

CONSTRUCTING SAINTS IN GREEK AND LATIN HAGIOGRAPHY

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Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography

Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative

Edited by

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BREPOLS

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Listen to Her

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

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

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

- 1 I provide translations, commentaries, and detailed analysis of the rewritten versions of the Passions of Tatiana and Ia, as well as for Constantine Akropolites' *Horaiozele of Constantinople* in Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.
- 2 It should be noted that in the earlier version of their stories, sexualization is not as prevalent and voyeuristic as in other Passions of virgin martyrs; however, what little there is, is further minimized in the revised versions and the women's voices are accentuated by contrast.
- 3 I develop the *MT*'s multiplicity more fully in Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.

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

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

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

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- 4 Constantinou, *Female Corporeal Performances*, pp. 19–58 gives the fullest account of virgin martyrs in Greek Passions from the performative and gendered perspectives. See also Frankfurter, 'Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze'.
- 5 The collection by Bynum and Mooney, eds, *Gendered Voices* gives a good range of the different ways male hagiographers in the West utilized female saints for varied purposes. The women she chooses date from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries: Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schönau, Clare of Assisi, Beatrice of Nazareth, Christine of Stommeln, Elsbeth Stigel, Catherine of Siena, and Dorothea of Montau. The collection falls into three distinct groups: women represented both by themselves and by men; women co-authoring with men; and women whose recorded acts contradict their hagiographers' aims. For the female reader, see Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' Lives and the Female Reader' and *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*.
- 6 For this manuscript, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 15–20. Thus far, the compendium has been considered most fully by Rapp, 'Figures of Female Sanctity', pp. 317–20. For the other manuscripts in which these narratives are copied, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. xiii–xiv.
- 7 Hinterberger, 'Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres', p. 40 gives a succinct overview. See also Efthymiadis, 'The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', pp. 68–70 referring to the *Life of Peter of Atroa* by Sabas and the *Life of Euthymios of Sardis* by Methodios. We know that the converse also occurred to correspond to the humble origins of the protagonist, see Rapp, 'Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries', pp. 36–37. Other reasons are outlined by Rapp, 'Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries': stylistic improvement (pp. 34–35); to eliminate objectionable content (p. 38); and to elevate the content with additional material (p. 38).

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

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

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

- 8 Resh, 'Toward a Byzantine Definition of Metaphrasis', pp. 754–87 provides an excellent overview of *metaphrasis* and its development over time with up-to-date bibliography.
- 9 Talbot, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', p. 19, and 'Hagiography in Late Byzantium', pp. 176–79.
- 10 *PI* 52, p. 472: ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Μαγγάνων μονῇ τὸ θεῖον ταύτης λείψανον μετετέθη. All Greek references to the *PI* are from 'Les Versions grecques des actes des martyres persans sous Sapor II', ed. by Delehay, pp. 461–73. All translations are from Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.
- 11 Mavroudi, 'Learned Women of Byzantium and the Surviving Record', p. 53: 'Greek narrative sources created or preserved during the Byzantine period seem to convey a significantly greater amount of information about learned women of the Ancient than of the Byzantine period'. Mavroudi goes on to provide an excellent survey. For examples of learned women from Late Antiquity, see Clark, 'Holy Women, Holy Words', pp. 422–24 with her provisos in the following pages. See also Constantinou, 'Women Teachers in Early Byzantine Hagiography' for an account of female teachers in hagiography.
- 12 There is a prolific bibliography on Katherine and her appeal by western medievalists. A good summary of the variety of interest Katherine inspires is the edited volume by Jenkins and Lewis, *St Katherine of Alexandria*. The best account of Katherine's origins is Chronopoulos, 'The Date and Place of Composition of the Passion of St Katharine of Alexandria', pp. 40–88. Thus far, only Stavroula Constantinou has written at any length on the Greek version of Katherine: Constantinou, 'The Authoritative Voice of St Catherine of Alexandria', pp. 19–38 and *Female Corporeal Performances*, pp. 25–26, 40–41, and 47–48.

