Monika Fludernik

Narratorial Involvement in Hagiography: Chaucer, the Scottish Legendary and Lydgate's Albon and Amphibalus

Let me start with a few personal remarks. The choice of topic for this essay, part of work in progress, is linked to one aspect of F.K. Stanzel's œuvre which is often being neglected or ignored in accounts of his narratological work, namely its diachronic perspective. Stanzel was trained as a traditional philologist and studied the history of the English language, especially on the basis of Herbert Koziol's works on historical linguistics of the English language (Luick 1940; Koziol 1937; 1967). In his first year as a professor at the University of Graz, he had to teach both linguistics (i.e. Old and Middle English) and literature. The department soon diversified with, eventually, two professors of English literature and representatives of both modern linguistics and historical linguistics among the faculty by the time I studied there in the 1970s. Although he by then exclusively taught English literature, Stanzel's excellent knowledge of the history of the English language showed in his teaching and also predisposed him towards asking questions about chronology and diachronic development in his research. Thus, when teaching Tom Jones (1749), in which dialectal vair for fair occurs in representations of characters' speech, Stanzel pointed out that this oddity was historically motivated and the v/f alternation could also be observed in the initial consonant of vixen, the female of fox. When teaching the History of English Poetry lecture, Stanzel always started out with the Middle English poem "Sumer is icumen in." He was one of the few narratologists to consider Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller (1594) as a forerunner of the novel genre. Stanzel's interest in history can also be gleaned from his work on imagology and his path-breaking study of telegony, the influence of observed objects on the foetus carried by women during pregnancy and even at the time of conception.¹

In Stanzel's narratological work, he did not only treat a variety of different periods of English literature – as the Bibliography appended to this special issue documents, his essays range from the Elizabethan era all the way to postmodernism –; he also focused on questions of historical development. As Ansgar and Vera Nünning point out in this volume, the typological circle illustrates the gradual filling in of empty spaces over time, especially in terms of the rise of figural narrative. For obvious typological and historical reasons, the genesis of reflector mode narration was one of the key topics in Stanzel's research. I have myself reminded readers of Stanzel's theses about perspectivization, that is, his demonstration of the predominance of aperspectivism in much

¹ As Stanzel's research assistant in the early 1980s, I was involved in tracing examples of telegony, and since then have developed a detective eye for the constellation, sending Stanzel numerous references to texts. Recently, I have encountered the topos as far afield as contemporary Chinese-American literature.
early description of interiors and the turn to more perspectival representations in conjunction with figural narrative (Stanzel 1984, 117-125; Fludernik 2014; 2017).

My own work has been crucially inspired by Stanzel's diachronic focus, which has served as a model for my own interest regarding the development of narrative through the centuries (2003a). In what follows, I present a partial summary of a chapter on the genre of the saint's legend, to be published as part of a two-volume study of the development of narrative structure from around 1300 to 1700. I focus on the functions of the narrator and the creation of a narratorial persona in three different examples from the cusp of the 15th century: a selection of lives from the Scottish Legendary (Metcalfe 1968); the two 'saints' legends' included in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales; and a long legend of two saints by John Lydgate. My choice of texts is motivated by the restrictions in space for this article but also by the fact that the period of the late 14th and early 15th centuries is the point at which narratorial presence becomes increasingly foregrounded in English hagiography. All three items in the corpus for this essay participate in a major shift in the function and status of the narrator. While earlier legends display a very reduced bardic narrator persona, Lydgate's 15th-century followers Capgrave and Bokenham imitate and extend this framework of narratorial involvement.

1. Narratorial Functions

There exist two major typologies of narratorial discourse and its various functions from the period after Stanzel's Theory of Narrative (1984): Ansgar Nünning's essay "Die Funktion von Erzählinstanzen: Analysekategorien und Modelle zur Beschreibung des Erzählverhaltens" (1997) and Marie-Laure Ryan's "The Narratorial Functions" (2001). While Ryan proposes three main types of communicative functions, Nünning lists four basic categories with numerous subcategories. I attempt to illustrate the two typologies in Figure 1.

At first blush, the terminology of the two models suggests that they might be compatible, but in actual fact they focus on quite different levels of narration: "My three functions [...] belong to a deeper level of analysis than the categories of classical narratology. I view them as categorical headings, under which the descriptive features catalogued by narratologists can be subsumed" (Ryan 2001, 148). Ryan's creative function concerns the "activity of shaping and encoding the story, of forming discourse in the mind," and it produces the impression of "a narratorial self" or, minimally, "reflects on the storytelling competence of a specific individual" (147). In authorial narrative, this function becomes problematic since the narrator persona needs to be very much foregrounded to claim responsibility for the chronological rearrangements or aspects like speed and stance, while – qua speaker – the choice of rhetorical elements and economy vs. digressivity are more probably linked to narratorial agency. Self-presentation (to the extent that it is explicit in the text) is obviously narrator-related, but may also be interpreted as the author's voice, presumably corresponding to Nünning's synthetic function rather than his expressive function as subcategory of his fourth category. When we turn to reflector mode narrative, all the creative functions in Ryan's model are to be ascribed to either the author or the reflector character (stance, rhetorical devices), since there is by definition no narrator persona in figural narratives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. creative (or self-expressive) function</td>
<td>1. erzähltechnische Funktion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• control of rhetorical devices</td>
<td>• Darstellung und Beschreibung einer fiktiven Welt (Zeit, Ort, Medium, Figuren, Ereignisse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• speed</td>
<td>2. analytische Funktion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stance</td>
<td>• interpretierende Darstellung der fiktiven Welt (explanativ, evaluierend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• self-presentation</td>
<td>• explizite Korrektur der Figurenperspektive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• chronological rearrangement</td>
<td>3. synthetische Funktion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• economy vs. digressivity</td>
<td>• verallgemeinernde Äußerungen (Allgemeingültigkeit, phatische Funktion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. transmissive (or performative) function</td>
<td>• Normen bestärkt oder differenziert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• written or oral</td>
<td>• Selbstcharakterisierung des Sprechers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• genre conventions</td>
<td>4. vermittlungsbezogene Funktionen (Bezug auf Erzählvorgang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. testimonial function</td>
<td>• expressive Funktion (Äußerungen des Erzählers über sich)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reliability</td>
<td>• appellative Funktion (Leseranreden bzw. andere Äußerungen, mit denen sich der Erzähler direkt oder indirekt an den fiktiven Adressaten wendet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• source of knowledge</td>
<td>• phatische Funktion (Äußerungen, die primär zur Stabilisierung des Kommunikationskanals dienen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sincerity</td>
<td>• metanarrative Funktion (Äußerungen, in denen Aspekte des Erzählvorgangs thematisiert werden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Narrative Functions Ryan vs. Nünning

