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Christodoulos PAPAVERNAS

**THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE
IN THE PRE-METAPHRATIC PASSIONS***

Byzantine hagiographical literature is commonly believed to serve the purpose of guiding the audience towards imitating the saintly lifestyle and achieving spiritual formation. However, little work has been done on the reception of hagiography by its Byzantine audience of listeners and readers¹. The importance of taking into account the audience in the research of literature in general has been pointed out by the German literary scholars Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser². The present study aims to

* List of abbreviations, see below p. 81-82. This article offers a condensed and updated version of my master's thesis entitled *Die Rolle des Publikums in den vormetaphrastischen Gruppen- und Einzelmartyrien* (University of Vienna, 2014), which is accessible at http://othes.univie.ac.at/34303/1/2014-08-26_1249304.pdf (in German). The present version of the article is based on a paper delivered at the colloquium on the topic of "Late Antique Hagiography as Literature" organized by the University of Edinburgh on 20-21 May 2015. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Claudia Rapp for her consistent academic advice and support, as well as for her invaluable feedback on this article.

¹ Significant contributions to the topic are: S. EFTHYMIADIS, *The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, in *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. C. HÖGEL (= *KULTs skriftserie*, 59), Oslo, 1996, pp. 59-80; C. RAPP, *Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and their Audience*, in *DOP*, 50 (1996), pp. 313-343; EAD., *Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis*, in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6 (1998), pp. 431-443; CONSTANTINOU, *Female Corporeal Performances*; C. RAPP, *The Origins of Hagiography and the Literature of Early Monasticism: Purpose and Genre between Tradition and Innovation*, in *Unclassical Traditions. I: Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. C. KELLY – R. FLOWER – M. S. WILLIAMS (= *Cambridge Classical Journal. Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, suppl., 34), Cambridge, 2010, pp. 119-130. Recent key writings on hagiographical reception include: *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*. II: *Genres and Contexts*, ed. S. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham – Burlington, 2014, and C. RAPP, *Author, Audience, Text and Saint: Two Modes of Early Byzantine Hagiography*, in *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 1 (2015), pp. 111-129. By and large, the Byzantines' own perception of literature still remains a topic that deserves a further study. Cf. e.g. P. A. AGAPITOS, *Η θέση της αισθητικής αποτίμησης σε μια «νέα» ιστορία της βυζαντινής λογοτεχνίας*, in *Pour une "nouvelle" histoire de la littérature byzantine. Problèmes, méthodes, approches, propositions*. Actes du colloque international philologique (Nicosie, 25-28 mai 2000), ed. P. ODORICO – P. A. AGAPITOS, Paris, 2002, pp. 185-232; ID., *Literary Criticism*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. JEFFREYS – J. F. HALDON – R. CORMACK, Oxford, 2008, pp. 77-85, esp. p. 78 and, most recently, ID., *Contesting Conceptual Boundaries: Byzantine Literature and Its History*, in *Interfaces. A Journal of Medieval European Literatures*, 1 (2015), pp. 62-91, esp. p. 80.

² See esp. H. R. JAUSS, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, Frankfurt am Main, 1970; ID., *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, 2nd ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1997; and W. ISER, *Der implizite Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, Munich, 1972; ID., *Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, 4th ed., Munich, 1994.

Analecta Bollandiana, 134 (2016), p. 66-82.

shed new light on the question of the audience and its response to hagiographical texts.

The Byzantines' reception is examined here through the literary analysis of the Passions of the martyrs produced before the activity of Symeon Metaphrastes in the 10th century. The focus of this article is on the secondary narrative characters, or rather the intra-textual audience, which may provide an indication of the anticipated reactions of the readers and listeners, namely the extra-textual audience³. A closer examination of the secondary characters within the narrations, in this instance the bystanders of the martyrdoms, will allow us to trace how they might have been construed as models to guide the recipients towards a pious way of life.

The pre-Metaphrastic Passions examined here are the following: the *Passion of Pistis, Elpis, Agape and their mother Sophia* (PPisElAg, BHG 1637z), the *Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete* (PMarCr, BHG 1196), the *Passion of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (PMarSeb, BHG 1201), and finally, the *Passion of Juliana of Nicomedia* (PJulNic, BHG 962z). These selected Passions provide representative material for the depiction of the intra-textual audience in this hagiographical subgenre⁴. This study could expand on the entire hagiographical corpus, including Lives and Accounts of Miracles; nevertheless, the presence of an intra-textual audience can best be outlined and understood especially in the case of Passions, as will be demonstrated below. The Passions treated here are also considered to be the textual sources ("Vorlagen") of the corresponding versions included in the *menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes⁵, which experienced wide dis-

³ For the distinction between intra- and extra-textual – or alternatively internal and external – audiences in Byzantine literature, see CONSTANTINO, *Female Corporeal Performances*, esp. p. 20. On the intra- and extra-textual levels of narrative texts, see G. GENETTE, *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, transl. J. E. LEWIN, Ithaca, 1980.

⁴ In its longer version, my master's thesis additionally deals with the *Passion of Sergios and Bakchos* (PSerBac, BHG 1624) and the *Passion of Eulampios and Eulampia* (PEulEul, BHG 616) to interpret the relationship between the martyr-protagonist and the martyr-spectator in respect of gender. See PAPAVERNAS, *Die Rolle des Publikums...* (see above n.*), pp. 29-37.

