰ τὴν τῆς σελήνης γένναν ἐποίει ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν θεωροῦντα καὶ πίπτοντα καὶ λακταρίζοντα. ἔστιν δὲ ὅτε καὶ τὸν διαλαλοῦντα προσεποιεῖτο. ἔλεγεν γὰρ πλεῖον ὅλων τῶν σχημάτων ἁρμόζειν καὶ συμβάλλεσθαι τὸ τοιοῦτον σχῆμα τοῖς προσποιουμένοις μωρίαν διὰ Χριστόν. διὰ τούτου γὰρ πολλάκις καὶ ἤλεγχεν καὶ ἀνέκοπτεν ἁμαρτίας καὶ ὀργήν τινι πρὸς διόρθωσιν ἔπεμπεν καὶ προέλεγέν τινα καὶ ὅσα ἤθελεν ἐποίει, μόνον δὲ ὅτι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φωνὴν καὶ τὰ μέλη ἐξήλλασσεν. Καὶ ὅσαπερ ἂν ἐποίει, εἶχον αὐτὸν ὥσπερ τοὺς πολλοὺς τοὺς ἐκ δαιμόνων διαλαλοῦντας καὶ προφητεύοντας. (The *Life of Symeon* 89.19–90.4, trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 159) For the *Life of Symeon*, I cite the edition by André Jean Festugière, *Léontios de Neapolis. Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1974). References to this edition will consist of the page in Festugière's volume followed by the number(s) of the line(s). All translations from the *Life of Symeon* are taken from Derek Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius' Life and the Late Antique City* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1996). For the *Life of Andrew*, I cite the edition and translation by Lennart Rydén, *The Life of St Andrew the Fool Vol. II, Text Translation and Notes*, Acta Universatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensa 4 (Uppsala: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB, 1995). References to the text or the translation will consist of the number(s) of the line(s) in Rydén's volume.

[3] Among the many various subgenres that hagiography comprises, this chapter, when speaking about 'the hagiographer', refers primarily to authors of saints' *Lives*.

[4] Although often the subject of hagiographical accounts themselves, women seldom appear to have been writers of hagiography; see Martin Hinterberg, "The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Text", in Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 1: *Genres and Contexts* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 211–46 at 215. For reasons of convenience, I will refer to the hagiographer as masculine in the rest of this chapter.

identity, every hagiographical document implies through its mere existence a hagiographer-figure who composed the text. If the composition of a hagiographical text is the task that defines the hagiographer, then it is our goal to understand this task, in all its complexities.

Scholars have shed light on different aspects of the hagiographer's task, although in general, the focus has been on the saints themselves more than on their hagiographers.[5] An important aspect that has been highlighted by Derek Krueger is the ascetic dimension of writing hagiography.[6] His study shows that late antique and early Byzantine models of authorship conceive of literary composition as a religious activity which involves the practice of humility and religious self-fashioning. Consequently, the hagiographer aligns himself with his literary subject, the saint.

In addition, Martin Hinterberg has shed further light on the literary dimension of the hagiographer and his task by pointing out that hagiographers tend to present themselves in close connection to the saint, even if this requires a serious distortion of the historical framework of the story.[7] His observations point towards a related aspect of the hagiographer's literary task that has not yet reached its full potential as an object of modern study, namely the fact that the hagiographer often writes a *fictionalised* account.[8] Indeed, it is well known that *Lives* of Saints can hardly be seen as reliable, historically accurate accounts of the conducts of a holy man.[9] Nevertheless, even if these biographies of presumed historical figures are full of invented elements,[10] their narrators generally claim to tell the truth and, as Peter Turner shows, go to great lengths to convince their audiences of the truthfulness of their writings.[11] As a result of this apparent contradiction, hagiography cannot easily be categorized according to the labels of fiction and nonfiction, inherent to a modern understanding of literature.[12] This difficulty has led

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[5] This is also noted by Hinterberg, "The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Text", 211. This chapter is useful starting point for any study on the figure of the hagiographer.

[6] Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). See also the chapter by Yuzwa in the present volume where it is suggested that the practice of rewriting and rereading of hagiography is itself salvific.

[7] Hinterberg, "The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Text", 213–14.

[8] 'Fictionalised' is used in this chapter with the meaning of 'containing fictive elements'. See below, pp. 000, for a theoretical discussion on the use of the terms fiction and fictionality.

[9] See for example Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes ,1955⁴), and Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

[10] Sometimes even the saint him-/herself is an invented character. This is the case for the *Life of Andrew*, as we will see later in this chapter. For a discussion on Leontius of Neapolis' literary creativity in writing the *Life of Symeon*, see Paul Magdalino ("What we heard in the Lives of saints we have seen with our own eyes: the holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople", in James Howard-Johnston and Paul A. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), 83–112 at 84–5), who looks at the impact of the acknowledgement of the fictionalised nature of hagiography on a study of the holy man (rather than on the hagiographer, who is the focus of this chapter).

[11] Peter Turner, *Truthfulness, Realism, Historicity: A Study of Late Antique Spiritual Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) discusses different literary techniques hagiographers employ to convince their readers of the truthfulness of their accounts. As such, he emphasizes the realistic stance of hagiography and discloses what he calls 'hagiographical realism'.

[12] In this respect, the recent chapter by Koen De Temmerman on fictionality in ancient biography is useful, since it deals with similar questions ("Ancient biography and formalities of fiction", in Koen De Temmerman and Kristoffel Demoen (eds.), *Writing Biography in Greece and Rome: Narrative Technique and Fictionalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3–25).

scholars who focus on the question of historical accuracy and treat the *Acts* of Martyrs and the *Lives* of Saints as historical sources to discard many hagiographical texts due to their 'legendary' character.[13] And even if hagiography has now become the object of literary investigation,[14] which embraces rather than dismisses its fictionalised character, only very recently have scholars started to pay particular attention to the fictionality of hagiography as an object of investigation in itself, trying to voice and resolve the theoretical difficulties that are tied up with it.[15]

How can we, as a modern audience, understand the hagiographer and his puzzling task of writing hagiography, which involves practising at once holiness and fictionalisation? As its title suggests, in this chapter I would like to make a comparison between the hagiographer (meant as a generic concept rather than a concrete individual)[16] and a particular type of saint, the holy fool. This comparison is inspired by Stavroula Constantinou's reference to 'masked authors' in her chapter on the holy fool and the cross-dresser as 'actors' and 'actresses'.[17] I believe there is some mileage in pursuing the analogy between the masked fool and the author of hagiography further, since, perhaps not by their concrete actions, but rather by the intended results of those actions, the hagiographer and the fool are not entirely dissimilar to one another. In other words, an understanding of the character of the holy fool can help a modern audience to acquire a better understanding of the hagiographer's task and his relation with his readership,

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[13] Exemplary are the studies by René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1953), and Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1966), as well as Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), which contains editions of only 28 texts out of hundreds of possible candidates, based on criteria of historicity.

[14] Already in the 1980s, Alison G. Elliott devoted careful attention to the narrative construction of late antique saints' *Lives* in her *Roads to Paradise*, *Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (London: University Press of New England 1987). More and more scholars have picked up a literary approach to hagiography ever since, studying these texts as creative pieces of literature, the need for which has been voiced eloquently by Lennart Rydén in his chapter on "Literariness in Byzantine Saints' Lives", in Paolo Odorico and Panagiotis A. Agapitos (eds.), *Les Vies des saints à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique? Actes du IIe colloque international philologique 'EPMHNEIA'* (Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, EHESS, 2004), 49–58.

[15] Turner, *Truthfulness, Realism, Historicity* made an important contribution in this respect: even though his study approaches the problem of fictionality from the opposite direction, namely as a problem of historicity, his examination of what truthfulness and realism actually meant in a late antique Christian context is revealing for the dynamics on a literary level. A recent chapter by Charis Messis on the phenomenon of 'novelisation' in hagiography also constitutes a step towards a better understanding of the problem of its fictionality: "Fiction and/or Novelisation in Byzantine Hagiography", in Efthymiadis (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion,* vol. 2, 313–42. Finally, it is worth mentioning the volume edited by Panagiotis Roilos, *Medieval Greek Storytelling: Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), which also includes discussions of late antique hagiographical material.

[16] It should be clear by now that the 'hagiographer' with which this chapter is concerned, does not coincide with the extra-textual, historical author. Nor does he fully coincide with the primary narrator, as this depends on the particular narrative situation which differs from text to text. Rather, I use 'hagiographer' as an overarching term to refer to what can be called the 'implied author' (Wolf Schmid, "Implied Author", in Jan C. Meister (ed.), *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (Hamburg: Hamburg University 2013), Website http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Implied_Author, last accessed 07/05/2018). On the complex constellation of the historical author, implied author and primary narrator in Byzantine hagiography, see Lennart Rydén, "Fiction and Reality in the Hagiographer's Self-presentation", *TM* 14 (2002), 547–52, and Martin Hinterberg, "The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Text", 212–15 (and esp. note 5).