Nünning, on the other hand, focuses, first, on what I would call the referential functions of narratorial discourse, i.e., the primary task of the narrator in locating the story, introducing the characters in their setting, and telling what happened. The (neutral) presentation of the (fictional or factual) world of the story is medium-dependent to the extent that the affordances of different media allow for diverse ways...
of presenting the storyworld. There is therefore here a possible link to Ryan's transmissive function.

Nünning's second category, which one might call the interpretative or evaluative function, concerns narratorial commentary of an explanatory or evaluative type. It is distinguished from the third category, in which generalizations and norms are at issue. The main difference consists in the object of the commentary. Function 2 targets the fictional world – it comments on the characters and the specific circumstances in which they find themselves –, whereas function 3 concerns general comments on the world as in gnomic utterances. With regard to the evaluative tenor of such comments, Nünning shrewdly observes that these serve to establish a moral rapport with the audience and therefore also have a phatic function. It should be noted that factual narratives in principle can also distinguish between general reflections, say, on political corruption and more specific commentary on the persons with whom the text is concerned, for instance, remarks on Boris Johnson's actions and utterances in the context of the 2019 attempt to prorogue parliament. However, since such a representation of (real) events refers to the real world, the journalist's generalizations are addressed as directly to his or her readers as are the comments on Johnson; for factual narratives, the importance of a distinction between functions 2 and 3 in Nünning's model is therefore a matter of grade. For fictional narrative, on the other hand, the separation of functions is crucial since it relates to two different levels of the narrative communication model, namely the levels of the narratee (function 2) versus that of the implied reader (and, by these means, the real contemporary reader). Nünning's subcategory of the self-characterization of the narrator is, I think, not a real subcategory since it is not an intentional function but an implicit effect: by uttering generalizing statements, the narrator also exposes his or her own preconceptions and world views as well as personal quirks.

Finally, Nünning's fourth category focusing on the narrational process is perhaps the most important. It combines a number of functions that all relate to the communicative level of the narrative and the act of narration. In rough alignment with Jakobson's model of linguistic functions, the expressive function concerns the self-characterization of the speaker, but also exclamations and emotional stance. The appellative function of address to the narratee and the phatic function – keeping the channel open – require little comment on my part. Nünning's metanarrative function, which focuses on the act of narration, departs from Jakobson's model, where metalinguistic commentary mostly concerns the semantics and materiality of the linguistic medium rather than the act of speaking. In fact, the metanarrative function à la Nünning can be subdivided into further functions, distinguishing a variety of types of comments on the act of narration. For instance, these can (minimally) be concerned with what I have called metadiscursive cross-references (Fludernik 2003b), with the intentions of the storyteller in relating the story, with the sources for the narrative, the writer's problems of composition, and with the form and style of the narrative discourse. It also includes comments on 'shifts' between plot strands or themes ('I will now turn to; 'It may be useful to explain here'). Metanarrative statements may additionally discuss the narrative's importance or impact, which often goes hand in hand with giving reasons for telling the story in the first place.
Both models, Nünning’s and Ryan’s, are based on the assumption that narratives have narrator personae – not an assumption shared by the representatives of no-narrator theory (Banfield 1982; Patron 2009; 2021).² For medieval texts, in particular, this assumption has been queried and at times vigorously rejected (Spearing 2005; 2012; 2015; 2021; Haferland 2007; Glauch 2009; 2010; Plotke 2017; Kragl 2019). Since I will be talking about the narrator in hagiographic texts from the later medieval period, a few remarks are in order on my use of the term narrator.

Medievalists question the usefulness of the term narrator because they argue that the medieval reader or listener did not distinguish between author and narrator – the narrator was taken to be the author. Discourse narratologists like myself, on the other hand, ground the existence of a narrator in the linguistic signals of a ‘speaker’ in the text, assuming that in fictional texts the author speaks by proxy in the words of a narratorial persona that is the alter ego of the author, but in some instances may be clearly designed to project an image of a very specific (fictional) character, not at all identical with the author. For the purposes of the present article, it does not much matter whether we have to do with an author or a narrator, since what is of interest will be the configuration of narratorial voice. Nevertheless, two comments on this rather deadlocked controversy suggest themselves.

Medieval narratives display a number of contextual frame conditions that impact on the author vs. narrator question. For one, many medieval texts are anonymous, hence, one does not have an author to link them to. This is particularly true of the hagiographical genre before Chaucer. Yet these texts do have a foregrounded ‘voice’ of narration. Due to the performance of saints’ lives and romances in oral contexts, that voice is often ascribed to the ‘bard’ who is telling the story, with the author relegated to the background and often unknown. In English literature, the hagiography and the romances are mostly anonymous before the 14th century, where we then have Langland, Gower and Chaucer, but also the Pearl Poet. (By contrast, in French and German medieval literature, there are many more known authors and the question of the author-narrator distinction is therefore particularly important.)