⁵ For PPisElAg (BHG 1637z), see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 175; ed. F. HALKIN, *Légendes grecques de «martyres romaines»* (= *Subs. hag.*, 55), Brussels, 1973, p. 181. For PMarCr (BHG 1196), see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 193; ed. P. FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI, *Scritti agiografici*, II (= *Studi e Testi*, 222), Città del Vaticano, 1962, p. 387. For PMarSeb (BHG 1201), see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 201; A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, II (= *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 51), Leipzig, 1938, p. 608 and n. 7. For PJulNic (BHG 962z), see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 193; ed. C. ANGELIDE, *Τὸ μαρτύριο τῆς ἁγίας Ἰουλιανῆς τῆς ἐκ Νικομηδείας*, in *Byzantina*, 9 (1977), pp. 147-148.

semination in Byzantium⁶. This means that these stories, either in their original or in their reworked form, had a constant effect on their audiences. Thus, the texts in question are of particular interest from the perspective of reception and the extra-textual audience, as well.

Before we proceed with the question of the role of the audience inside and outside of the narrative, a summary of the texts under consideration and their date of composition will be helpful. The composition of the *Passion of Pistis, Elpis and Agape* is dated between the 7th and 8th centuries⁷. The three sisters are arrested in Rome along with their mother Sophia by the soldiers of Emperor Hadrian for having preached Christianity. Sophia, although not interrogated and tortured like the young girls, is buried after her death in the same grave with her daughters, who had been beheaded three days earlier. The *Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete* was probably written by the 8th century at the latest in Gortyn, in Crete⁸. Under the reign of Decius, ten Christian men refuse to participate in the dedication of a pagan temple and begin preaching the kingdom of heaven. Thus, proconsul Platimaios arrests them. Soon afterwards, in front of a raging crowd, they are interrogated, tortured and finally, executed by the sword outside of Gortyn. The *Passion of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* was probably written in the early Byzantine period, and more specifically after the *Homilies on the Forty Martyrs* by the Church Fathers Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Ephrem the Syrian (4th century), but before the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (6th century)⁹. Under the reign of Licinius, due to their refusal to sacrifice to the pagan gods, forty Christian soldiers are apprehended and brought to the governor of Sebaste, Agricolas. After being interrogated for a few days, they are thrown naked into a frozen lake to die. The *Passion of Juliana of Nicomedia* must have been written in the 5th century¹⁰. Her martyrdom takes place in Nicomedia during the reign of Emperor Maximian. The interrogation and torture of

⁶ Cf. C. RAPP, *Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries*, in *Bosphorus. Essays in Honour of Cyril Mango*, ed. S. EFTHYMIADIS – C. RAPP – D. TSOUGARAKIS (= *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 21), Amsterdam, 1995, p. 36; E. SCHIFFER, *Metaphrastic Lives and Earlier Metaphrastic Lives*, in *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences...*, ed. HØGEL (see above n. 1), p. 22. For the manuscript transmission of the *Metaphrastic Menologion*, see EHRHARD, *Überlieferung...* (see above n. 5), II, p. 306-709.

⁷ Ed. HALKIN, *Légendes grecques...* (see above n. 5), pp. 180, 185.

⁸ Ed. FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI, *Scritti agiografici...* (see above n. 5), II, pp. 368, 377.

⁹ Cf. A. AMORE, *Sebastia, XL martiri di*, in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. 11, Rome, 1968, pp. 768, 770.

¹⁰ Ed. ANGELIDE, *Τὸ μαρτύριο τῆς ἀγίας Ἰουλιανῆς...* (see above n. 5), p. 143.

the martyr begin after she revealed her Christian faith and refused to enter into marriage with the pagan prefect Eleusios.

Byzantine Conceptions of Audience Response

The Byzantines themselves seem to have comprehended the correlation between intra- and extra-textual audiences. This is suggested by a comparison of the same story in two versions. In the preface of the *Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete* (BHG 1196), the anonymous late antique hagiographer divides his intended audience into two categories of Christians, those well-intentioned towards the martyrs and those ill-intentioned towards the divine:

ὁ τε γὰρ πίστει τὴν ψυχὴν κεκοσμημένος ἐλάττονα νομίσοι λέγειν τὸν διηγούμενον, ὡς πεπονθέναι τοὺς ἁγίους πιστεύειν· ὁ δὲ ἐλαφρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον προαίρεσιν ἀσθενῆς μικρὰ πράγματα λόγοις ἐξευρεῖν νομίσοι τὸν διηγούμενον (*PMarCr*, p. 389.7-10, emphasis added).

“The one adorned in his soul with faith might think that the author accounts less than what he [= the faithful] believes that the saints had undergone. On the contrary, the other one, who is shallow in soul and weak in his leaning towards the divine, might think that the author invents paltry things in words”¹¹.

In his version (BHG 1197), Symeon Metaphrastes, probably inspired by his textual source, i.e. the above *Passion*, categorizes the bystanders of the martyrdom in a similar fashion:

Συνέρρεον οὖν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς πάντες ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τι τῶν καινῶν τε καὶ παραδόξων, πιστοὶ τε ἅμα, καὶ ὅσοι πρὸς τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἐπεπήρωντο, ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν ὥστε θαυμάσαι τῆς καρτερίας τοὺς ἀθλητὰς καὶ βεβαιοτέραν θέσθαι παρ’ ἑαυτοῖς τὴν εὐσέβειαν, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὸ μυκτηρίσαι μᾶλλον τὴν ἐκείνων ὑπομονὴν καὶ οἷα ταῖς αὐτῶν πληγαῖς ἐφισθῆναι διὰ περιουσίαν ὠμότητος (*Met-PMarCr*, p. 159; emphasis added).

“All the people, both the faithful and those who despised piety, were swarming towards them [= the martyrs], as if something new or unusual happened. The former [did so] in order to admire the perseverance of the athletes and to reinforce their own piety; but the latter [did so] rather to mock their [= the martyrs’] patient endurance and to exult over their beatings in extreme cruelty”.