[17] Stavroula Constantinou, "Holy Actors and Actresses: Fools and Cross-Dressers as the Protagonists of Saints' Lives", in Efthymiadis, *Ashgate Research Companion*, vol. 2, 343–62 at 356–57.

at least with regard to one particular dimension, namely the paradoxical meeting point of fictionality and truth.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The term 'holy fool' or 'σαλὸς διὰ Χριστόν' ('fool for Christ's sake') refers to a particular type of saint and a specific literary character type in Byzantine hagiography that remained popular from its early stages until the current day.[18] The most famous ones are probably Symeon Salos and Andrew Salos, but their stories are part of a broad religious and literary tradition of holy folly in late antiquity and beyond.[19] Vincent Déroche disentangled the history of the figure of the *salos* as the simultaneous development of two types: the active and the passive *salos*.[20] While the passive *salos* lives quietly in a monastic community and pretends to be mad as a means of reaching the virtuous state of *apatheia* ('insensibility') while avoiding worldly praise of his/her fellow monks,[21] the active *salos* usually obtains *apatheia* while living a solitary life in the desert, and then returns to the world to mock it. The goal of his feigned madness is not just to mask his own virtue, but to act on his urban environment and to save souls.[22]

My comparison between the hagiographer and the holy fool is concerned with the second type, the active *salos*. Symeon of Emesa is the prime example of this type of holy folly, but apart from his *Life*, written by Leontius of Neapolis in the seventh century (BHG 1677), two other texts deal with a holy fool of his kind: the *Life of Paul the Corinthian* (BHG 2362) and the *Life of Andrew Salos* (BHG 115z), written by a certain Nikephoros, most likely in the tenth century.[23] Since the *Life of Paul* has not been transmitted in full,[24] this chapter will focus on the *Lives* of Symeon and Andrew.

Both Symeon and Andrew spend a lifetime pretending to be mad; while hiding their true identities as holy men and displaying subversive behaviour, they edify the people of the city. They eat insatiably, deal with base women, pretend to be drunk, walk around naked and relieve

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[18] Constantinou, "Holy Actors", 343–45.

[19] Lennart Rydén provides a nice overview of the type of the holy fool in Greek hagiography: "The Holy Fool", in S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (London: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981), 106–13. Krueger traces the shared context of stories of holy folly and concealed sanctity in Late Antique and Early Byzantine culture (*Symeon the Holy Fool*, ch. 4).

[20] This distinction corresponds to the geographical opposition between Syria and Egypt and the religious opposition between eremitism and coenobitism; see Vincent Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensa 3 (Uppsala: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB, 1995), 177. On this distinction, see also José Grosdidier de Matons, "Les thèmes d'édification dans la vie d'André Salos", *TM* 4 (1970), 277–328.

[21] A famous example is the anonymous nun in Palladius' *Lausiac History* (34, 1).

[22] Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, 176: 'La différence avec le type précédent tient à l'utilisation de la folie feinte : au lieu d'être un simple moyen de masquer sa vertu et de progresser dans l'humiliation, la folie provocante peut aussi être un moyen d'agir sur le monde et de sauver des âmes.'

[23] The author presents himself as Nikephoros in the epilogue of his text. However, the historical identity of the author is not certain. On the author of the *Life of Andrew*, see Lennart Rydén, *The Life of St Andrew the Fool Vol. I, Introduction, Testimonies and Nachleben*, Acta Universatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensa 4 (Uppsala: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB, 1995), 57. On the date of the *Life*, see Lennart Rydén, "Date of the 'Life of Andreas Salos'", *DOP* 32 (1978), 127–55.

[24] On the *Life of Paul* and its textual tradition, see Sergei Ivanov, "St Paul the Corinthian, Holy Fool", in E. Kountoura-Galake (ed.), *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church. The New Saints, 8th–16th C.* (Athens: Institute for Byzantine Research, 2004), 39–46.

themselves publicly, but they also perform miracles. More importantly, their narratives address questions concerning truth, falsehood, belief and deception. On the one hand, the image of holy folly can serve as a metaphor for the task of the hagiographer in general: just like the holy fool edifies the people in the city by putting on a theatrical show, the hagiographer conveys a religious truth by writing a fictionalised narrative. On the other hand, the *Lives* of Symeon and Andrew may serve as concrete case studies for exploring this particular metaphorical connection. As we will see, the paradox that is involved in writing the story of a holy fool (how was the hagiographer able to write the story of a *secret* saint?), forces the hagiographer into employing all kinds of strategies to ensure his authority, aligning him with his saintly subject in unexpected ways.[25]

I would like to emphasize that holy folly as a metaphor for the hagiographer's task does not derive from contemporary evidence: in other words, I do not claim that Byzantines saw hagiographers as holy fools. The value of comparing the two lies in the fact that it allows to circumvent the modern bias of a rigid distinction between fiction and nonfiction when thinking about the problem of fictionality in saints' *Lives*; it allows us to imagine it in a narrative language belonging to the hagiographical realm itself. At the same time, as modern readers, we can never entirely shake off these categories and the mental concepts they are tied up with. In fact, it will be helpful to attempt to define what scholars understand nowadays by 'fiction' and 'nonfiction', before venturing into the world of hagiography.

The past decades have produced an abundance of literature on theory of fiction, in which different approaches have generated different definitions of the notions of fiction, nonfiction, and their relation to other theoretical concepts such as fictionality, fictiveness and fictionalisation.[26] However, bearing in mind the difficulties of applying the modern framework of fiction and nonfiction to hagiography, I would like to focus on those ideas that are best suited to be transferred to the world of ancient, late-antique and early medieval literature because they allow a broad understanding of these concepts. In this respect, Marie-Laure Ryan's 1997 article 'Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality' is extremely useful, where she defines fiction and nonfiction in terms of a specific set of game rules.[27]

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[25] I cautiously hypothesise that what will be argued for the *Lives* of Symeon and Andrew and their hagiographers holds general significance for the writing of saints' *Lives* and applies to 'the hagiographer' in the broader sense. To fully support this claim, I would like to extend this study by testing the validity of the analogy on a larger corpus of *Lives* in a later stage of research.

[26] Most influential are speech act theory (John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975²), and John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969)), fictional worlds theory (Thomas Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), and Marie-Laure Ryan, "Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory", *Style* 26.4 (1992), 528–54), fiction as make-believe (Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990²)) and fiction(ality) as rhetoric (Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983²), and Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality. Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007)).

[27] Four years earlier, John Morgan already talked about fiction in terms of game rules in his contribution on the fictionality of the ancient Greek novel: "Make-Believe and Make Believe: The Fictionality of the Greek Novels", in Christopher Gill and Timothy P. Wiseman (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), 175–229 at 186, 194 and 210. Although he does not pursue an actual theory of fiction based on the notion of game rules, he shows that the idea is suitable to be applied to pre-modern literature. The idea of fiction as a game goes back to Walton's famous study, *Mimesis as Make-believe*.

According to Ryan, the rules of nonfiction 'specify that the text is to be evaluated in terms of truth'.[28] As a result, the text enters into a polemical relation with other representations that share the same frame of reference, which is the real world in which we live.[29] By contrast, the rules of fiction specify that the text 'makes no claim to external truth but rather guarantees its own truth'.[30] This truth is called the 'fictional truth'; it is only truth within the unique fictional world generated by the text, that functions as its frame of reference.[31] This unique fictional world of reference can, to a certain degree, present overlap with the real world in which we live. Thus, reading fiction is 'a form of double-think, a game of truth … in which the ordinary rules of truth and falsehood are both simulated and suspended'.[32]

Defining fiction and nonfiction as a set of game rules has advantages. For instance, it acknowledges that fiction and nonfiction are not ontological categories; that a novel, for example, is not inherently fictional, but is *regarded* as such and read as such, because both author and reader approach it according to the same game rules (i.e. those of fiction, described above).[33] However, this means also that it is perfectly possible that one person would place a certain book in the nonfiction-section of a library, while another person would place the same book in the fiction-section. The problem with hagiography is precisely that we do not know on what shelf the *Life of Symeon*, for instance, belonged.