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

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

The Narratives

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

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- 13 Both narratives state that the women were martyred in the third century. Their cults can be traced back to the sixth century for Ia and the seventh for Tatiana; see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 36–38 (Ia), pp. 42–43 (Tatiana).
- 14 In scholarship, the virgin martyr is understood as female though this is technically not the case.
- 15 Constantinou, *Female Corporeal Performances* gives brief accounts of fifteen stories with literary and theoretical readings for the texts. Western medievalists have engaged most fully in the construct of the virgin martyr. The bibliography is extensive but some of the most important are Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*; Salih, *Versions of Virginity*, pp. 42–106; Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*, pp. 91–122, and Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?'; pp. 187–213. The pornographic/voyeuristic/sado-erotic aspects of the Passion is the focus of Graval, *Ravishing Maidens*, pp. 21–41 and Frankfurter, 'Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze' but see the cautionary note, among others, in Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300*, p. 67.
- 16 For the full process involved in creating Tatiana's *metaphrasis*, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom* and 'The Hagiographer's Craft'.

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

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

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

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- 17 *PI* 1, p. 115: 'Makarios, who became monk and presbyter, produced the martyrdom of Ia, the saintly and glorious martyr of Christ'. For all details relating to Makarios's reworking process, see Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 45–52; pp. 55–70.
- 18 *PI* 53, p. 141: 'It was then that this present account about the holy martyr was written. Makarios has just supplied a succinct historical timeline ending with the reign of Andronikos.
- 19 Efthymiadis and Kalogeras, 'Audience, Language and Patronage in Byzantine Hagiography', p. 271. They suggest that the length indicates that these types of texts were intended for private reading rather than public recitation.
- 20 Her father has been consul three times (*MT* 2, p. 158). All Greek references to the *MT* are from Halkin's edition of the Passion and the *metaphrasis*: *Légendes grecques de 'Martyres romaines'*, ed. by Halkin, pp. 12–53 for the Passion, and pp. 56–81 for the *metaphrasis*. All translations are from Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*.
- 21 See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, pp. 155–56 n. 2.

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

Tatiana, Ia, and Virgin Martyrs

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

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

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

24 *MT* 3, p. 160.

25 *MT* 15, p. 176.

26 *MT* 15, p. 176.

27 *MT* 8, p. 167.

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

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

Tatiana's Refutation

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

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

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

29 *PI* 8, p. 120.

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

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

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

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

34 See Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.

35 *MT* 8, p. 64: 'ἐπηρώτα'.

36 *MT* 12, p. 69: 'ἐλεγκτικῶς'.

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

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

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

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

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

39 *MT* 13, p. 174.

40 *MT* 13, p. 174.

41 *MT* 13, p. 174.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

47 ‘μεγαλοφώνως’: *MT* 15, pp. 73 and 19, p. 79; ‘μεγαλοφωνότερον’: 17, p. 76.

48 *MT* 17, p. 180.

49 See, for instance, Demosthenes’ *Oration* (6.31) and Isocrates’ *Oration* (*Antidosis*) (15.43).

50 ‘λατρείας’: *MT* 3, p. 58; ‘ἐπίγνωσιν’: 6, p. 61; ‘θεός’: 7, p. 63; 16, p. 74; 17, p. 75.

51 Photios, *Lexicon* (TLG 392).

52 ‘Flattery’ (θωπείας: *MT* 3, p. 58); ‘deceitful flattery’ (κολακευτικοῖς: 15, p. 72); ‘treacherous’ (δολιόγνωμος: 18, p. 78); ‘crafty’ (πολυπλόκου: 9, p. 65); ‘beguile’ (ὑπόυλως: 15, p. 72); ‘duplicitous/deceit’ (δολιότητος: 3, p. 58; 15, p. 72).

53 ‘ἄφασίας’: *MT* 16, p. 75.

54 *MT* 9, p. 168.

55 *MT* 11, p. 171; 16, p. 178 (twice); 18, p. 181.

56 *MT* 16, p. 177 and n. 105.

57 Plato, *Resp.* 519b (‘τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ὄψιν’) and *Symp.* 219a (‘τῆς διανοίας ὄψις’). The idea is to go beyond what is revealed by sense experience to access true reality revealed by the intellect. See Alwis, *Narrating Martyrdom*, p. 175 n. 91.

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

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

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

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

58 *MT* 5, p. 162.

59 ‘ὡς λῆρον’: *MT* 15, p. 73.

60 ‘ἐκωφώδησεν’: *MT* 15, p. 73.

61 Aristotle, *Rh.* 3.17.

62 For this performance helping to read the *MT* as a possible Iconoclast text, see Alwis, ‘The Shape of Water’.

63 *MT* 3, p. 160.

64 *MT* 4, p. 161.

65 *MT* 5, pp. 161–62.

66 *MT* 17, p. 181.