On the narrative level, the intra-textual audience of the martyrdom consists of both the Christian and pagan observers. The Christians among the bystanders empathize and support the martyr-protagonist during his interrogation, torture and death. In the case of “Group Passions”, namely the Passions of more than one martyr, the Christian observers can also in-

¹¹ Translations from Greek are my own unless otherwise indicated.

clude the companions of the martyr-protagonist, designated here as “martyr-spectators”, who are mostly subjected to interrogations and torture in succession one after another¹². The pagan observers, by contrast, who usually assume a hostile posture against the martyrs, either are converted to Christianity or experience divine punishment¹³. In other words, the attitude of the intra-textual audience towards the Christian martyrs can either be approving or disapproving and skeptical, as attested by Symeon Metaphrastes. Interestingly, the hagiographer of the pre-Metaphrastic version assumes the same range of responses in the extra-textual audience by directly addressing his readers and listeners in the preface. Symeon Metaphrastes, however, moves this thought of the dual potential responses from the preface almost to the middle of his narrative and from the extra-textual to the intra-textual audience. Contrary to the hagiographers of the pre-Metaphrastic versions, who usually preface their texts with references to their recipients, Symeon Metaphrastes either does not preface his texts at all or includes a prologue without addressing the extra-textual audience¹⁴. That is why only the main body of his narrative undertakes the guidance

¹² A case in point is provided by the *Passion of Pistis, Elpis and Agape*, where the entire course of the martyrdom of the three sisters is repeated three times within the narrative in a similar manner. See *PPisELAg*, ch. 7-9 [Pistis], ch. 10-11 [Elpis], ch. 12-14 [Agape].

¹³ Here is to be noted that at the sight of the martyrdom of the Christian martyr-protagonist, several members of the crowd renounce Paganism to become Christians, something that automatically leads to their own martyrdom. In such cases, the martyr-protagonist can be considered as a potential spectator of the recent converts to Christianity while they are being beheaded. The narrative, however, is usually very brief on these points and does not focus on the reactions of the martyr-protagonist. That is why the potential roles of the martyr-protagonist as martyr-spectator and the recent converts to Christianity as martyr-protagonists are not further discussed here.

¹⁴ For example, in the case of the *Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete*, Symeon Metaphrastes furnishes his text with a brief prologue referring to Crete and its martyrs instead of his recipients (*Met-PMarCr*, p. 157). Yet, in most cases, unlike his textual sources, Symeon Metaphrastes chooses to begin his narration directly without introduction. Cf. the Metaphrastic *Passion of the Martyr Eustathios and his Family* (*Met-PEus*, BHG 642) and its textual sources (*EncEus* by Niketas David Paphlagon, BHG 643 and *PEus*, BHG 641; see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 176); the Metaphrastic *Passion of Galaktion and Episteme* (*Met-PGalEp*, BHG 666) and its textual source (*PGalEp*, BHG 665; see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 184-185); and the Metaphrastic *Life of Sampson the Xenodochos* (*Met-VSam*, BHG 1615) and its textual source (*VSam*, BHG 1614z; see HÖGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes*, p. 202). Hence, it may be concluded that the Metaphrastic strategy of avoiding any preface addressing the extra-textual audience is applied not only in those texts that are based on highly rhetorical textual sources, such as on the *enkomia* by Niketas David Paphlagon, but probably in the entire Metaphrastic corpus, regardless of the genre of the respective textual source. For the features of the *Metaphrastic Menologion* in relation to the *enkomia* by Niketas David Paphlagon, see E. PEYR [SCHIFFER], *Zur Umarbeitung rhetorischer Texte durch Symeon Metaphrastes*, in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 42 (1992), pp. 143-155, esp. p. 147.

of the recipients by means of a depiction of the intra-textual audience. Still, as a whole, not only the Metaphrastic, but also the pre-Metaphrastic texts, with or without a preface, often rely on the conception of an intra-textual audience to communicate their message to the extra-textual audience.

The Martyrdom as Spectacle: An Intra-textual “Interactive Performance”

In the Roman Empire, a wide range of spectacles took place for public entertainment¹⁵. In this context, even the punishment of prisoners was turned into a public event, which often ended with the cruel death of the accused in the amphitheater¹⁶. According to David Potter, a successful spectacle in the Roman Empire should include radical twists of fate¹⁷. In this regard, the entire process of martyrdom proves to be an ideal spectacle. After frequent alternation of interrogation and bodily tortures¹⁸, martyrdom concluded with the public execution of the Christian martyr. This spectacle was performed either in the arena or in the courtroom, where the protagonists, namely the pagan judge and the Christian martyr, could be observed by the bystanders. The presence of a performer — the martyr or his opponent — and of an audience gives the martyrdom a theatrical aspect¹⁹. In fact, the hagiographers themselves very often employed theatrical terminology, such as “theater” (θέατρον) and “spectators” (θεαταί), in order to designate the place of martyrdom and its audience, respectively²⁰.

During the entire process of martyrdom, all narrative characters interact with each other. In an attempt to explore the interrelation between the secondary characters and the protagonists, I am introducing the term “interactive performance”. With this term, I refer to the stage play or theatrical performance in which the so-called technique of “breaking the

¹⁵ D. S. POTTER, *Spectacle*, in *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. D. S. POTTER (= *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Ancient History*), Oxford, 2010, pp. 387-392.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

¹⁸ Cf. S. CONSTANTINOY, *The Authoritative Voice of St. Catherine of Alexandria*, in *Acta Byzantina Fennica*, n. s., 2 ([2003-2004], published in 2005), pp. 19-20; EAD., *Female Corporeal Performances*, pp. 33-35, 48-49.

¹⁹ Cf. CONSTANTINOY, *Female Corporeal Performances*, p. 32.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 20, with specific examples.

fourth wall” is applied. Performance theorist Elizabeth Bell describes this theatrical technique as follows:

“Performers ‘break the fourth wall’ between themselves and the audience when they address the audience directly, making observers aware they are being watched and that performers, in turn, are watching their own behavior. [...] the audience is directly addressed and involved in the performance”²¹.