Finally, an important distinction, one that I would like to adopt, has been made by scholars who have pointed out that the term 'fiction' can in fact be employed to refer to two different things: that which is 'fictitious' or 'fictive' (i.e. which is not true, a lie), and that which is 'fictional' (i.e. which, in line with Ryan's definition of fiction, is not susceptible to truth-judgment, such as a modern novel).[34] The former use of 'fiction' is the one at work in studies like those by Hippolyte Delehaye and Timothy Barnes,[35] who are concerned with finding out to what extent a hagiography is historically reliable. However, if hagiographies are to a certain extent 'fictions' in the sense of 'not historically accurate' (i.e. the first meaning of fiction described above), but at the same time engage in claims of truthfulness, and if we take these claims seriously (as Turner suggests we should),[36] then they are not to be straightforwardly

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[28] Marie-Laure Ryan, "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", *Narrative* 5.2 (1997), 165–87 at 166.

[29] On theory of frames of reference, see also Benjamin Harshaw, "Fictionality and Fields of Reference. Remarks on a Theoretical Framework", *Poetics Today* 5.2 (1984), 227–51.

[30] Ryan, "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", 167.

[31] Cf. Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 13: 'A work of fiction itself creates the world to which it refers by referring to it.'

[32] Michael Wood, "Prologue", in Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction*, xiii–xviii at xvi.

[33] The idea that the fictional status of a text relies on a mutual awareness of both author and reader that what is written is outside of truth-judgment is expressed by many critics. Examples are Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 36; Morgan, "Make-Believe", 180; and Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture. A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 17. The same idea is evoked by the concept of fiction as a communicative contract between author and (implied) reader, put forward, among others, by Stein Haugom Olsen and Peter Lamarque, *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996²).

[34] On this distinction see Calin Andrei Mihailescu and Walid Hamarneh, "Introduction: Under the Jealous Gaze of Truth", in iid. (eds.), *Fiction Updated. Theories of Fictionality, Narratology and Poetics* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 3–18 at 8; Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, 3; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction ?* (Paris: Seuil, 1999); and De Temmerman, "Ancient biography and formalities of fiction", 5.

[35] Cf. note 9.

[36] Turner, *Truthfulness*, 43.

identified with 'fiction' in the second sense of the term. As a result, we must distinguish 'fiction' from 'fictionality'.[37] Fictionality refers to the result of the hagiographer's deliberate shaping of the narrative according to criteria other than historicity, his literary fashioning. The point is that this does not automatically turn the narrative into literary 'fiction' as defined by Ryan; it does not necessarily place it outside of truth-judgment.

The rest of this chapter will further tease out the analogy between the holy fool and the hagiographer. First, using the metaphor of the fool's mask, I look at the way the hagiographer presents himself (with a particular focus on the more covert strategies of authorisation which hagiographers could employ in addition to explicit truth claims). Second, I examine how the fool's/hagiographer's self-presentation reflects upon the expected relation with his audience. Comparing the performance of the fool in the city with the literary performance of the hagiographer will hopefully help to make sense of the 'contract' between the hagiographer and his readership that is promoted by his text, of the rules that are governed by its game.

THE MASK OF THE HOLY FOOL/HAGIOGRAPHER

> And wanting him to refresh his body, John said to him playfully, "Come take a bath, Fool!" And Symeon said to him, laughing, "Yes, let's go, let's go!" And with these words, he stripped off his garment and placed it on his head, wrapping it around like a turban. And Deacon John said to him, "Put it back on, brother, for truly if you are going to walk around naked, I won't go with you." Abba Symeon said to him, "Go away, idiot, I'm all ready. If you won't come, see, I'll go a little ahead of you." And leaving him, he kept a little ahead.[38]

As is illustrated in this passage, during his act of pretended folly Symeon makes sure to dress in the appropriate costume (or should we say 'undress'?). Stavroula Constantinou discusses 'the mask of the holy fool', behind which he hides his true identity.[39] The mask or the disguise of the holy man consists of few clothes: it is his nakedness in particular which marks his position of fool.[40] Constantinou points out that the mask of the saint is more than just a means to hide his identity: 'costume serves a twofold function: it directs the wearer's actions, and it generates a specific set of expectations.'[41] Thus, the nakedness of the saint is part of his public spectacle and contributes to the construction of his reputation as a madman. Besides the mask of nudity,

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[37] Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Henrik Skov Nielsen defend this view in a forthcoming chapter in the *Narratologia*-series entitled "Distinguishing Fictionality" (2018).

[38] ... βουληθεὶς ὡς ἐν τάξει παιγνίδιου ἀνακτήσασθαι αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα λέγει αὐτῷ· "ἔρχη λούη, Σαλέ;" λέγει αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνος γελῶν· "ναί, ἄγωμεν ἄγωμεν" καὶ σὺν τῷ λόγῳ ἀποδύεται τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπιτίθει αὐτὸ εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ δήσας αὐτὸ εἰς αὐτὴν ὡς φακιόλιν. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ κύρις Ἰωάννης· "φόρεσον, ἀδελφέ, ἐπεὶ ὄντως ἐὰν γυμνὸς περιπατεῖς, ἐγὼ μετὰ σοῦ οὐκ ἔρχομαι". λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀββᾶς Συμεών· "ὕπαγε, ἔξηχε, ἐγὼ ἔργον πρὸ ἔργου ἐποίησα. εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἔρχη, ἴδε ἐγὼ προλαμβάνω σε μικρόν." καὶ ἀφεὶς αὐτὸν προεποίησεν ὀλίγον. (*Life of Symeon* 82.24–83.3, trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool,* 153–54)

[39] Constantinou, "Holy Actors", 348–52.

[40] Symeon appears naked in lines 82.27 (cf. the passage quoted above) and 90.18–19. Andrew appears to walk around nearly naked the whole time due to extreme poverty, as becomes clear from the passage about the severe winter storm (lines 422–42). His nakedness is explicitly mentioned in lines 86, 276, 332, 1039 and 1452.

[41] Constantinou, "Holy Actors", 349.

Symeon adopts other costumes as well. When entering the city of Emesa, he binds the corpse of a dead dog to his belt and drags it along.[42] Apart from the symbolic significance of the deed,[43] this very first act of foolishness turns out to be extremely effective in portraying an image and creating a first impression: once the schoolchildren see him running around like this, they immediately start calling him a 'crazy abba'.[44] Thus, the so-called 'mask of foolishness'[45] that is adopted by the holy fool turns out to be a theatrical costume, crucial to the success of his performance in the city.

The hagiographer, like the holy fool, also hides behind a mask in his writing in order to provoke a specific set of expectations in his audience. As Constantinou observes, often 'hagiographers hide their real identities and intentions behind their fictitious protagonists and their own pen names (Nikephoros, Eulogia) or anonymity'.[46] However, hagiographers found other ways to mask themselves as well, I would add. As Lennart Rydén notes, saints' *Lives* are generally characterized by a complex relation between the historical author, implied author, primary narrator and protagonist, resulting in 'several degrees of visibility' in which the hagiographer can appear.[47] In the *Lives* of the fools, we find examples of various techniques employed to complicate this constellation of narrative voices, resulting either in a higher or a lower degree of visibility of the hagiographer. However, as we shall see, in both cases, these techniques aim at masking the hagiographer's deliberate shaping of the narrative and are intended to authorize his narration.

A well-established way of disguising authorship among hagiographers is to present the *Life* of a saint as an eyewitness report, a technique that has been identified by Hippolyte Delehaye as 'la fiction littéraire du témoin bien informé'.[48] Often, the 'well informed witness' is presented as one of the characters of the story. This happens in the *Life of Symeon Salos*, where Leontius claims to have heard the story from John the Deacon, who is presented as a close friend of Symeon and a reliable source. When Leontius has narrated the beginning of Symeon's story, he suddenly comments:

> All this Symeon narrated in Emesa, where he pretended to be a fool, to a
> certain deacon of the holy cathedral church of the same city of Emesa, an
> excellent and virtuous man, who, by the divine grace which had come to
> him, understood the monk's work, and it was on his behalf that this most
> blessed Symeon performed a wonderful marvel, which we shall recall in

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[42] *Life of Symeon* 79.19–25.

[43] The dragging of the dead dog has been interpreted as a symbolic act by Constantinou, "Holy Actors", 351, and others, e.g. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 90 on its link with the Cynic tradition and Vincent Déroche, *Syméon Salos, le fou en Christ* (Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 2000), 59–60.

[44] ἀββᾶς μωρός (*Life of Symeon* 79.24–5). The very first act of foolishness performed by Andrew, which also has the desired effect of constituting his false identity of fool, consists of ripping up his clothes. Again the symbolic function of the act (referring to the naked state of the fool for Christ's sake in this case) coexists with its immediate effectiveness.