It should moreover be pointed out that the author – narrator distinction is a recent innovation in the history of literary studies. For heterodiegetic narratives, the necessity of establishing a narrator persona continues to be uphill work for educators, and even much narratologically aware criticism continues to use formulae like ‘What Dickens says about Inspector Bucket.’ Nevertheless, the usefulness of the concept is patent: in Fielding, it helps us distinguish a narrator from the historical author, since that narrator is emphatically foregrounded as a fictionalized persona. For those who agree to the construct of the implied author, the question is less controversial, since there can be a gliding scale of specificity and fictionalization, with a speaker who is a surrogate of the implied author at one end of the scale and a foregrounded narratorial persona at the other. For figural narrative, only the implied author is assumed to be responsible for the referential functions of the narrative discourse. What I wish to say is that the author –

² Ryan discusses this point in her two tables (2001, 149-150).
³ Here, Layamon’s Brut is an exception, and ‘he’ also refers to himself in the third person (Spearing 2005, 13-15).
narrator distinction is controversial even for non-medieval texts. However, its heuristic value lies not in the identification of the narratorial persona as a narrator or an author but in the description of the various forms and functions of the narrative discourse and the extent of profiling the teller figure in the text.

As long as we have a bard delivering the story, the author disappears from view, since the bard or minstrel reincarnates the author (Spearing 2005, 50-59). Authorial narratives with a foregrounded narrator figure could therefore be treated as instances of pseudo-orality (" fingierte Mündlichkeit" – Goetsch 1985; see also Spearing 2012; 2015): they adopt and stage a teller persona within the written medium, where no speaker but only a writer could appear as narrator. This 'teller' is the producer of a written discourse but residually invokes the act of (oral) storytelling. Yet there are also very colloquial and 'oral' tellers in the kind of novels that Paul Goetsch discussed as examples of pseudo-orality, namely works like Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) with its peripheral first-person narrator Thady. One reason for the increased tendency in the 18th century to foreground authorial narrators and present them as an 'Ich mit Leib' (Stanzel 2008, 127; a 'narrator with a body') may be the rise of first-person narratives – very rare in medieval literature except in dream narratives – and of the pseudo-factual mode (see Paige 2011 for the French novel). Both 'genres' or modes foreground the teller persona and may therefore have had an influence on Fielding and later authorial narratives in the 19th century that likewise highlight the narrator figure. And this narrator persona thus foregrounded, one does well to underline, is a quite variable entity with a whole panorama of manifestations from a mere teller figure all the way to a pompous author figure with didactic pretensions.

Besides anonymity, there is the case of the well-known author who is taken to be identical to the narratorial voice and even assumes this role quite explicitly, as does Chaucer as pilgrim in the *Canterbury Tales*, especially also in the final retraction. Instead of inventing a distinct narrator, fictionalizations of this voice often take the form of allegorization. In James I's *Kingis Quair*, for instance, or in Charles d'Orléans' poem cycle, we assume an autobiographical framework, but when Charles meets with Cupid, this is no longer a literal or factual narrative. Both 'genres' or modes foreground the teller persona and may therefore have had an influence on Fielding and later authorial narratives in the 19th century that likewise highlight the narrator figure. And this narrator persona thus foregrounded, one does well to underline, is a quite variable entity with a whole panorama of manifestations from a mere teller figure all the way to a pompous author figure with didactic pretensions.

Besides anonymity, there is the case of the well-known author who is taken to be identical to the narratorial voice and even assumes this role quite explicitly, as does Chaucer as pilgrim in the *Canterbury Tales*, especially also in the final retraction. Instead of inventing a distinct narrator, fictionalizations of this voice often take the form of allegorization. In James I's *Kingis Quair*, for instance, or in Charles d'Orléans' poem cycle, we assume an autobiographical framework, but when Charles meets with Cupid, this is no longer a literal or factual narrative. Both 'genres' or modes foreground the teller persona and may therefore have had an influence on Fielding and later authorial narratives in the 19th century that likewise highlight the narrator figure. And this narrator persona thus foregrounded, one does well to underline, is a quite variable entity with a whole panorama of manifestations from a mere teller figure all the way to a pompous author figure with didactic pretensions.

4 Compare Spearing (2005, 197-198; 229-247) and Fludernik (2019, 486-489).
starts to emerge more clearly, but of course also less distinctly than in Fielding.\(^6\) What these discussions show is the importance of fictionality. I would argue that Chaucer's work already playfully engages with its fictionality by freely manipulating the facts of the (historical) sources of the tale.

The second important consideration in treating medieval texts is their historiographic nature: romances purport to tell true stories on the authority of previous narratives that are taken to be historical documents (Spearing 2005, 21). Such an assumption is relevant both for the early romances and the early hagiography, but at times gives way to a more critical assessment of sources; see, for instance, in the *South English Legendary* story of St. John the Baptist (1967 Bk. I, 241-242; ll. 1-12), where the narrator tries to account for St. John's failure to produce miracles. In Chaucer, who is obviously influenced by Boccaccio, the historical truthfulness of the record is being creatively manipulated, and this manipulation allows for the installation of a voice that projects a fictionalized authorial narrator relatable to the implied author rather than necessarily the historical person of Chaucer, even though the distinction would have been invisible to the contemporary reader.\(^7\)

On the basis of the above observations, I will use the term *narrator* in this essay but with the proviso that it is a technical term for the contours of the narratorial functions and the textual voice as these are inscribed in the text.