The “fourth wall” is the imaginary wall in front of a box-set stage consisting of three walls²². The “interactive performance” breaks the fourth or imaginary wall which traditionally separates the performer from the audience both physically and verbally. In the context of my study, the term “interactive performance” suggests that the martyrdom can be interpreted as a theatrical performance in which not only the protagonists but also the spectators take on active roles. The intra-textual audience is not a passive observer, but participates in the spectacle of martyrdom. At the same time, the protagonists respond variously to the reactions of the audience. Based on two significant examples, I will now discuss the interaction between the narrative characters.

The first example demonstrates the cruel attitude of the pagan bystanders towards the martyrs. At the order of the judge, the Ten Martyrs of Crete were dragged by force to the pagan temples all over the city. For thirty days, they were mocked, beaten, stoned, spat upon and covered with excrement by the enraged mob:

καὶ συγχωρήσεως τοῦ δικαστοῦ περιήγοντο μὲν κακουχούμενοι καθ’ ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἱερῶν, ἔλκόμενοι βία ἐπὶ τοὺς βωμοὺς σπένδειν τε καὶ μιροφαιεῖν. Ἔφερον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ὄλας τριάκοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ δημῶδους ὄχλου ἐμπαιγμούς, τυπτόμενοι, λιθολευστούμενοι, ἐμπτυόμενοι, κοπρίαις παττόμενοι. Καὶ τοιαῦτα πάσχοντες ὑπέμενον (*PMarCr*, p. 391.8-13, emphasis added).

“According to the verdict of the judge, they [= the Ten Martyrs of Crete] were mistreated in every pagan shrine of the city and were violently dragged to the altars in order to offer sacrifices and eat the sacrificial meat. For thirty days in total, they were mocked, beaten, stoned, spat upon and sprinkled with excrement by the common crowd. And while they endured such things, they remained steadfast”.

When the martyrs are summoned to the court, the pagan spectators cause a lot of noise to intimidate the accused. Nevertheless, the martyrs remain undisturbed (οὐκ ἐταράχθησαν, *PMarCr*, p. 392.18). The attitude of the pagan audience towards the martyrs is provocative. Here is to be

²¹ E. BELL, *Theories of Performance*, Los Angeles et al., 2008, p. 203.

²² For the box-set stage, see M. WALLIS – S. SHEPHERD, *Studying Plays*, London, 1998, p. 114.

noted that the intra-textual audience abandons the mere observation of the spectacle and influences the course of action. In response to the provocation by the pagan bystanders, the martyr Theodoulos reacts immediately by verbally challenging them back. His words shake the whole crowd (ἐταράχθη μὲν ὁ δῆμος ἅπας, *PMarCr*, p. 393.18). Interestingly, the outcome of the action of the audience, namely the disturbance, returns through the reaction of the protagonist to the audience itself. In fact, Theodoulos interrupts the interrogation conducted by the judge in order to open a new communication channel with his audience. In this way, the martyr breaks the imaginary wall that separates him from his audience both physically and verbally. This episode is a representative example of an “interactive performance” within a martyrdom narrative.

The second example attests that the attitude of the bystanders towards the martyr is not always hostile. Sometimes the bystanders feel empathy for the martyr, as they are able to recognize the cruelty of the torture. A case in point can be found in the Passion of the female martyr Pistis and her sisters Elpida and Agape (*BHG* 1637z). Once the emperor commands to cut off the breasts of the female martyr Pistis, the spectators, both men and women, burst into tears and cast doubts on the correctness of the imperial decision:

ὁ βασιλεὺς [...] ἐκέλευσεν ξίφει ἀπομηθῆναι αὐτῆς τοὺς μασθοὺς. Οἱ δὲ παρόντες ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν ἄνδρες ὁμοῦ καὶ γυναῖκες, ὁρῶντες τὸ νέον τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον κάλλος ποτὲ μὲν πληγαῖς βασανιζόμενον, ποτὲ δὲ σιδήρω τῶν ἀγίων μελῶν ἀποκοπτόμενον, ἔκλαιον ὀλολύζοντες καὶ λέγοντες: Τί γὰρ κακὸν ἔπραξαν τὰ νήπια, ἵνα τοιαύταις τιμωρίαις ὑποβάλλωνται; Κακὴ κρίσις, βασιλεῦ, καὶ ἄδικα τὰ προστάγματα σου (*PPisEIAg*, ch. 7, emphasis added).

“The emperor [...] commanded to cut off her [= Pistis’] breasts by sword. Those present at the spectacle, men and women, cried aloud in lamentation seeing her [= Pistis’] youthfulness and her great beauty, at times tortured by beatings and at times deprived by iron of the holy body parts; and they were saying: ‘What bad thing did the little ones commit to be subjected to such punishments? Oh emperor, [your] judgment [is] bad and your order unjust!’”

However, according to the text, at the violent removal of the breasts, not blood but streams of milk flow out (ἀντὶ αἵματος κρονοὶ γάλακτος ἀπέρρεον, *PPisEIAg*, ch. 7). Thereupon, the entire crowd praises God for the great miracles they witnessed (Καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ῥώμης ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τοῖς μεγάλοις θαύμασιν οἷς ἔβλεπον, *PPisEIAg*, ch. 7). The on-site verification of the miraculous abilities of the martyr’s body by the intra-textual audience serves as tangible evidence of the holiness of the martyr first for the eyewitnesses themselves and — by extension — for the extra-textual audience. The extra-textual audience can be more easily con-

vinced by the view of an impartial observer, in this instance the “Roman crowd”. This is, in my opinion, the main reason for the detailed description of the reactions of the audience in the Passions.