[45] For the 'Maske der Verrücktheit', see Ernst Benz, "Heilige Narrheit", *Kyrios* 3 (1938), 1–55, Walter Nigg, *Der christliche Narr* (Stuttgart: Artemis-Verlag, 1956), and Peter Hauptmann, "Die 'Narren um Christi Willen' in der Ostkirche", *Kirche im Osten* 2 (1959), 27–49.

[46] Constantinou, "Holy Actors", 356.

[47] Rydén, "Fiction and Reality", 547. See also my note 16.

[48] Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 182.

its proper place. This aforementioned John, beloved of God, a virtuous deacon, narrated for us almost the entire life of that most wise one, calling on the Lord as witness to his story, that he had written nothing to add to the narrative, but rather that since that time he had forgotten most things.[49]

From now on the story is presented to the reader through the filter of John's trustworthy testimony (as indicated by φησίν ('so he said') appearing on the next line). Thus, while the first half of the *Life*, which takes place in the desert in the absence of John the Deacon, is accounted for by the assuring words that 'all this Symeon narrated [to him] in Emesa', the second half, set in Emesa, is accounted for by the fact that John was present himself to witness everything from close by. Moreover, since John is the only one living in the city who is aware of Symeon's real identity and of his holiness from the beginning, he is the ideal source for the hagiographer's information on the secret saint.[50]

It has often been assumed that Leontius' claim to John's testimony is no more than a literary construction, as it would be highly unlikely that Leontius (who lived in the seventh century) met a contemporary of Symeon (who lived in the sixth).[51] Krueger, on the other hand, argues that there is no reason to assume that Leontius did not intend to convey the idea that he used a written source by John the Deacon, rather than an oral account.[52] Either way, the point is that Leontius skilfully validates his claims concerning the reliability of his sources through the way in which he works them into his narrative.[53] In the passage quoted above, mentioning the fact that John admits to his own forgetfulness bolsters his image as a reliable source, as it shows him to be self-aware about his own fallibility and, consequently, that he can be trusted on what he transmits. A later passage confirms once again that Symeon 'told him [John] his whole life'.[54] The scene evokes a situation in which John can ask the saint all kinds of questions and thereby has access to a first-hand account of the saint's personal experiences, once again representing him as a reliable source. By presenting the narrative as coming from John, who

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[49] Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα ἐξηγήσατο ὁ ἐνάρετος Συμεών τινι ἐν Ἐμέσῃ, ἔνθα καὶ τὸν σαλὸν προσεποιήσατο, διακόνῳ τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς αὐτῆς Ἐμεσηνῶν πόλεως, ἀνδρὶ θαυμαστῷ καὶ ἐναρέτῳ, ὃς καὶ ἐκ τῆς προσούσης αὐτῷ θείας χάριτος ἐνόησεν τὴν ἐργασίαν τοῦ γέροντος, εἰς ὃν καὶ θαῦμα φοβερὸν ἐποίησεν οὗτος ὁ μακάριος Συμεών, οὕτινος θαύματος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τόπῳ μνημονεύσομεν. ὁ εἰρημένος οὖν θεοφιλὴς Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἐνάρετος διάκονος, αὐτὸς ἡμῖν τὸν ἅπαντα βίον σχεδὸν τοῦ πανσόφου διηγήσατο, τόν κύριον προβαλλόμενος τῶν λεγομένων μάρτυρα, ὡς ὅτι οὐδὲν κατὰ προσθήκην ἐπέγραψεν τῷ διηγήματι ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον καὶ τὰ πλεῖστα ἐκ τοῦ χρόνου ἐπελάθετο. (*Life of Symeon* 59.16–24, trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 135)

[50] In addition to the John the Deacon, other characters are presented as sources for Symeon's sanctity as well in order to deal with the paradox of writing the life of a secret saint: whenever a character witnesses a miracle (s)he is forced to keep it silent (see below when 'the audience of the holy fool/hagiographer' is discussed), a motif that goes back to the gospel of Mark. However, the texts always specifies that the silence must be kept as long as the saint is alive, but that after his death, the character in question proclaims the story openly (e.g. *Life of Symeon* 98.13 and 102.27–9).

[51] See for example Festugière, *Léontios de Neapolis*, 14.

[52] Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 23–4.

[53] On how Leontius manipulates the chronology of Symeon's life to fit the proposed picture, see also Lennart Rydén, "Introduzione", in P. Cesaretti (ed.), *Leonzio di Neapoli. Niceforo prete di Santa Sofia. Vite dei Saloi Simeone e Andrea (BHG 1677, 115z). Premessa di Augusta Acconcia Longo. Introduzione di Lennart Rydén*, Testi e studi bizantino-neoellenici, 19 (Roma: Dipartimento di scienze dell'antichità "Sapienza", 2014), 33–54 at 40–1.

[54] ὅτε ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἐξεῖπεν αὐτῷ (The *Life of Symeon* 83.10, trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 154).

heard it from Symeon himself, the hagiographer not only establishes a direct connection with the saint, imbuing his own persona with authority, but also succeeds in layering on top of his own authorship two trustworthy narrative voices, which makes his own deliberate fashioning of the narrative move quietly to the background.

Another option, which can be perceived in the *Life of Andrew Salos*, is that the hagiographer presents *himself* as the 'well informed witness', thus promoting himself to the forefront instead of lingering in the background of the narrative.[55] In the *Life of Andrew*, now and then the hagiographer steps onto the stage as a character in the story, thus creating the illusion that he was a close friend of the saint and witnessed everything he tells us from close by. Since it has been argued convincingly that the *Life of Andrew* was written in the tenth century, while the saint, according to the text, supposedly lived in the fifth or the sixth century, the author's claim that he himself was present at that time can certainly be revealed as a literary construction.[56] In fact, Andrew himself must be an invented character.[57]

The first time the hagiographer appears as a character is in lines 89–95, right after the detailed description of a dream of the saint in which he sees himself battling a demon.

> In the morning he came to me, unworthy though I am, telling me in confidence what he had seen. As I listened I was amazed, for a fragrance as from a very costly ointment issued invisibly from him. Having jointly considered the matter we decided that he should expose himself to public ridicule in the guise of one possessed by a demon and mad for the sake of him who said, "Be a fool for my sake and you will enjoy many good things in my kingdom." For otherwise he could not escape from his earthly master.[58]

In order to understand the appearance of the first person in this passage we must look at what precedes. The *Life of Andrew* starts out in a way not uncommon for a hagiographical text; after the prologue, in which the hagiographer speaks in the first person, presenting his story ('I want to describe to you…'[59]) and imploring the audience to pay attention, the actual story begins in

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[55] As Rydén points out (*Life of St Andrew*, vol. 1, 28), the narrative situation of the *Life of Andrew* becomes even more complex when a second figure who functions as 'témoin bien informé' is introduced: Epiphanios, the young disciple of the saint. Thus, in the epilogue the hagiographer can claim authority twice over, saying that he wrote in his book 'partly what I have seen with my own eyes, partly what I have learnt from the renowned Epiphanios who became bishop here' (*Life of Andrew* 4396–7: ἃ μὲν καὶ οἰκείοις ὀφθαλμοῖς ἑώρακα, ἃ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ἀοιδίμου Ἐπιφανίου τοῦ γεγονότος ἐνθάδε ἀρχιερέως μεμάθηκα).

[56] On the date of the *Life of Andrew*, see Rydén, "Date of the 'Life of Andreas Salos'", and on its 'chronological fiction', see Rydén, *Life of St Andrew*, vol. 1, 38.

[57] Rydén, *Life of St Andrew*, vol. 1, 143. There is a long tradition of pseudepigraphy in (Judaeo-) Christian writings. I thank James Corke-Webster for this observation.

[58] Πρωΐας δὲ γενομένης ἔρχεται πρός με τὸν ἀνάξιον καὶ θαρρεῖ μοι τὴν ὅρασιν. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἀκούσας ἐξέστην· εὐωδία γὰρ ἐξήρχετο ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀοράτως ὥσπερ μύρου πολυτίμου. Σκεψάμενοι δὲ ἀμφότεροι ἐκρίναμεν τοῦ παραδειγματίσαι ἑαυτὸν εἰς τάξιν δαιμονῶντος καὶ μαινομένου διὰ τὸν εἰπόντα· "Γίνου σαλὸς δι' ἐμὲ καὶ πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀπολαύσεις ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου." Ἄλλως γὰρ ἀποδρᾶσαι τοῦ σωματικοῦ αὐτοῦ δεσπότου οὐκ ἠδύνατο.