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

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

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

Ia's Voice

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

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

67 *Passion of Tatiana* 17.

68 *Passion of Tatiana* 2.

69 *Passion of Tatiana* 10.

70 See Alwis, 'The Shape of Water'.

71 *PI* 20, p. 126.

72 'πιθανολογία': *PI* 20, p. 126.

73 *PI* 16, p. 123; 16, p. 124; 19, p. 125; 20, p. 126; 43, p. 136.

74 *PI* 15, p. 123.

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

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

Ia and Andronikos II

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

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

75 *PI* 19, p. 126.

76 *PI* 47, p. 138.

77 *PI* 10, p. 121.

78 She is called ‘ἐμφορόνως’ by her tormenters (*PI* 20, p. 466); as well as ‘συνετῶς μάλα’ (28, p. 467) and ‘συνετῶς’ (30, p. 468) by Makarios.

79 *PI* 15, p. 123.

80 *PI* 47, p. 138.

81 Her Passion (BHG 761).

82 *PI* 51, p. 140: ‘Her sorely tried relics were brought back to most blessed Constantinople. A very beautiful church was dedicated to them and they were deposited there, where they faithfully gushed forth many graces of healing to those who approached them.’

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

Ἐπει δὲ κρίμασιν οἷς οἶδε Θεὸς ἢ πόλις ἐάλω τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς, Ἀλεξίου μὲν, οὗ ἐπώνυμος Ἄγγελος, τηρικαῦτα τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπιλημμένου ἀρχῆς, τὸν ἴδιον δὲ ἀδελφὸν Ἰσαάκιον ταύτης ἐξοστρακίσαντος, ἅπαν μὲν τὸ κάλλος ἀπέσβη τῆς πόλεως, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις λαμπροῖς, ὅσον ἐν οἴκοις ἱεροῖς, ὅσον ἐν εὐαγέσι σεμνεῖοις· σὺν τούτοις πᾶσι καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τέμενος τῆς μάρτυρος Ἰας διαφθάρειν, ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Μαγγάνων μονῇ τὸ θεῖον ταύτης λείψανον μετετέθη.

Ἦνίκα καὶ αὖθις Θεὸς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τὴν πόλιν ἀπέδωκεν, ὅσα καὶ σπαράκτας κόρακας ταύτης ἐκδιώξας τοὺς Ἰταλοὺς, τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Παλαιολόγου Μιχαῆλ κατέχοντος τὰς ἡνίας. Τούτου δὲ τῆς βασιλείας διάδοχος, οὐμενοῦν τῆς γνώμης καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸ θεῖον σέβας δόξης, γέγονεν υἱὸς ὁ μεγακλεῆς καὶ μέγας Ἀνδρόνικος, τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας ὠραιότατον στήριγμα, τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀσφαλέστατον καὶ περικαλλὲς ἐδραίωμα, τὸ πάσης ἀρετῆς καὶ καλοκάγαθίας περιδοξὸν ἄκουσμα.

At the time when the Italians conquered the city, God knows by which decrees, Alexios, who was named Angelos, had seized the Roman Empire. He banished his own brother, Isaac, and extinguished every possible beauty of the city — everything in illustrious houses, everything in sacred houses, and everything in innocent monasteries. In addition to all these events, the hallowed sanctuary of Ia, the martyr, was utterly destroyed and so her holy relics were transferred to the Mangana monastery.

At the time when God again restored the city to the Romans and chased away the attacking Italian ravens, Michael Palaiologos possessed the reins as absolute sovereign of the Empire. His successor to the throne, or rather the object of reverence, both in his conscience and in his judgement concerning the divine, was his son, the very famous and great Andronikos, the most vigorous supporter of piety and the most steadfast and resplendent pillar of the Church, who had the most famous reputation (for embodying) every virtue and perfection.⁸⁵

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

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

85 *PI* 52, pp. 140–41.

Alexios is obviously Alexios III Angelos (reigned 1195–1203), who infamously usurped power from his younger brother, Isaac II (reigned 1185–1195). And when Makarios writes of the Italians who conquer the city and then refers to subsequent destruction, he can only be describing the disastrous events of the Fourth Crusade and the infamous sack of Constantinople in 1204.⁸⁶ Thus, Ia's portrayal is positioned amongst some of the most tumultuous chapters in Byzantium's eventful history.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ἐπει δὲ χρόνος παρίπτευσε συχνός, συνεστάλη μὲν ἡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχή, ἠϋξήθη δὲ ἡ τῶν Περσῶν· ἤνικα καὶ Διοκλητιανὸν μὲν τὸν κάκιστον συνέβη οἷς οἶδε Θεὸς κρίμασιν ἐπειλήφθαι τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς, τῆς τῶν Περσῶν δὲ Σαβώριον τὸν μιάρόν.