A second authorial strategy to support the interactive character of a martyrdom account consists in presenting the martyr-protagonist as preaching to the bystanders. The martyr-protagonist of the *Passion of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (BHG 1201) is the eldest one, named Kyrion (Κυρίων). He addresses his speech to his companions, namely the “martyr-spectators”, in order to encourage them to follow his example by bravely suffering martyrdom:

Ἀγομένων δὲ αὐτῶν παρήνει αὐτοῖς ὁ ἅγιος Κυρίων λέγων Ἀδελφοί, μὴ φοβηθῶμεν. Οὐχὶ ὅταν ἐν πολέμοις εὐρέθημεν ἐπεκαλούμεθα τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἐβοήθει ἡμῖν καὶ ἐνικῶμεν; Μνημονεύετε ὅτε συνήψαμεν ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ πολέμῳ, καὶ πάντες ἔφυγον καὶ ἡμεῖς μόνοι οἱ τεσσαράκοντα μέσον αὐτῶν εὐρέθημεν, καὶ μετὰ δακρύων ἐπεκαλεσάμεθα τὸν θεόν, καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς δύναμιν, καὶ τοὺς μὲν αὐτῶν ἀπεκτείναμεν, τοὺς δὲ ἐδιώξαμεν, καὶ εἷς ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐπλήγη ἐκ τοῦ τοσοῦτου πλήθους. Νῦν οὖν τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ πολεμοῦντες ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς καὶ ὁ δοῦξ καὶ ὁ ἡγεμών. Ὅλωσ δὲ εἷς ἐστὶν καὶ οὗτος ἀόρατος ὁ οὖν εἷς, ἵνα τοὺς τεσσαράκοντα νικήσῃ; Μὴ γένοιτο, μὴ. Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἐπικαλεσώμεθα ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν τὸν θεόν, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἡμῶν ἄψηται κολαστήρια οὔτε βάσανοι οὔτε δεσμά. Οὐχὶ πάντοτε ὅταν ἠρξάμεθα πολεμεῖν, ἐλέγομεν τὸν ψαλμὸν τοῦτον Ὁ θεός, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου σῶσόν με, καὶ ἐν τῇ δυνάμει σου κρινεῖς με. Ὁ θεός, εἰσάκουσον τῆς προσευχῆς μου, ἐνώτισαι τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ στόματός μου (Ps 53.3-4); Καὶ τὰ νῦν τοῦτον εἶπωμεν τὸν ψαλμὸν, καὶ ἀκούει ἡμῶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ βοηθεῖ ἡμῖν (*PMarSeb*, p. 174.4-26).

“After they were brought in, Saint Kyrion advises them [= the companions] saying: ‘Brothers, let us not fear. When we found ourselves at war, did we not implore God, and He helped us, and we won? Remember when we joined together during the great war and everyone left and we alone the forty [soldiers] found ourselves in the middle of them [= the enemies] and in tears we implored God and God gave us strength and we killed some and chased away others and not one of us was harmed by such a crowd. Now we have three enemies: Satan, the dux and the emperor. Yet, on the whole, this is one [enemy] and even invisible. So, could one defeat the forty? No, that may not happen! I ask you then, let us implore God as always, so also now, and let not any punishments, tortures or fetters affect us. When we started fighting, have we not always recited this psalm: *Save me, O God, by your name, and vindicate me by your might. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth* (Ps 54.1-2 [Ps 53.3-4])? In the present situation as well, let us recite this psalm and God will hear us and help us”.

In this exhortation to his companions, Kyrion appeals to the common heroic past of the former soldiers and encourages them to fight against the new enemy, namely the pagans. It is also remarkable that he constantly

uses personal pronouns (ἡμεῖς) and verbs (such as μὴ φοβηθῶμεν) in the first person plural. Through the direct address to his companions, the speaker emphasizes the feeling of unity and togetherness by which their group was previously characterized. In the end, he manages to persuade them to follow his example. The general atmosphere of unity achieved in this scene does not leave the listeners and readers of this text indifferent. They are summoned to support and strengthen Christianity. The appeal of Kyrion's exhortation in this Passion would fall on particularly fertile soil when the extra-textual audience comprised monks of a monastic community (*koinobion*), where the unity of the target group was of crucial importance²³.

The *Passion of Juliana of Nicomedia* (BHG 962z) offers another example of preaching. Due to the absence of any "martyr-spectators", shortly before her decapitation, the female martyr addresses the Christian crowd and gives some words of advice about prayer, mutual love, repentance and confession. Of course, her words reach out to the pagan bystanders of the martyrdom, as well:

[...] ἡ ἅγια μάρτυς [...] ἤρξατο λέγειν τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς: [...] Προσεύχεσθε οὖν συνεχῶς καὶ ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, ἵνα καὶ ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς δώσῃ ὑμῖν ἔλεος ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ εὕρητε παρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων (Ep. Hebr. 10, 19). Καλὸν οὖν τὸ γρηγορεῖν ἐν προσευχαῖς, ἀδελφοί, καὶ μετανοεῖν ἐν καρδίαις πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι αὐτῷ τὰς ἁμαρτίας, καλὸν καὶ τὸ ψάλλειν συνεχῶς καὶ τὸ εὐχεσθαι ἀδιαλείπτως. Οὐκ οἶδαμεν γὰρ ποῖα ὥρα ἐξερχόμεθα ἀπὸ τοῦ σκηνώματος τοῦ γῆινου τούτου (*PJulNic*, p. 164.32, p. 165.2 and 8-15, emphasis added).

"[...] the holy martyr [...] started saying to the Christians: [...] 'Pray then constantly and love one another, so that the Lord Jesus grants you mercy on that Day [of Judgment] and you find confidence at the entrance of the holy. Therefore, it is good to be alert in prayer, brothers, and to repent in your heart before God and confess your sins to Him; it is also good to chant psalms continuously, as well as to pray without ceasing. For we do not know in what hour we will depart from this earthly body'".