2. Narratorial Functions at the Turn of the 15th Century

In what follows I will discuss a development towards the increased foregrounding of narratorial presence between the *Scottish Legendary* (*ScL*) and Lydgate's epic verse legend, *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*.

Let me start with the *ScL*. This work, here discussed on the basis of W.M. Metcalfe's 1891 edition (reprinted 1968), has been preserved in one manuscript, Cambridge University Library Gg 2.6. Its date is set in the 1380s; its author or authors are unknown, but the dialect allows us to assume the Aberdeen area as origin (von Contzen 2016, 225-229). There is some controversy regarding the authorship of the *ScL*, with all parties agreeing that the first fourteen lives are not only in the hand of the same scribe but also from the same author, and a dissensus on the authorship of the second half (see Metcalfe 1968, xxv-xxxi; von Contzen 2016, 219-224). In work in progress, I am

---

\(^6\) Here, I beg to differ from Spearing's treatment of *Troilus and Criseyde* (2005, 68-100), who argues that if we have a realistic teller figure, he could not know about the characters' consciousness. For an authorial narrator (of course a convention), this ability is not problematic; despite Chaucer's deployment of the strategy of the unknowing narrator (compare Füger's "Nichtwissen des Erzählers in Fieldings 'Joseph Andrews'" [1978/2004]), another convention which Chaucer possibly was the first to use in the discourse of his narratorial persona, the narrator is definitely omniscient. Spearing (2005, 85 and 125-126) in fact provides examples of the playful strategy of the unknowing author.

\(^7\) In *Medieval Autographies*, Spearing in fact traces what could be described as textual evidence for a proto-narrator in the genre of the *dits*, in the Chaucerian prologues of the *Canterbury Tales* as well as in Hoccleve and Bokenham (2012).
arguing that the use of discourse markers varies between individual lives and therefore suggests different authorship.

Thanks to Eva von Contzen's PhD thesis, published in 2016 as *The Scottish Legendary. Towards a Poetics of Hagiographic Narration*, my presentation of the narratorial presence in the legendary can rely on the results of her study, which is the only book-length critical treatment of the work and the only narratological analysis of hagiography. Von Contzen provides a list and discussion of various narratorial functions which include the following: the articulation of the purpose of the composition (providing against idleness); cross-references to other legends; shifts from the narrator's discourse back to the story; expressions of belief ('I trov,' see "I trow" – 1968, I 283; "I treu" – II 288, l. 580; von Contzen 2016, 64); explanatory and didactic comments (65); evaluations of actions and characters; prayers; and digressions (to which von Contzen devotes extensive analysis, 2016, 67-77). There is even a passage referring to the narrator-author as an old man (1968, I 2; l. 35; see Metcalfe 1968, xxvi) and one in which he says he is too weary to write (II 153; ll. 27-28; see von Contzen 2016, 72). Von Contzen notes that there are no formulae of modesty and no invocations of divine assistance (2016, 59-60).

In order to document in what manner the ScL profiles the narratorial voice, let me briefly compare two legends from the *South English Legendary* (SEL), composed in the 13th century, with the corresponding lives in the ScL, namely "XV. Barnabas" in the ScL with "St. Barnabas" in the SEL, and the two Mary Magdalene legends.

In the SEL, the narratorial voice is present in a much less profiled manner than in the ScL. The opening of the legend in the SEL has two brief abstract passages (1967, I, 217; ll. 1-2, l. 10), which summarize that Barnabas was a martyr. Wedged between is an orientational passage that tells of Barnabas' conversion and the selling of his goods. The emphasis is on the referential function of the narrative, with the pronoun *our* ("After þat oure swete Louerd ðe heuene him gan wende" [l. 3]) positioning the narrative voice on the same level as the audience. By contrast, the ScL foregrounds the narratorial persona as a didactic conveyer of religious information. This speaker starts out by saying that some people believe Barnabas to have been an apostle, but that is incorrect (1968, I, 249; ll. 1-8), and goes on to refer to the Bible, listing the twelve apostles. Quoting from the Gospels, the narrator goes on to argue that Jesus sent out many other people to preach his message (250; ll. 36-42). At the end of this 'prologue,' the narrator turns to the story: "quhare to for now me lest nocht rek, / bot of barnabas I wil speke" ("To which [about what the Gospels say] for now I will not concern myself, / but speak about Barnabas' [250; ll. 43-44]; translations here and elsewhere are mine).


9 The textual history of the SEL is extremely complex – see Görlach (1974; 1998). Roughly, composition of the earliest versions may be dated to the late 12th century, with manuscripts extant from the early and late 13th century to the 14th and 15th centuries.

10 "Sein Barnabe þe apostel . þat god was and hende / Imartred was for Godes loue . in strong deþ atte nende" (ll. 1-2); "And ymartred wiþ hom was . for loue of Cristendom" (l. 10).
This is a clear shift from the level of the narrating voice to the reporting of the story and the storyworld.

The first episode, Barnabas' conversion of wise men in Cyprus (SEL)/Anemoria (ScL), does not have any foregrounded narratorial element; the only difference is that the exchange between Barnabas and the pagans is partially in indirect discourse in the ScL (1968, I, 251; ll. 61-663). The ScL adds a section commenting on the name Barnabas (250; ll. 45-46) – echoing the Legenda aurea etymologies – and also a few lines on Barnabas receiving money from the pagans and handing it to the poor (252; ll. 102-106).