[59] βούλομαι ὑμῖν διηγήσασθαι (*Life of Andrew* 4).

what appears to be a third-person narration by an omniscient narrator.[60] However, in the passage quoted above, the hagiographer suddenly speaks in the first person again, this time representing himself as a character in the story next to the saint. After this passage, the third-person perspective appears to be resumed when the hagiographer picks up again his role as an omniscient narrator.[61] Such sudden intrusions of the hagiographer in the story are found a couple of times hereafter and they do not occur randomly. The passage quoted above explains how the hagiographer was able to narrate the saint's dream (a private experience that would normally not be accessible to him): it was the saint who told him in detail what he had seen. Other occasions when the hagiographer suddenly enters the stage of the narrative are also related to the narration of dreams and visions or to the narration of miraculous events (namely lines 408–21, where the hagiographer, while secretly observing Andrew, witnesses the saint levitating, lines 429–740, which include a long account by Andrew in which he narrates his experience of rising up to paradise during a severe winter storm, and lines 1786–90, where Epiphanios, Andrew's disciple, goes to the hagiographer after having a divine dream and tells him about it).[62] It seems, then, that the hagiographer appears as a first-person narrator in those moments when his narrative authority is questionable due to the fact that the event he is telling is either heuristically problematic or challenges the conventions of plausibility (by defying basic human capacities for instance).[63] This relates to Turner's observation regarding the use of explicit truth claims in hagiography: 'precisely because their details are challenging, miracles are often an occasion to remind readers of the hagiographer's factual integrity.'[64] Here, the hagiographer's efforts to write himself into the story on precisely those occasions presents a more covert strategy of satisfying the same literary needs.

Whereas in the previous examples from the *Life of Andrew* the sudden switch to first person narration highlights the hagiographer's position, the same narrative technique can also be used to do the opposite, that is, to conceal the hagiographer's role from the reader's view. This effect is created when the narration suddenly switches to a first person which is not to be

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[60] This typical mode of narration, found in many medieval hagiographical narratives, is described by Eva von Contzen, *The Scottish Legendary: Towards a Poetics of Hagiographic Narration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 61.

[61] This is clear, for instance, in lines 101–2: 'The cook woke up and, thinking day was dawning, went out to draw water.' (Ἔξυπνος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ μάγειρος καὶ νομίσας ὅτι πρὸς ἡμέραν ἐστὶν ἐξῆλθε τοῦ ἀντλῆσαι ὕδωρ.)

[62] Apart from the four passages mentioned already, there is one other moment in which the hagiographer acts as a character in the story in the *Life of Andrew*, and where he firmly secures his role as 'témoin bien informé' by creating an intertextual parallel between himself and John the Deacon in the *Life of Symeon*. At line 224, reference is made to Symeon. Next, the hagiographer describes a situation which is reminiscent of a passage in the *Life of Symeon* (94.19–24) and clearly must be read in light of that reference: 'In the evening he came to me, unworthy though I am, as I lay sleeping alone in my room. … He gave me a coherent account of everything with meekness, for only to me, O most faithful brothers, did he speak plainly and without dissimulation; to all others he feigned a deranged state of mind.' (*Life of Andrew* 225–31: Ἑσπέρας δὲ γενομένης ἔρχεται πρός με τὸν ἀνάξιον, ἐμοῦ μόνου ἔνδον τοῦ οἰκήματος καθεύδοντος, καὶ ὑπομειδιάσας μικρὸν ἤρξατο δάκρυσι τὸ τίμιον αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον καταβρέχειν. Προσπλακέντες δὲ ἐπὶ πολλὴν ὥραν καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι ἀλλήλους ἐκαθέσθημεν. Ἐπηρώτησα οὖν αὐτὸν πῶς ἐν δεσμοῖς ὢν ἀπελύθη. Ὁ δὲ καθεξῆς διηγήσατό μοι πάντα μετὰ πραότητος· ἐμοὶ γὰρ μόνῳ, ἀδελφοί μου πιστότατοι, ὡμίλει ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀδόλως, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς φρενήρει διαθέσει.) As Rydén notes, 'similarly, Symeon the Fool is said to have talked in an orderly manner only to his friend the deacon John' (*Life of St Andrew, vol. 2*, 307).

[63] The narration of events which raise questions concerning the hagiographer's knowledge of them due to their hidden nature is also discussed by Staat in her chapter in the present volume.

[64] Turner, *Truthfulness*, 27.

identified with the hagiographer, but with one of the other characters. In the *Life of Symeon* this technique is used when the experiences of one of the citizens are related, and another time when those of John the Deacon are told.[65] In both cases, the character in question, while normally being referred to in the third person, suddenly becomes a speaking 'I', a first-person narrator at the primary level of narration.[66] The reader is left with the impression that (s)he is listening directly to the personal testimony of that character, without the hagiographer's mediation intervening. The same happens in the *Life of Andrew*, first at lines 208–16, during the narration of one of Andrew's dreams, and again at line 1734, where it is Epiphanios' perspective that is taken when his divine vision is narrated. Here, the sudden switch from the third person to the first person does not aim at promoting the *hagiographer* to the forefront, as is the case elsewhere in this *Life*, but serves on the contrary to make him disappear in the background by promoting one of the other characters instead. The ultimate effect of both strategies is however essentially the same, and indeed, they are used within the same rather 'problematic' narrative context: the narration of a divine dream.

The hagiographer can use different strategies to mask his deliberate shaping of the narrative; he can either construct for himself a prominent position at the forefront of the narrative action by taking up the position of well-informed witness (*Life of Andrew*), or he can hide behind other reliable narrative voices by presenting other characters as 'témoin bien informé' or letting them step in as primary narrators, directly addressing his readership (*Life of Symeon* and *Life of Andrew*). Thus the mask of the hagiographer can work in two directions, focusing the reader's attention on what is a constructed façade, or directing attention away from what is actually hidden behind it.[67] The *Life of Andrew* proves that both can be present in one and the same text. Like the mask of the fool, the hagiographer's disguised self-presentation helps to direct the audience's expectations. It eases the reader into taking seriously his explicit claims of truthfulness and historicity, often found in prologues and epilogues of hagiographical narratives, just like the holy fool's nudity paves the way for the citizens to regard him as a *salos*. Thus, paradoxically, the hagiographer's literary fashioning and fictionality lead to self-authorisation. It is true that the need to portray reliability resonates with the idea that fictional narrative must to some extent deny its own fictionality in order to work as fiction (what Ryan calls 'the paradox of fiction').[68] Otherwise, it would be hard for the reader to commit to the fictional game of 'make-believe'. From this perspective, it is not surprising that the hagiographer presents his narrative as a true story, even when it is not. However, the mask the hagiographer puts on betrays a deeper need for authentication and supports the idea that the game rules of hagiography are different from those of what we call fiction today: while, according to the rules of the latter, the fictional truth that is communicated needs no validation outside of its attribution to the implied author's design, the hagiographer apparently needs to

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[65] *Life of Symeon* 93.13–15 and 94.12–13 and 23–4.

[66] The hagiographer could have announced the direct speech of the character, using a phrase such as 'he said,' in which case in would have been clear that these words belong to a second, embedded level of narration. Since such an announcement is missing, the character appears to speak directly to us, at the primary level of narration.

[67] The two directions of the hagiographer's mask described here can be related to the two modes of making the saint present that Claudia Rapp introduces and explores in a recent article: "Author, Audience, Text and Saint: Two Modes of Early Byzantine Hagiography", *SJBMGS* 1 (2015), 111–29.

[68] Ryan, "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", 168. See also Morgan, "Make-Believe", who discusses 'strategies of realism' in the ancient novel.

perform a certain role and portray a certain character in order to earn the trust of his audience. This leads us to the next section of this chapter, which considers the (ambiguous) position of the reader and the question of belief.

THE AUDIENCE OF THE HOLY FOOL/HAGIOGRAPHER

> One of them started a discussion, saying, "Brothers, curse upon Satan! How could this fool predict what happened to us?" One of the others answered, "You fool, do you not know that what the demon intends to do he tells his companion? No doubt it was the demon living with him that did this to us because we mocked him." The first said, "Not at all! In my opinion God punished us because we beat him pitilessly." The other replied again, "You fool, do you think God cares about a madman? God gave him a demon and we beat him for fun, there is nothing strange about that. Had he been a saint you would have convinced me that we were punished by God, but since he is mad God does not care." Discussing this and other matters of concern to the young they went away.[69]

If the city is the theatre in which the holy fool performs, then the people in the city are his audience. Often, the citizens that appear in the story do not have a name (though sometimes their profession is mentioned), an indication that they are the representatives of an abstract category of people. The people in the audience, the inhabitants of the city, generally do not realise they are watching a performance, or do they?