Such advice to be steadfast in prayer and repentance in view of the Last Judgment often appears in church preaching, as well²⁴. What makes this passage special, however, is that the speaker is not a preacher addressing his audience directly, but a protagonist in a narration addressing the wit-

²³ In a *koinobion*, all the monks of the monastery must lead a common and egalitarian way of life. For further information, see A.-M. TALBOT, *Koinobion*, in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. KAZHDAN, et al., II, New York – Oxford, 1991, p. 1136.

²⁴ For relevant examples, see *EphSyrTract*, p. 249.10-15; *BasHomPs*, p. 313; *BasHomBapt*, p. 1520 and *JChrysHomGen*, p. 614.

nesses to her martyrdom, both pagan and Christian alike, and — by extension — anyone who encounters this text. The Christians on both intra- and extra-textual levels should internalize the content of the martyr's preaching. To sum up, these examples show us, on the one hand, the interrelation between the intra-textual audience and the martyr-protagonist, and on the other hand, the connection between the intra- and extra-textual audiences.

The Text as Spectacle: An Extra-textual “Interactive Performance”

Accounts of martyrdoms were composed, read aloud and perceived by the Byzantines much later than the spectacle of martyrdom itself. Through the public reading of the text, the event of martyrdom was revived. On the one hand, martyrdom in the early Christian period constituted an actual spectacle, which occurred before the eyes of a large crowd of people. On the other hand, the text which reproduces the spectacle of martyrdom in a literary fashion can be viewed as a “simulated spectacle” of martyrdom, as the storyline is vividly developed before the eyes and ears of the later Christian readers or listeners. In other words, the interactive relationship, or rather the above-mentioned “breaking the fourth wall”, appears not only on an intra-textual level between the spectacle of martyrdom and the bystanders, but also on an extra-textual level between the text and the readers/listeners. This is because the audience should be attentive and active during the oral performance of the text in order to comprehend the message²⁵. The hagiographer of the pre-Metaphrastic *Life of Matrona* (BHG 1221) illuminates the desirable attitude of the audience towards the narrative in an allegorical way:

ὅπου γὰρ λόγος συνετός καὶ εὐσεβής, δεῖ τὸν ἀκροατὴν σπουδῆν ἔχειν τῷ λέγοντι, ἵνα ὁ μὲν ἐπιμελῆ γεωργὸν μιμεῖται, ὁ δὲ τὴν ἀγαθὴν γῆν τὴν τὰ σπέρματα δεχομένην· εἰ μὴ γὰρ τοῦτο οὕτως γένηται, ὁ μὲν διδάσκων εἰκῆ καὶ μάτην ἔρριψε τοὺς λόγους, ὁ δὲ ἀκροατὴς οὐδὲν πλέον ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων μαθῶν ἀπῆλθε διακενῆς (*VMatr*, ch. 1).

“For wheresoever speech is wise and pious, it behooves the listener to give heed to the speaker, in order that the latter may follow the example of the careful husbandman and the former that of the good ground receiving the seeds; otherwise, the teacher will have cast his words aimlessly and in vain, and the listener retire empty-handed, having learnt naught from what has been said”²⁶.

²⁵ As a rule, Byzantine texts were orally performed before their contemporary audiences. On this matter, see most recently S. EFTHYMIADIS, *Audience, Language and Patronage in Byzantine Hagiography*, in *The Ashgate Research Companion...* (see above n. 1), II, esp. p. 248, with further references.

²⁶ Transl. J. FEATHERSTONE, *Life of St. Matrona of Perge*, in *Holy Women of Byzantium*:

In this passage, the hagiographer breaks the “fourth wall” by suggesting the ideal response of his audience. Through the public reading not only the event of martyrdom was revived, but also the text itself was kept active and alive. In this manner, the text always achieves a certain impact on its audience.

The possible reception of the Byzantines can also be examined on the basis of modern reader-response theories. According to Wolfgang Iser, the reception of a text is controlled by the text itself, since the activities of the so-called “implied reader” (expectations, interpretations, etc.) are confined within the limits laid down by the literary work²⁷. In Byzantium, the author knew or anticipated his immediate audience; hence, the implied reader could be identified with the real reader²⁸. Moreover, the reception of a text depends also on the intention of the author, as well as on the “horizons of expectation” of the extra-textual audience. According to Hans Robert Jaub, this expectation arises from the familiarity of the reader with the genre, the form and the subject matter of earlier similar texts, as well as the language usage (poetic and practical)²⁹. Byzantinist Claudia Rapp argues that the main concern of hagiographical texts “is not the accurate representation of historical events, but the direct involvement of the audience in the narrative”³⁰. And that was exactly what the Byzantines expected at the time, namely to experience a “simulated spectacle” of martyrdom by means of a vivid narrative, from which they could draw models for an exemplary Christian attitude. To achieve this effect was also the fundamental intention of the author, who strove to strengthen the Christian faith in his audience.

Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation, ed. A.-M. TALBOT (= *Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation*, 1), Washington D.C., 1996, pp. 18-19.

²⁷ ISER, *Der Implizite Leser... and Der Akt des Lesens...* (see above n. 2).

²⁸ For a potential identification of the implied reader with the real reader in the Byzantine context, see C. MESSIS, *Public hautement affiché et public réellement visé: le cas de l'Apologie de l'eunuchisme de Théophylacte d'Achrida*, in *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat*. Actes du colloque international, Paris, 5-6-7 juin 2008, ed. P. ODORICO (= *Dossiers Byzantins*, 11), Paris, 2012, pp. 41-43.