Both SEL and ScL move on to the healing of Symon (SEL)/Thymone (ScL), with the SEL having a longer passage about Barnabas' reiterated healing of sick people and a narratorial comment at the end: "Muche fair miʒte oure Louerd haþ" (‘Our Lord has much power’ [1967, I, 219; l. 74]). Such a comment is missing in the much shorter passage in the ScL. The SEL then disparagingly refers to an evil Jew ("a luþer Giu" [220; l. 79]) who alerts the "luþer Iustice" to Barnabas' preaching and leads to the saint's arrest and torture (82-86). In the ScL, by contrast, we go through a series of miracles performed by Barnabas. At the end, a "wikyt baryene" ('baron' [1968, I, 169]) 'began to show his wickedness' (l. 172) and has Barnabas arrested "and wrocht hym wa" ('made him suffer' [lit. 'worked him woe'] [l. 176]). Here, the evaluative adjectives are more strongly foregrounded in the ScL.

The tendency for the ScL to expand the story, to add comments by the narrator on the characters and to preach to the audience can be seen in many other legends. For instance, the SEL life of Mary Magdalene has only one reference to a source ("Iwrite it is þat heo was iwedded" [1967, I, 303; l. 11]) and the final communal prayer (315; ll. 351-352). By contrast, in the ScL the narratorial presence is much more foregrounded. There is an opening prayer addressed to Jesus ("lowyt þu be" – 'Praised be you;' [1968, I, 256; l. 1]); the text also includes several references to the Gospel as source text: "as we In þe ewangeliste red" (l. 7); "& als þi-selfe [Christ] sais" (l. 10); "as we red" (257; l. 42); "as men fyndis in haly wryt" (l. 47); "þus says haly wryte" (261; l. 180). The

11 'Whom I ask with all my heart now / that he may ask Jesus / that I may leave this world / without shame, debt or deadly sin.' Translations are my own throughout the essay.
inexpressibility topos is used when the narrator refers to his inability to represent the grief of the prince who loses his wife: "mar dule he mad þan I cane say" (‘he made more moan than I can tell’) (272; l. 559). We moreover find a gnomic comment on women being pigheaded (267; ll. 405-408). In addition, the narrator formulaically refers to his beliefs (“I trew” [283; l. 939]; see also "as we trev" [258; l. 88]) and provides explanations about distances between places (279; ll. 815-824), adding "þu sal wite" (‘you shall know’) (l. 819), addressing the narratee. Proximal deixis is used when the narrator empathetically projects himself onto the plot level, referring to the baby born on the ship with the proximal temporal deictic "nov" (‘now’) (269; l. 461). When Mary anoints Jesus, we even get an insight into Simeon’s thoughts, about which the narrator speculates:

In til nyme-selhe he thoct but vene,
had þis bene prophet, as we twe,
he had noch thohty gote sinful now
tweche hyme. jane lhesu ful rathe
hyme blamyt, & hir synn forgafe. (259; ll. 122-126)\footnote{Unto himself he thought without doubt / (if) this had been a prophet as we believe / he would not have suffered that sinful (person) now / to touch him. Then Jesus quickly / blamed him (chided him) and forgave her her sin.}

Simeon 'without doubt' and 'as we believe' is appalled at Jesus allowing the sinner Mary to touch him. This also leads to a comment on Mary's intentions introduced by a rhetorical question of the narrator: "with quhat seruice se we now / þis woman to cum to ples ihesu?" (‘With what service do we now / see this woman arrive to please Jesus?’) (259; ll. 127-128). Moreover, the narrator explicitly 'manages' the narratorial process, indicating that "now here of hyre [i.e. Mary Magdalene] we begyne" (257; l. 51). Note the double proximal deixis (now, here). After having turned to Martha and Lazarus, the narrator marks a shift back to the main subject, again employing here and now:

of martha now na ['nor'] of laʒare
here now wil I spek na mare ['no more'],
bot of mary we wil begyne […]. (258; ll. 81-83)

At the end of the legend, the narrator even refers back to his previous discourse: "quhare-of I tauld þou her before" (284; l. 990).

I have documented how the ScL expands the presence of the narratorial role both quantitatively and in terms of the categories of narratorial functions. When we look at Lydgate (here treated as representative of 15th-century verse hagiography), an even more extensive expansion of narratorial functions can be observed both in quantity and variety. Among the most notable additions to the inventory of authorial or narratorial strategies is the prologue or proëmium, which does not only occur as an opening section in epics\footnote{I here refer to the distinction between 'epic' hagiography (Capgrave's St. Katherine, Lydgate's Saints Edmund and Fremund) and shorter lives.} and books within these epic texts but appears even in shorter legends like Lydgate's "Saint Margaret," Bokenham's life of St. Caecilia and, arguably, in the invocatio of Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale." Prologues provide the opportunity to
foreground the historical author as composer of the text, for instance by means of dedications or explicit references to a patron or patroness (especially relevant for Bokenham's verse); they also allow the author to say something about his own life (as already in the ScL), to discuss the intentions of the work and the sources. In many cases, the prologue or proëmium includes an epic invocation to a muse, sometimes in the person of the saint, at other times the prologue is apostrophically directed to God or Mother Mary, asking for their help writing the legend.