In any case, the holy fool does everything he can to make his audience believe in his act. Apart from wearing the appropriate costume, which I discussed above, 'it was the saint's practice, whenever he did something miraculous, to leave that neighbourhood immediately, until the deed which he had done was forgotten. He hurried on immediately elsewhere to do something inappropriate, so that he might thereby hide his perfection'.[70] His goal is to save

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[69] Εἷς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν λόγον κινήσας ἔφη· "Καταργηθῇ ὁ σατανᾶς, ἀδελφοί, πῶς τοῦτο ἡμῖν ὁ σαλὸς ἐκεῖνος προεφθέγξατο;" Λέγει ὁ ἔτερος· "Ἔξηχε, οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι ὃ βούλεται ὁ δαίμων ποιῆσαι, τῷ συμπράκτορι αὐτοῦ λέγει; Τάχα γὰρ ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐνεπαίξαμεν αὐτὸν ὁ συμπεριφερόμενος αὐτῷ δαίμων ἐποίησεν ἡμῖν ταῦτα." Ἔφη ὁ ἔτερος· "Οὐχί, μὴ γένοιτο, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰκάζω, ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐτύψαμεν αὐτὸν ἀνηλεῶς, διὰ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν." Λέγει πάλιν ὁ ἔτερος· "Ναί, ἔξηχε, μέλει τῷ θεῷ περὶ σαλοῦ; Ἐκεῖνος γὰρ δαίμονα αὐτῷ δέδωκε καὶ ἡμεῖς παιγνίως αὐτὸν ἐτύψαμεν, καὶ οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν. Εἰ γὰρ ἦν ἅγιος, ἔπειθες ἄν με ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔξηχός ἐστι. τοῦτο οὐ μέλει τῷ θεῷ." Ταῦτα αὐτῶν λεγόντων καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἅ εἰσι τοῖς νέοις ἐπιτήδεια ἐπορεύοντο. (*Life of Andrew* 260–71)

[70] Ἐπετήδευσεν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ὁ ὅσιος, ὅτι καθότι ἐποίει τίποτε παράδοξον, εὐθέως ἤλλασσεν τὴν γειτονίαν ἐκείνην, ἕως οὗ λησμονηθῇ τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὃ ἐποίησεν. ἔσπευδεν δὲ καὶ παραυτὰ σχηματίσασθαι ἄκαιρον τίποτε, ἵνα δι' ἐκείνου
ἐπικαλύψῃ τὸ κατόρθωμα. (*Life of Symeon* 81.5–8, trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 152) A concrete example can be found in the *Life of Symeon* 81.22–5 (trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 153): 'Then the tavern keeper understood that Abba Symeon had broken the wine jar for the same reason. And he was edified and considered Symeon to be holy. Thereupon the saint wanted to destroy his edification, so that the tavern keeper would not expose him.' (τότε οὖν ἔγνω ὁ κάπηλος, ὅτι δι' αὐτὸ ἔκλασεν καὶ ὁ ἀββᾶς Συμεὼν τὸ βισσίν. καὶ οἰκοδομήθη καὶ εἶχεν αὐτὸν ἅγιον. Θέλων οὖν ὁ ὅσιος ἀναλῦσαι τὴν οἰκοδομὴν αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ θριαμβεύσῃ αὐτόν.) The reason why he does not want to be exposed is given in 78.23–5 (trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 150): 'And his every prayer was that his works might be hidden until his departure from life, so that he might escape human glory, through which human arrogance and conceit arises, and which also made the angels

souls without being exposed as holy.[71] However, this enterprise involves a paradox,[72] since the edified citizen necessarily becomes aware by means of his edification that he is dealing with a saint rather than a fool. As a result, while most people in the city are convinced that he is an actual fool and treat him likewise, sometimes a citizen discovers the true nature of the holy man, who then finds himself compelled to silence him/her by force so that his secret stays hidden. This happens, for example, in the *Life of Symeon* at 87.15–17, where the lips of the two monks who experience Symeon's gift of prophecy are burnt so they cannot tell what they know.[73] In the *Life of Andrew*, force is sometimes replaced by or combined with persuasion, as in the following passage:[74]

> When the pious woman came to herself after this vision she was greatly amazed and exclaimed, "How wonderful God is in his goodness! What luminaries he has on earth, and nobody knows it!" Often she wanted to tell some people what she had seen, but immediately a divine power prevented her, throwing her into a trembling so that henceforth she kept the miracle secret *voluntarily*. One day the righteous man met her and said, "Keep my secret for the time being, Barbara," – that was her name – "and do not reveal it to anybody until I have come to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, to the House of God!" She answered, "Unfortunately I do not want to. And even if I want to tell somebody, I cannot, honourable luminary and wholly marvellous elect of the Lord, for I am prevented by an invisible power, and trembling enters my bones and my strength is troubled within me."[75]

The element of persuasion is important not just in this passage, but in the *Life of Andrew* in general. Whereas Symeon reaches his goals through acts, Andrew generally converts the people through words.[76] Furthermore, in the *Life of Andrew* discussions often arise among the citizens

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fall from heaven.' (ἡ δὲ εὐχὴ αὐτοῦ ὑπῆρχεν πᾶσα τοῦ σκεπασθῆναι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐργασίαν μέχρι τῆς αὐτοῦ μεταστάσεως ἐκ τοῦ βίου, ἵνα διαφύγῃ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, δι' ἧς παραγίνεται τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὑπερηφανία καὶ οἴησις ἡ καὶ ἀγγέλους ἀπολέσασα ἐξ οὐρανῶν.)

[71] *Life of Symeon* 91.12–16.

[72] Further aspects of the paradox inherent in the fool's conduct (as well as the paradox of writing the story of a holy fool, which I introduced above at p. 000) are discussed by Youval Rotman, *Insanity and Sanctity in Byzantium. The Ambiguity of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 11–31.

[73] Other examples are found in the *Life of Symeon* 88.16–18 and 90.20–2. The topos goes back to Mark 1:44 (cf. Matthew 8:4) and a handful of other passages in Mark and Matthew. I thank Christa Gray for this observation.

[74] A similar passage is lines 1335–46, where the boy who witnessed the levitation of Andrew is silenced.

[75] Ταῦτα ὁρῶσα ἡ γυνὴ ἐκείνη ἡ θεοσεβὴς ἐξεπλήττετο σφόδρα ἐν ἑαυτῇ γενομένη καὶ ἔλεγε· "Βαβαὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθότητος· οἴους φωστῆρας ἔχει ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπίσταται." Πολλάκις οὖν ἠβουλήθη τὰ ὁραθέντα αὐτῇ τισι διηγήσασθαι καὶ παραχρῆμα θεία τις δύναμις ἐκώλυεν αὐτὴν εἰς τρόμον ἄγουσα, καὶ λοιπὸν ἑκοῦσα τὸ θαῦμα ἀπέκρυπτεν. Ὅθεν ἐν μιᾷ συναντᾷ αὐτῇ ὁ δίκαιος καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ· "Φύλαττέ μου τὸ μυστήριον ἐν τῷ τέως, Βαρβάρα," (τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ὄνομα αὐτῇ) "καὶ μηδενὶ αὐτὸ ἐξείπῃς ἄρτι. ἕως οὗ ἐλεύσομαι ἐν τόπῳ σκηνῆς θαυμαστῆς ἕως τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ." Ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπεκρίνατο· "Κακῶς καὶ οὐ θέλω· εἰ δὲ καὶ θελήσω τινὶ διηγήσασθαι, οὐ δύναμαι, τίμιε φωστὴρ καὶ ἐκλεκτὲ κυρίου πανθαύμαστε· κωλύομαι γὰρ ἀοράτῳ δυνάμει καὶ εἰσέρχεται τρόμος εἰς τὰ ὀστᾶ μου καὶ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἡ ἰσχύς μου ταράττεται." (*Life of Andrew* 3603–14)

[76] For example the monk at the Staurion (*Life of Andrew* 1952–2124).

concerning the nature of the holy fool (like the one in the passage quoted at the beginning of this section):[77] do his special powers arise from a pious or an evil source, and consequently, is he a saint or a possessed madman? As Rydén remarks, it is precisely in this no man's land between the realm of the angels and the realm of the demons that the holy fool can operate.[78] Such discussions among citizens concerning the nature of the fool explicitly address the question of belief on the part of the audience in the performance of the saint and are symptomatic for their ambiguous position in the paradoxical game of the fool; on the one hand the citizens are led to believe in the act of the holy fool, who is said to deceive his audience (his performance is called *apatè* ('deceit').[79] On the other hand, the result of this deception is edification, which means that the citizen realizes that (s)he is dealing with a saint who serves a higher cause and is then forced – or willing – to play along in his game of make-believe.