²⁹ See JAUB, *Literaturgeschichte...* (see above n. 2), pp. 173-174: “Die Analyse der literarischen Erfahrung des Lesers entgeht dann dem drohenden Psychologismus, wenn sie Aufnahme und Wirkung eines Werks in dem objektivierbaren Bezugssystem der Erwartungen beschreibt, das sich für jedes Werk im historischen Augenblick seines Erscheinens aus dem Vorverständnis der Gattung, aus der Form und Thematik zuvor bekannter Werke und aus dem Gegensatz von poetischer und praktischer Sprache ergibt”. The idea of the so-called “horizons of expectation” (“Erwartungshorizont”) is also investigated in JAUB, *Ästhetische Erfahrung...* (see above n. 2).

³⁰ RAPP, *Storytelling...* (see above n. 1), p. 444.

The extra-textual audience can identify with the intra-textual audience on different levels. The Christian and pagan audience within the text serves as a positive or negative role model (“Identifikationsfigur”) for the Christian extra-textual audience. In particular, if the reactions of the intra-textual audience turn against the martyrs, then they should be avoided. For the ill-intentioned or unconvinced Christians on the extra-textual level, the pagans in the text provide a corresponding role model, as both of them cast doubts on Christianity³¹. As indicated in several Passions, God punishes any hostile attitude against the martyrs on the intra-textual level, by directing the destructive effects of the martyrs’ torture to the pagan bystanders³². This can be seen as an indirect warning by the hagiographer to the extra-textual audience. If, however, the reactions of the intra-textual audience, such as those of the Christian spectators and sometimes even of the pagan crowd, are beneficial for the martyr, they offer appropriate examples for imitation.

In the presence of the audience, the holiness of the martyr is revealed on both the intra-textual and extra-textual level. Watching and admiring the miracles performed on the martyr’s body, the pagan observers are sometimes converted to Christianity, and that results in their immediate punishment through beheading³³. Similarly, the Christian recipients of the text are expected to defend the Christian faith whenever it faces challenges. Even in periods without any threats against Christianity, Christians should emulate the martyrs in their steadfastness of faith and liberation from human passions. Antoine Guillaumont argues that human passions could be defeated through bodily exercise, which leads to the devaluation of the body and the flesh³⁴. Teresa M. Shaw discusses the virtues that someone had to cultivate, such as self-control or abstinence, in order to bridle the

³¹ On the basis of various Byzantine sources, Dagron has shown that the Byzantines were often reserved regarding the truthfulness of the hagiographical literature as far as the saints and God are concerned. See G. DAGRON, *L’ombre d’un doute: l’hagiographie en question, VI^e-XI^e siècle*, in *DOP*, 46 (1992), pp. 59-68. In addition, by discussing examples of hagiographical texts, Kaldellis has recently argued for the Byzantines’ scepticism concerning the saints. See A. KALDELLIS, *The Hagiography of Doubt and Scepticism*, in *The Ashgate Research Companion...* (see above n. 1), II, pp. 453-477.

³² See, for instance, *PPisElAg*, ch. 11 and ch. 13; *PMarSeb*, p. 175.8-19; and *PJulNic*, p. 164.11-17.

³³ See, for example, *PJulNic*, p. 163.12-17, p. 164.1-10 and *PEulEul*, ch. 15.

³⁴ A. GUILLAUMONT, *Le célibat monastique et l’idéal chrétien de la virginité ont-ils des “motivations ontologiques et protologiques”?*, in *La tradizione dell’enkrateia. Motivazioni ontologiche e protologiche*. Atti del Colloquio internazionale, Milano, 20-23 aprile 1982, ed. U. BIANCHI, Rome, 1985, pp. 87-89. Repr. in A. GUILLAUMONT, *Études sur la spiritualité de l’Orient chrétien (= Spiritualité orientale, 66)*, Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 1996, pp. 165-167.

passions of the soul and body³⁵. The idea of consistent *ascesis* which the martyrs promote through their bodily torture contributes decisively to cultivating these virtues. Indeed, Basil the Great mentions in his *Homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (BHG 1205) that through recognition and true beatification (μακαρισμός) of the martyrs, one can become “martyr in intention” (μάρτυς τῆ προαιρέσει) and receive the same reward as them, even if one has not experienced an actual martyrdom³⁶. Basil adds that orators, like painters, should strive to impart, through a vivid description, the courageous attitude of the martyrs as an example for Christians to imitate. In this respect, the “martyr-spectators” can be an ideal model of imitation for the reader/listener, since they follow the example of the martyr-protagonist without reservation.

The relationship between the secondary characters in a narrative and the actual recipients of the texts is not limited to corporeal and spiritual imitation. It may also be extended to their emotional world. In the face of the mistreatment or death of the martyr, the spectators usually cry. Readers and listeners may also share the grief of the spectators for the loss of the martyr. The narration of a death in a text might lead the reader himself to experience a symbolic death³⁷. The text triggers, in this way, emotions in the recipients³⁸, producing an emotional communication between the text and the audience. For example, as stated above, all bystanders, both men and women, empathize with the female martyr Pistis during her martyrdom. In the pre-Metaphrastic *Passion of Sergios and Bakchos* (BHG 1624), these two categories of spectators are complemented by children³⁹. In addition, the Metaphrastic version of the just-mentioned *Passion* (BHG 1625) refers to an intra-textual audience of every age, including apparently young and elderly people, as well⁴⁰. These categories of intra-textual audience correspond to the entire gender and age range of the extra-textual

³⁵ T. M. SHAW, *The Virgin Charioteer and the Bride of Christ. Gender and the Passions in Late Ancient Ethics and Early Christian Writings on Virginity*, in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, ed. A.-J. LEVINE – M. M. ROBBINS (= *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings*, 12), London – New York, 2008, pp. 191-210.

³⁶ See *BasHomMS*, cols. 508-509.

³⁷ W. BRAUNGART, *Ritual und Literatur* (= *Konzepte der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, 53), Tübingen, 1996, p. 35.