Chaucer's two hagiographical tales, "The Priorress's Tale" (Group B2) and "The Second Nun's Tale" (Group G), are stylistically different from his romance tales like "The Man of Law's Tale" or "The Clerk's Tale," which have a thematic affinity with saintliness of behaviour and long-suffering patience in their protagonists. In particular, both romances are much longer and plot-laden, with several settings and plot-strands in the "The Man of Law's Tale."\(^{14}\)

The Priorress's Prologue, like her tale, does not show any signs of a personalized narratorial or authorial persona. The prologue reads like a very stereotypical opening of a saint's legend with a likewise cliché modesty formula in the final stanza ("My konnyng is so wayk" ['My knowledge/ability is so weak'] [1970, 375; l. 481]) and a plea for help to Mother Mary as a kind of muse. The typical elements of a saint's legend are even more pronounced in the much longer prologue to "The Second Nun's Tale" (119 lines). This prologue starts, as a homily against idleness, a declaration of intent to avoid idleness by telling the legend "in translation" (l. 25). It is combined with a direct address to the saint: it is 'your' life 'I' want to tell, "Thee meane I, mayde and martyr, Seint Cecilie" (l. 28). This is followed by an "Invocatio ad Mariam" (intertitle, 1970, 478), in which after a litany of apostrophes and praises to Mary, she is requested to aid the speaker, "Me, flemed wrecche" ('banished exile' [479, l. 58]), to have her sins forgiven. The invocatio ends with an address to the audience reading the legend, "praying" them to forgive her unskilled rendering of what she is translating ("Yet preye I yow that reden that I write" [479, l. 78]). The fact that the producer of this prologue writes rather than tells in her own voice underlines the lack of a verisimilar situation of performing a narrative in the presence of the other pilgrims. The prologue ends with etymologies of Caecilia's name (taken out of Voragine), concluding with a narratorial formula, "Now have I yow declared what she highte" (480, l. 119). This is the only place in the prologue where one could assume that the second nun is 'speaking.'

In the legend/tale itself, two typical formulaic references to the source(s) appear: "as hir lif seith" (481, l. 120), "as I wryten finde" (l. 124); we also have a reference to narratorial succinctness in the line "To tellen shortly the conclusioun" (488, l. 394). The only other narratorial element in the text, which overwhelmingly stages the verbal confrontations between Caecilia and her antagonists, is a homiletic insertion commenting on Valerian's dream by citing St. Ambrose verbatim for ten lines (485, ll. 270-285).

\(^{14}\) In terms of the use of the historical present there is also a significant difference, with the two 'romances' having more than twice the instances of the HPR than the hagiographic tales (see Fludernik, forthcoming). On a close analysis of Chaucer's 'hagiography,' see Broughton (2010).
At the end of the legend, there is no final prayer and we conclude with St. Urban's burial of the saint's body.

"The Prioress's Tale" is even less given to foregrounding a narrator's voice. Only at the end do we have an exclamation on the part of the teller: "Ther he is now, God leve us for to mete" ('There lies he now [the murdered chorister in his marble coffin], God grant (us) that we may meet him' [381, l. 683]).

We can therefore note that in the two hagiographical tales Chaucer imitated the traditional shape of the saint's legend very closely; this meant that metanarrative formulae and narratorial comments occurred only in fairly reduced form and the prayers and invocations in the prologue were extended; these latter are not really narratorial in the sense of linking to the prioress or the second nun as a fictional persona: do we really believe the second nun has written the translation to avoid idleness and is now reading (?) it to the other pilgrims?

Lydgate's *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus* (ca. 1439) is a text I would like to dwell on in more detail. The legend of these two patron saints of England goes back to the venerable Bede. St. Alban's life appears in the SEL but not in the ScL, which has no English or indeed Scottish saints. The reader may be familiar with the legend from Deloney’s proto-novel *The Gentle Craft* (1597/1961), where it occurs in combination with the legend of St. Winifred.

The 15th-century verse hagiographers have been influenced by Chaucer in terms of style, rhetoric and narrative strategies. Thus, Lydgate in *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus* has several passages resembling Chaucer's opening April passage from the *Canterbury Tales*, for instance Bk. II, ll. 919-923: "Whan somer flores blew, whiht, and rede, / Wer in the hyghest lusty fressh sesoun, / And fyry ["fiery"] Phebus from the Crabbis ["Cancer","July"] hede / Took his passage toward the Leoun ["Leo","August"], / At Verolamye, into the roial toun [. . .]" (1985, 80). Another common feature in Lydgate, Capgrave and Bokenham is their recourse to modesty formulae, meant to set their work in relation to illustrious predecessors like Chaucer, but also canonical authors in antiquity, and to feign self-disparaging inferiority:

Pleynly procede, as I first undirtook,
The residewe t accomplishish for his sake.
Make her ["here"] an ende of the first booke!
But now in soth my penne I feele quake,
Voide of al colours sauff rude colours blake,

---


16 I use the Lydgatian name Albo throughout in what follows.

17 See also 1985, 80-81; II, 933-945, which deploys Chaucerian vocabulary like "bawe" or "the flours and holsom levis grene" (ll. 940-941). Besides the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, a passage from *Troilus*, Bk. I; ll. 155-158, may have been a model with its reference to white and red flowers. On Chaucer and Lydgate see Pearsall (1990).
In this process my dulnesse to acquyte,
The martirdam of Albon for to endite. (1985, 40-1; I l. 925-931)\(^\text{18}\)

The 15th-century hagiographers draw attention to their sources much more often than do earlier legendaries. While the Bible figures as the predominant source in the *SEL* and *ScL*, here authors like St. Augustine but also more local sources are mentioned. Lydgate, for instance, cites his "cronycler" (1985, 31; I l. 706) and authenticates his presentation by the phrase "myn auctour writith this" (31; I l. 708). Even more numerous are formulæ like "the story tellith vs" or "the story seith" (144, III l. 300; 31; I l. 721), already common in the *ScL* and the *Northern Homily Cycle* of the early 14th century. The narrator's comments on the act of narration are also more extensive than in the *ScL*. In the second book, Lydgate combines a note on intended brevity with a reference to the fact that he is translating from a source text:

> I wil procede, vndir correccioun,  
> To wryte in ordre thi translacioun,  
> First set afforn, breeff and compendious,  
> The martirdam of Amphibalus. (1985, 130; II ll. 2070-2073)\(^\text{19}\)

The audience or narratee is invoked in the text in formulaic phrases like "as ye shal here" (87; II l. 1087) but also in the prayers (e.g. 1985, 3; I ll. 57-61). The prologues to the three books are of course especially audience-directed. An implied narratee can moreover be posited for the expressive function, for instance for the narrator's exclamations: "euyl mote he fare" (It. 'May he fare evil,' i.e. 'evil betide him' [1985, 76; II l. 818]) or "An vncouth mervaile, a gracious myracle!" (110; II l. 1612). The narrator is also very prominent when he provides explanations, especially notable for passages like the long delineation of Roman customs of chivalry in Book I (16-26; ll. 351-581).