Perhaps we can image the reader of hagiography to resemble the citizen when it comes to the ambiguous nature of his belief.[80] Whether readers of hagiography actually took the narrative as factual/historical truth or not remains almost impossible to reconstruct. It is not unlikely, however, that both options were simultaneously in place, that some readers must have literally believed what was written, while others did not (or only to a certain extent). Like the people in the city of the holy fool, then, some readers may not have realised they were reading a fictionalised story, while others did but chose to play along with the game anyway. As such, the question of whether or not the audience took the narrative to be representing historical truth would be irrelevant to the functioning of the genre, and thus to the game rules of hagiography. Indeed, another type of belief, religious in kind, is at stake in this genre. And even if sometimes readers simply turned to hagiography for entertainment, like the people in the city 'go have a drink where the Fool is' because he brings them amusement,[81] at the same time, stories about saints combine frivolous pleasure with very serious didactic purposes in a way similar to ancient myth.[82] Although this combination does not fit into our modern system of thinking, which

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[77] Such discussions are abundant in the *Life of Andrew*, but they can also be found in the *Life of Symeon*, e.g. 90.11–13 (trans. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool*, 160): 'There was a certain village headman living near Emesa, and when he heard about Symeon's way of life he said, "Believe me, if I saw him, I would know if he's pretending or if he really is an idiot."' (Ἦν δέ τις πλησίον Ἐμέσης μένων πρωτοκωμήτης, καὶ ὡς ἤκουσεν τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ, λέγει· "πίστευσον, ἐὰν ἴδω, νοῶ ἐὰν προσποιητός ἐστιν καὶ ἐάν τε ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐστὶν ἔξηχος.")
[78] Rydén, *The Holy Fool*, 110.
[79] See the *Life of Symeon* 56.21 and 82.12.
[80] This raises the complex question of who the audience of hagiography was, which requires a study in itself. Stephanos Efthymiadis and Nikos Kalogeras point out that the question of audience of Byzantine hagiography is an understudied topic; "Audience, Language and Patronage in Byzantine Hagiography", in Efthymiadis, *Ashgate Research Companion*, vol. 2, 247–84 at 248. However, their own article also claims to trace the 'intended audience' rather than the actual one (ibid.). They point to Claudia Rapp, "Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience", *DOP* 50 (1996), 313–44, for a discussion of the historical reader.
[81] See the *Life of Symeon* 81.8–11 ('πίωμεν ὅπου ὁ Σαλός') and the *Life of Andrew* 232–44, where the people in the city are said to deliberately seek out the holy fool because they find him entertaining. The analogy here is that both the holy fool and the hagiographer can win souls by first attracting them with entertainment. On the entertaining function of hagiography as the 'mass media' of its time, see Alexander Kazhdan, "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries", *DOP* 44 (1990), 131–43 at 131. Edification through amusement is also emphasized by Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), esp. at 47–119, and von Contzen, *The Scottish Legendary*.
[82] According to Frye (*The Secular Scripture*, 22), classical mythology is 'pleasant enough to entice the more light-minded reader, but when he digests [it] he will find that [it] is really wholesome food'. The fictionality of myth is discussed by Ryan, "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", 181. She writes: 'It [myth]

maintains a strong division between fiction and nonfiction and associates these categories with pleasure and didacticism respectively, in the ancient narrative system, where texts often seem to float between history and fiction, such associations are not necessarily valid.[83] For example, ancient historiography used illustrative dialogue and rhetorical and dramatic modes in order to accomplish a 'dramatic re-enactment of events', while pleasure was also a 'legitimate function' of ancient historical texts.[84] Conversely, ancient fiction (such as the Greek novels) adopted historiographical techniques of authentication.[85] Thus, ancient literature was 'a vehicle for shared truth rather than for the individual imagination'.[86] Moreover, ancient biography, an important predecessor of Christian *Lives*, also blurred the line between history and fiction through its 'willingness to read poetic truth as historical fact, and vice versa'.[87] Finally, in the 2012 book *How to Do Things with Fictions*, Joshua Landy explores the use of fictional stories in the Gospel of Mark, and contends that these captured the spirit of what Christianity meant for contemporaries, regardless of whether they actually happened this way.[88]

Like ancient and late-antique historiography and biography, it seems, hagiography presents moral truths in a fictionalised form.[89] The following passages from the *Lives* of

combined the guaranteed truth of fiction with the knowledge-claim of nonfiction and its referential anchoring in a non-textual reality. But in contrast to nonfiction, it conveyed this knowledge through a mode of expression that could be interpreted as figural.' The parallel between hagiography and myth has been drawn by Alison G. Elliott (*Roads to Paradise*, 11), who states that '[fictional Lives] conform more closely to literary and mythic norms of conduct and portray the ideal rather than the actual'. See also Anthony Kaldellis, "The Emergence of Literary Fiction in Byzantium and the Paradox of Plausibility", in P. Roilos (ed.), *Medieval Greek Storytelling. Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 115–30 at 120.

[83] Ancient literary and rhetorical theory classifies texts according to three instead of two categories: *historia* (or *alēthēs*; true narrative), *fabula* (or *muthos*; narrative that is untrue nor like the truth) and *argumentum* (or *plasma*; narrative that consists of invented material but nevertheless could have happened). Although Morgan, "Make-Believe", 190, calls this famous division a 'flawed tool for thinking about fiction' because it 'lacks any element of intentionality', the tripartite scheme nonetheless reveals a fundamental difference from modern thinking about texts. The third category, *argumentum*, seems to align with what is going on in hagiographical texts. See also Claudia Rapp, "Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis", *JECS* 6.3 (1998), 431–48 at 443, on the criterion of plausibility in hagiography, a genre that does not 'make a distinction between truth and verisimilitude or like-truth'.

[84] Morgan, "Make-Believe", 184. For a discussion of Byzantine historiography and 'how it explores the twilight zone between history and fiction', see also Panagiotis Agapitos, "In Rhomaian, Persian and Frankish Lands: Fiction and Fictionality in Byzantium and Beyond", in Panagiotis A. Agapitos and Lars Boje Mortensen (eds.), *Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, c. 1100–1400* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012), 235–68 at 258.

[85] Morgan, "Make-Believe". On the hybrid nature of ancient narrative fiction, see also Niklas Holzberg, "The Genre: Novels Proper and the Fringe", in G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1996), 11–28 at 15–19.

[86] Christopher Gill and Timothy Peter Wiseman, "Preface", in iid. (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), vii–ix at viii.

[87] Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity, A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), xii. On the relationship between ancient biography and Christian *Lives*, see Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*; Marc Van Uytfanghe, "La biographie classique et l'hagiographie chrétienne antique tardive", *Hagiographica* 12 (2005), 223–48; Samuel Rubenson, "Antony and Pythagoras: A Reappraisal of the Appropriation of Classical Biography in Athanasius' Vita Antonii", in David Brakke, Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Jörg Ulrich (eds.), *Beyond Reception. Mutual Influences between Antique Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity* (Bern: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 191–208; and Tomas Hägg, "The Life of St Antony between Biography and Hagiography", in Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography,* vol. 1*: Periods and Places* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 17–34.

[88] Joshua Landy, *How to Do Things with Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[89] See Catherine Cubitt, "Introduction: Writing True Stories – A View from the West", in Arietta Papaconstantinou (ed.), *Writing 'True Stories'. Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval*

Symeon and Andrew seem to indicate that, like the holy fool, the hagiographer indeed serves a higher goal with his literary 'performance'. In his prologue, for instance, Leontius says that the sinner must be aroused by a divine yearning 'through the stories which are told to him',[90] and about Andrew we learn that 'he loved to read the Holy Scriptures but even more the Passions of the martyrs and the Lives of the God-bearing Fathers, so that his heart was aflame with trust in them and aroused to imitation of their good way of living'.[91] Furthermore, in lines 3788–90, once again the hagiographer appears and assures us that 'this, my friends, I have learnt from blessed Andrew and written down for the edification of our souls, that we may consider how we lead our life in this world, for nothing escapes God and his saints'.[92] Thus, paradoxical as it may sound, the hagiographer has no intention of deceiving his audience, but writes in order that their souls may be saved. Similarly, the holy fool, even though his performance is called *apatè* ('deceit'),[93] eventually (and paradoxically) targets religious truth. In both cases, in order to convey a specific kind of truth, moral in nature, the 'fiction' must be 'believed' in one way or another. Theorists have been struggling for decades with the question to what extent a reader of fiction can be said to 'believe' what he reads. Critics have often interpreted the reader's position as one of a 'willing suspension of disbelief'.[94] In this regard, some have pointed at the problem of a reader's emotional involvement with a fictional text: fiction, which we know to be fiction, can nonetheless move us to actual tears.[95] In his chapter on the fictionality of the ancient Greek novel, John Morgan points out that 'if it makes sense at all to talk about believing fiction, the belief must clearly be different in kind rather than degree from that accorded to straightforwardly factual statements'.[96] When dealing with Christian literature, the question of belief becomes even more pressing when the issue of religious involvement is considered. If it is the kind of belief Morgan is referring to that is responsible for our tears when we read about the death of our favourite character in our favourite novel, then perhaps it is a similar kind of

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Near East (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 1–12 at 11. In her introduction, Cubitt also refers to the 'powerful, higher truth' of the stories explored in the volume ("Introduction", 12).