³⁸ Cf. H. R. VELTEN, *Performativität. Ältere deutsche Literatur*, in *Germanistik als Kulturwissenschaft. Eine Einführung in neue Theoriekonzepte*, ed. C. BENTHIE – H. R. VELTEN, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2002, p. 228.

³⁹ See *PSerBac*, ch. 27.

⁴⁰ See *Met-PSerBac*, col. 1028.

audience, which might also have consisted of men, women, children, young and elderly people. Thus, the readers/listeners may find themselves in the corresponding figures of the narrative and thereby, experience a “simulated spectacle” of martyrdom.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I hope to have shown that not only the protagonists, but also the secondary characters of Passions could function as potential role models for the Byzantine extra-textual audience. In order to explain the dynamic between martyrs and spectators, I have introduced the concept of “interactive performance”: martyrs and bystanders, whether Christians or pagans, take part in a spectacle. Thus, the observers of the martyrdom become actors and the “fourth wall” between stage and audience on the narrative level is broken. This strategy also grants the readers and listeners of the text direct access to the events of the narrative, because they may recognize themselves in the reactions of the intra-textual audience. In this way, the text becomes a spectacle and the reader or listener turns into a spectator. Overall, the methodology I employed here for the study of the martyrs’ Passions can lead not only to a better understanding of each text, but also to the reconstruction of the relationship between the text and its audience over time.

University of Vienna

Christodoulos PAPAVERNANAVAS

Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
Postgasse 7/1/3
A – 1010 Vienna

Résumé. En examinant quatre Passions de martyrs antérieures au X^e s. – la *Passion de Pistis, Elpis, Agape et leur mère Sophie* (BHG 1637z), la *Passion des dix martyrs de Crète* (BHG 1196), la *Passion des quarante martyrs de Sébaste* (BHG 1201) et la *Passion de Juliana de Nicomédie* (BHG 962z), cet article entend jeter une lumière nouvelle sur la réception de la littérature hagiographique par son public, à savoir l’auditeur et le lecteur byzantins. Pour déterminer les effets des Passions sur l’audience, une comparaison littéraire est établie entre le public intra-textuel et extratextuel. En effet, en considérant de près les personnages secondaires dans les différentes narrations, il semble possible de retracer la manière dont ces personnages ont pu être interprétés comme des modèles inspirant la réaction du public extratextuel. Selon cette approche, le texte devient spectacle et le lecteur ou l’auditeur se mue en spectateur. Cette analyse des Passions peut conduire non seulement à une meilleure compréhension de chaque texte, mais aussi à préciser la relation entre le texte et son public au fil du temps.

Abbreviations

- BasHomBapt* = Basil the Great, *Homilies on Baptism*, in *PG* 31, cols. 1513-1628.
- BasHomMS* = Basil the Great, *Homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (*BHG* 1205), in *PG* 31, cols. 508-525.
- BasHomPs* = Basil the Great, *Homilies on Psalms*, in *PG* 29, cols. 209-494.
- CONSTANTINOY, *Female Corporeal Performances* = S. CONSTANTINOY, *Female Corporeal Performances. Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women* (= *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*, 9), Uppsala, 2005.
- DOP* = *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.
- EncEus* = *The Enkomion of Eustathios and his Family by Niketas David Paphlagon* (*BHG* 643), in *PG* 105, cols. 376-417.
- EphSyrTract* = Ephrem the Syrian, *Treatise* [᾽Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ παίζειν Χριστιανούς], in K. G. PHRANTZOLES, ᾽Οσίου Ἐφραίμ τοῦ Σύρου ἔργα, V, Thessaloniki, 1994, pp. 239-250.
- HØGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes* = C. HØGEL, *Symeon Metaphrastes. Rewriting and Canonization*, Copenhagen, 2002.
- JChrysHomGen* = John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, in *PG* 54, cols. 581-630.
- Met-PEus* = *The Passion of Eustathios and his Family* by Symeon Metaphrastes (*BHG* 642), ed. G. VAN HOOFF, *Acta graeca S. Eustathii martyris et sociorum ejus nunc primum edita ex codice Leidensi*, in *AB*, 3 (1884), pp. 66-112.
- Met-PGalEp* = *The Passion of Galaktion and Episteme* by Symeon Metaphrastes (*BHG* 666), in *PG* 116, cols. 93-108.
- Met-PMarCr* = *The Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete* by Symeon Metaphrastes (*BHG* 1197), ed. F. CORNELIUS, *Creta sacra*, I, Venice, 1755, pp. 157-160.
- Met-PSerBac* = *The Passion of Sergios and Bakchos* by Symeon Metaphrastes, (*BHG* 1625), in *PG* 115, cols. 1006-1032.
- Met-VSam* = *The Life of Sampson the Xenodochos* by Symeon Metaphrastes (*BHG* 1615), in *PG* 115, cols. 277-308.
- PEus* = *The Passion of Eustathios and his Family* (*BHG* 641), in *PG* 105, cols. 376-417, in inf. pag.
- PG* = J.-P. MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, 161 vols., Paris, 1857-1866.
- PGalEp* = *The Passion of Galaktion and Episteme* by Eutolmios (*BHG* 665), in *AASS*, Nov. t. 3, Brussels, 1910, pp. 35-41.
- PJulNic* = *The Passion of Juliana of Nicomedia* (*BHG* 962z), ed. C. ANGELIDE, Τὸ μαρτύριο τῆς ἀγίας Ἰουλιανῆς τῆς ἐκ Νικομηδείας, in *Byzantina*, 9 (1977), pp. 150-166.
- PMarCr* = *The Passion of the Ten Martyrs of Crete* (*BHG* 1196), ed. P. FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI, *Scritti agiografici*, II (= *Studi e Testi*, 222), Città del Vaticano, 1962, pp. 389-400.

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