We have already noted the Chaucerian influence, which is particularly strong in style and rhetoric. Lydgate extensively uses similes, as Bernau (2015) has pointed out.\(^\text{20}\)

A typically ornate passage is the following which conjoins several key aspects of Lydgate's verse (some of them also relevant for Capgrave and Bokenham):

> Miracles shewid and vertuous doctrine  
> Off Amphibalus, with fructuous influence,  
> Grace annexid, which did vpon hem shyne,  
> Causid the cite of all ther old offence

---

\(^{18}\) 'But now truly I feel my pen shake, / [which is] lacking all colours except untutored black, / in the attempt to discharge my duty [against, in spite of] my dullness / [and] to write the martyrdom of Albon!'

\(^{19}\) 'I will proceed, subject to emendation / to compose your [Amphibalus'] translation [i.e. the translation of your life] in order, / the first foremost, briefly and concise, / [namely] the martyrdom of Amphibalus.'

\(^{20}\) See e.g. Lydgate (1985, II 42; II. 1-4; as well as II 91; II. 1185-1187; and III 144; II. 282-286).
To axe mercy, and with hool diligence
Ther fals goddis of newe thei have despised [...]. (1985, 184; III ll. 1296-1301)\textsuperscript{21}

The passage illustrates Lydgate's predilection for ornate epitheta ("vertuous doctrine;" "fructuous influence;" "hool diligence"). The stanza is also typical of another strategy employed by Lydgate, namely the incantatory characterization of the saint. Lydgate frequently interrupts the delineation of the course of events to indulge in stylistic extravagances of a semi-allegorical quality. For instance, when Albon and Amphibalus part company and exchange their clothes (which allows Amphibalus to escape), this important plot juncture is interrupted by a disquisition by the narrator on love (76-78; II ll. 835-864): "O feithful love [...] // Ther [their'] love more sad, stable and vertuous / In comparisoun than that poetes made" (ll. 835, 842-843). Such passages can be descriptive and explicitly allegorical. As Albon is discovered by the officers of the law who arrest him and is beaten up, his saintly comportment is visually presented in stasis. (This is quite in contrast with the previous narrative episode: "thei vpon hym went [...] / Fel vpon hym, lik wolvis thei hym rent. / In ther furious mortal fel deluge / Thei hym present affor the cruel iuge" [81-82; II. 955, 958-960]). Not only is the saint described as "Meek as a lamb" (l. 961); "Steedfast of hert, hardy as leoun" (l. 969), but we also find the following passage: "His sheeld was feith, his swerd and his burdoun, / His sper, his pollex, surer than steel t'endur, / Was oonly hope victory to recur" (ll. 972-974).\textsuperscript{22} These allegorical metaphors continue for three more stanzas, identifying patience as the saint's coat of arms (l. 988), grace as his guide (guiding principle) (l. 995) and charity as his chief counsellor (l. 989). These stylistic choices foreground the narratorial persona as stylist, underlining the 'voice' in the text which is that of an implied author.

Another prominent aspect of the passage is the syntactic choice of absolute constructions ("Miracles shewid;" "Grace annexid" – i.e., 'after the miracles had shown themselves,' 'after [God's] grace had materialized'), a feature widespread also in Capgrave and Bokenham. Lydgate's syntax, however, is not as lucid as it might be, as one can see from the main clause in this stanza, which lacks a subject. (On Lydgate's syntax and absolutes compare Hardman 2005, 22-23). See also:

\begin{quote}
Whan Amphibalus sauh hem all dede,
Liggyng in the feeld, turnyd yp-so-doun,
With pitous cheer sauh the woundis bleede,
Of woful hert and compassioun
Devoutly made his comendacioun,
Praying Iesu with vois, most pitously,
On all tho sowlis for to have mercy. (1985, 145; III ll. 316-322)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{21} 'After the miracles had been shown [due to] the virtuous doctrine / of Amphibalus, who had conjoined God's grace with his profitable influence, which shone on them, / [this] caused the city to ask mercy for their old offence and they have again with great diligence despised their false gods.' Note the use of the historical present to signal a major plot turn.

\textsuperscript{22} '[He was] steadfast in heart, strong as a lion;' 'His shield was faith, his sword and staff, / his spear, his poleaxe, more effective and long-lasting than steel / were alone his hope to achieve [lit. 'recover'] victory.'
In such a typical episode, the syntax is quite different from the oral pattern as one finds it preserved in the 14th-century texts. Typically, the clauses would all be paratactic:

'When Amphibalus saw the bodies, he experienced great grief. And as he looked on them, lying in the field, he turned to God and called on him and asked God with a piteous voice to have mercy on their souls.'

Instead of such a paratactic structure, the stanza consists of one single sentence split into a *whan*-clause for the first three lines and a four-line main clause. The latter does not, however, have an explicit subject ('he'), a feature quite common in *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*. The subsidiary *whan*-clause's main verb ('sauh') is modified by two participles ('lying' and 'turned') and then repeats the main verb ('he saw the wounds bleed'). This is followed in the main clause by two actions: the first comes in a clause with a finite verb ('devoutly made'), and the second, the prayer, has been put into a modifying present participle clause. Thus, though incipit, incidence and result points each have a finite verb ('sauh', 'sauh' and 'made'), the ambiguity of the syntax (where exactly does the main clause start?) due to the many participles overrides the dynamics of the scene and instead highlights the stasis of Amphibalus praying.