[90] δι᾽ ἀκοῆς καὶ διηγήσεως πρὸς αὐτὸν καταντώσης (*Life of Symeon* 56.7).

[91] Ἠγάπα δὲ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκειν τὰς θείας γραφάς, πλεῖον δὲ τὰ τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρια καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν θεοφόρων πατέρων, ὥστε ἐκκαίεσθαι τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν τούτων πεποίθησιν καὶ εἰς μίμησιν διεγείρεσθαι τῆς ἀγαθῆς αὐτῶν πολιτείας. (*Life of Andrew* 29–33) Other examples can be found in the *Life of Andrew*, e.g. lines 731–37, where Andrew just told a story of his spiritual journey to Paradise and back: in this passage the narrator suddenly speaks in the first person, as discussed at p. 000, and testifies that 'Blessed Andrew's story sent my soul into a trance'. (Ταῦτα τοῦ μακαρίου Ἀνδρέου πρός με διηγουμένου εἰς ἔκστασιν φρενῶν ἤγαγε τὴν ψυχήν μου.) In another passage, the boy who witnessed the levitation of Andrew exclaims (1332–34): 'My goodness, what a miracle! How many hidden servants God has, who lead a good way of life and have a good conscience! What we hear from the Lives of the saints we have seen with our own eyes.' ("Βαβαὶ τοῦ μυστηρίου· πόσους κρυπτοὺς δούλους ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἀγαθῆς πολιτείας καὶ συνειδήσεως, καὶ ἅπερ ἐν τοῖς βίοις τῶν ἁγίων ἠκούομεν, ταῦτα οἰκείοις ὀφθαλμοῖς ἑωράκαμεν.")

[92] Ταῦτα, ὦ φίλοι, γέγραφα, μεμαθηκὼς παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἀνδρέου, πρὸς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν, ὅπως σκοπῶμεν πῶς περιπατῶμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ· οὐδὲν γὰρ λανθάνει θεῷ καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ.

[93] Cf. note 79.

[94] This term was first introduced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907 (1817)). See also the chapter by Alwis in the present volume for a discussion of this term.

[95] Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, discusses reader involvement in chapter V. The question is also addressed by Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*, in his chapter "Why We Wept for Little Nell". See also Gregory Currie, "Emotion and the Response to Fiction", in id., *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), 182–216, and Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction?*.

[96] Morgan, "Make-Believe", 193.

belief that is responsible for the religious involvement of the readers of saints' *Lives*, and which is targeted by the hagiographer.

CONCLUSIONS

According to Grosdidier de Matons, the task of the hagiographer is not to represent but to interpret; it is to present a model as perfect as possible.[97] In order to do this, fictionality can be a powerful tool. Like the fool, whose theatrical performance is crucial to his mission of edifying the townsmen, the hagiographer presents a narrative that is not an accurate presentation of the historical truth so as to represent 'not the life as lived, but the life as made sense of, the life imaginatively reconstructed and rendered significant'.[98] In order to better understand the implications of such fictionalising practices for the literary contract between hagiographer and reader, I have further pursued the analogy between the hagiographer's task of writing and the performance of the holy fool. Although the comparison will probably not elucidate every aspect of the game called hagiography, at least it has led to the following observations.

Firstly, like the holy fool must wear a costume to support his performance, the hagiographer hides behind a mask to support his narrative and to authorize it. In fact, he can use different techniques to conceal his own authorship and/or generate an opportune self-presentation, namely by appearing prominently in the text as a highly constructed or fictional persona, or, on the contrary, by disappearing from the text by promoting other narrative voices to the forefront. The double potential of the mask (i.e. to present a constructed façade and to hide what is behind it) in both cases results in a presentation of the material as reliable and trustworthy. From this it may be inferred that the rules of hagiography prescribe that all parties involved approach the hagiographical text as containing a message whose truth value is guaranteed by the authorial power of the figure of the hagiographer (in the case of his constructed appearance) or of his sources (in the case of his disappearance). In this respect, the rules of hagiography differ from those of what we regard as fiction today, since, according to the rules of modern fiction, both sender and receiver mutually agree on the fact that the message has no truth value in the world outside the text and therefore does not need any external authorisation (it 'guarantees its own truth').[99]

On the other hand, although the hagiographer, like the fool, does everything in his power to make his audience believe in his literary performance, he does not intend to deceive his reader (which does align him with writers of modern fiction),[100] since his ultimate goal is to rouse in his audience a different kind of belief, which is a belief in the religious rather than the historical truth of his narration. Here, it helps to compare the goal of the holy fool to edify the citizens through a theatrical show with the hagiographer's practice of edifying his reader through a

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[97] Grosdidier de Matons, *Les thèmes d'édification dans la vie d'André Salos*, 277: 'La tâche de l'hagiographe consiste, non à représenter, mais à interpréter un personnage hors série pour en faire un modèle aussi parfait que possible.'

[98] Geoffrey Cubitt, "Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives", in Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren (eds.), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1–26 at 3.

[99] According to Ryan's definition ("Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", 167).

[100] According to the definition provided by Morgan ("Make-Believe", 225).

fictionalised account, since both involve a paradox: like the spectator needs to believe in the feigned folly of the holy man in order to be edified and receive moral truth, the reader of hagiography needs to 'believe' the narrative of the hagiographer (regardless of whether (s)he actually takes it to be historically accurate) in order to benefit from its edifying qualities. In both cases, the 'fictiveness' of the performance is only instrumental to this higher goal. Eventually, what the hagiographer and the fool both aim at is to spread religious truth, and that despite (or is it thanks to?) their deceptions.

While this 'other' kind of belief appears to correspond rather well to the kind of belief involved in a reader's emotional engagement with modern fiction (different from the factual belief in the historicity of the events narrated), what is different here is that, given its religious nature, the truth that is proclaimed in the text has the real world as frame of reference, while the fictional truth of the modern novel is truth only within the fictional world, which is its frame of reference.[101] This is illustrated by the fact that an author of a modern novel cannot (or should not) be held responsible for the ideological viewpoints his narrator or his characters proclaim (although there have been cases in the past where this occurred; think for instance of the trial against Gustave Flaubert or the attacks against Salman Rushdie).[102] The fact that the hagiographer does seek to establish a direct link between the ideological statements issued in his text and the concrete reality inhabited by its readers accounts for the hybrid and paradoxical nature of the hagiographer's enterprise, who wears a mask in order to imbue his narrative with reliability and authority and to disguise his literary fashioning, but without the primary intention of making his reader actually believe in the historical truth of his narrative (although this must have been the unavoidable effect in some cases). Rather than just adhering to strategies of realism to draw the reader into the text in order to achieve emotional involvement, the hagiographer must create for himself a more profound narrative as well as ideological authority for his audience to become religiously involved.

The hagiographer is then indeed like the saint he is writing about (as Derek Krueger proposed) since his practice of humility results in the edification of others, and, more particularly, he is like the type of the *salos*, since this practice is inextricably connected to a kind of performance that is well compared to that of the holy fool, who also, in his nakedness and self-degrading, practices humility and fictionality at once. Moreover, shedding light on the fictionalising dimension of the hagiographer's task has allowed to reflect on the intricate role of the hagiographer for the construction of the hagiographical text: he reflects onto his saintly subject a certain authority while at the same time the saintly subject reflects religious authority

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[101] Again according to Ryan's definition ("Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality", 167). That does not mean that a modern work of fiction cannot say something about the real world in which we live (why would certain governments otherwise have censuring-policies?), but it always does so indirectly.

[102] Public prosecutors brought Flaubert to court for the immoralities proclaimed in his *Madame Bovary* in 1857, while more recently, Rushdie's highly controversial *Satanic Verses* (1988) was the object of a violent storm of critiques. In both cases, the discrepancy between the rules according to which the prosecutors approach the literary work in question and the rules according to which the authors (and presumably also the modern-day public) conceive of it results in a painful misunderstanding with severe consequences.

onto the hagiographer, all of which is achieved through his own narrative crafting, which establishes a complex but profound link between the hagiographer and the saint.[103]

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[103] See also Williams in this volume for an illustration of conspicuous modesty involved in hagiographical writing.