After a long time had passed, the Roman Empire contracted while the Persian Empire expanded. [...] it happened that the utterly evil Diocletian seized the Roman Empire – God knows by which decrees – while the abominable Shapur seized the Persian Empire.⁹⁶

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

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

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

94 *PI* 52, p. 141: 'ἡ πόλις ἔάλω τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς [...] κόρακας [...] τοὺς Ἰταλοὺς.'

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

96 *PI* 2, pp. 116–17.

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

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

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

Τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς εἰς μέγα δυνάμεως ἀφιγμένης, ἤδη τῆς τῶν Μακεδόνων παυσαμένης, ὡς μὴ μόνον τοῦδε τοῦ ἔθνους ἢ τοῦδε κατάρχειν δυναμένης ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν παγκόσμιον τὸ κράτος κεκτημένης, Ὀκταβίου τοῦ τρικαῦτα, ὃς καὶ Αὐγουστος ἐκαλεῖτο, τὴν δυναστείαν ταύτης περιεζωσμένου, ἦν δῆπου καὶ ῥάβδον σιδηρᾶν ἄνωθεν ὁ θεῖος προεῖπε Δαβίδ, πεντακοσιοστοῦ πρὸς τοῖς πεντακισχιλίοις ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, ἀπὸ δέ γε Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀρχῆς ἑξακοσιοστοῦ ἔτους συμπεραινομένου, ὁ συναΐδιος καὶ παντέλειος καὶ ὁμοούσιος τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ Θεὸς λόγος ὁ δημιουργὸς πάσης ὀρατῆς καὶ ἀοράτου φύσεως [...].

By the time the Roman Empire came to great power, the Macedonian empire had already ended. And so the Roman Empire could govern any nation it chose, and had acquired almost absolute sovereignty. Under these circumstances, Octavian, also known as Augustus, girded the empire with this power and (ruled with) *an iron rod*, which, indeed, the divine David foretold on high. This he accomplished 5500 years after the Creation of the world and 600 years after Alexander's domination. At that time, God the Word, co-eternal, perfect, and consubstantial with God and Father, the Creator of all visible and invisible nature [...].⁹⁹

97 *PI* 52, p. 140.

98 *PI* 52, p. 141.

99 *PI* 1, pp. 115–16.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 106 Even though the sexualization/silencing of virgin martyrs leads to their objectification, the power gained by their mental and vocal resistance allows them to become subjects (Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?'). McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins from Thecla to Joan of Arc* argues that female authors in the West used their virgin martyrs to explore female agency, rescuing them from their silencing by male authors. However, this is too reductive as differences in, say, plot or genre, are credited to the author's gender.
- 107 See, for example, Alwis, *Celibate Marriages in Late Antique and Byzantine Hagiography*, pp. 52–54 and the *Passion of Julian and Basilissa* where the grief of the pagan governor Markianos when he loses his son, Kelsios to Julian and Christianity is emotively portrayed.
- 108 *PI* 2, p. 117: 'She ran through the course of martyrdom like a man, for the glory of Christ, and so doubly won the crown of righteousness'; *MT* 17, p. 180: 'The manly minded martyr'.
- 109 *MT* 20, p. 185; *PI* 55, p. 143.
- 110 But also see Wilkinson, *Women and Modesty* on how the performance of modesty (including in speech) may provide some agency for women. For 'the modest mouth', see pp. 86–116.
- 111 To name just a few: the *Life of Melania* 41, 43, 65 (ed. by Clark); *Life of Macrina* 21 (ed. by Maraval); abbesses who rebuke: *Life of Theodora of Thessalonike* 26–27 (ed. by Talbot); *Typikon of the Convent of the Mother of God Kekcharitomene in Constantinople* 49 (trans. by Jordan).

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

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

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

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

112 *MT* 2, p. 158.

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

114 My thanks to Kelli Rudolph for this suggestion.

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

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

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

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117 At least as far back as ancient Greece and the women of Greek tragedy. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* is essential reading for understanding gender relations in connection with the polis.

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