The narrator of the Alban legend moreover strongly foregrounds his management of the plot. As Bernau (2015, 156) points out, there is a typical instance of *entrelacement*, shifting from one plot strand to the other, when the narrative moves from the story of Amphibalus to that of Alban (Albon): "In this place here as now I am advertid / Off this marter for to stynte a while / And to procede how Albon was convertid / To Christis feith […]" (Bk I, Epilogue – 1985, 38; ll. 876-889). An even more strongly foregrounded structural element is Lydgate's use of *prolepsis*. Already early in Book I, we have an introduction to Albanus, Albon, who is described as being of good lineage and very handsome and virtuous ('excellyng of beaute [...] seemely of statur, / To all ve[rtu disposid bi natur"] (1985, 12-13; ll. 263-266), following the lengthy appreciation of "Amphiball" (l. 248) earlier in the text. We then get a stanza that moves from his (i.e. Albon's) noble birth to "aspectis of grace which is divyne / Predestynat bi eleccioun / For to be callid of this regioun / Prothomar-tir whan he the feith hath take / And shedde his blood for Iesu Cristis sake" (1985, 12-13; I ll. 269-273). He is identified as the future martyr (which did not happen with Amphibalus, who was only declared to be worthy of being dubbed a knight). In another passage in Bk. II, Diocletian's instructions on how to woo Albon to forsake Christianity

23 The *whan*-clause marks the incipit point, the incidence is taken up by Amphibalus' perception of the wounds and the result is his prayer to Jesus. For this concept of the episode see Fludernik (1996, 62-71).
24 It is of course possible to read line 318 as a second subsidiary clause depending on the initial *whan*.
25 'In this place here as I am now reminded / to pause awhile [to speak] of this martyr / and to proceed [to tell] how Albon was converted / to Christianity!'
26 'his' impression of divine grace, / predestined by (God's) election, / [who] will be called a proto-martyr of this region when he will have adopted the Christian faith / and spill his blood for the sake of Christ.'
("To pervert his hert and his corage" [95; I. 1265]), are interrupted by a proleptic reference to the (future) saint's steadfastness: "But evir i-lik of cheer and of visage, / Tween fire and waiir, now hard, now blandisshing, / From his constaunce thei myht hym nevir bryng" (95; II. 1266-1268).27 This is followed by a full stanza reiterating Albon's resistance to the blandishments of the infidels before the text returns to the instructions of Diocletian, namely detailing that he should be beheaded if he does not agree to revert to the Roman religion (95-96; II. 1276-1282).

There is a third very notable proleptic passage in the third book of *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*, which also foregrounds some of the inconsistencies in the work already pointed out by Derek Pearsall, who criticized Lydgate's "repetitiveness" (1970, 284). After the massacre of the converted Verolamians we get a report (146; II. 337-350) of the infidels' buffeting of Amphibalus and of how they drive him forward on bare feet across a stony path to the place where St. Albon has been buried. Yet, shortly afterwards we hear of the "paynyms" grieving for their fellow citizens whom they have just killed in a fit of fanaticism. We then move on to a man being healed by Amphibalus. Next, we learn how the heathens arrive in Verolamium (near present-day St. Albans, Hertfordshire), the capital, and are criticized by the fathers, mothers and wives of those whom they have killed. Later, they start to tell a story of how, after they had slain their renegade former neighbours, the heavens opened, Christ appeared to them, and all the dead were taken up into heaven, an event they characterize as a "wondir thyng" (160; I. 691). This results in a near-conversion of the townsfolk, a development extremely inconvenient to the judge. He turns the Verolamians' mood by asking the people to revenge themselves on the drought caused (as has been claimed) by Amphibalus, and this triggers their anger and the execution of the saint. The noted passage of how Amphibalus is buffeted seems to be a prolepsis concerning the saint's final path to the place of execution and apparently does not refer to the earlier journey to Verolamium. In addition, the narrative of the slain being taken up into heaven had been completely elided from the earlier delineation of events, in which the tormentors, as they are often called, simply took their way home after having caught Amphibalus. This pro-Christian report of these miraculous events is psychologically unconvincing as regards the actions and feelings of the killers; it almost seems as if they had invented the story to mitigate the impact of their murderous deeds to the mothers and wives of the slain. And although the judge is blamed for initiating the final homicidal violence against Amphibalus, one is hard put to believe that the recently converted townspeople now immediately again turn into ravenous wolves and pant for the saint's blood.

As I have tried to demonstrate, Lydgate's epic legend displays a prominent narrative voice. This voice is foregrounded not only by (meta)narrative comments but also stylistically by Lydgate's ornate style and by the use of Latinate syntax, which works against a simple delineation of events. In addition, the strategic manipulation of plot elements both in terms of explicit shifting between narratorial comment and story presentation and regarding proleptic passages in the text profiles an active narrating

27 'But for ever of like mood and facial expression, / between fire and water [the tortures], / now hard now seductive [refers to the attempts to sway him], / they never could make him betray his constancy.'
agent (even though the effect on a present-day reader may be irritating). Lydgate’s narratorial voice is very much linked to the authorial claim to stylistic and rhetorical excellence. As with Bokenham, also a cleric, the homiletic intention of the text is a personal aspiration for the author, and the voice is therefore much more authorial in the autobiographical meaning of ‘author-derived.’ Nevertheless, in the use of formulae referring to sources of the legend, a more schematic and fictive narratorial voice can be glimpsed at times, echoing the kind of voice that was present in the *SEL* (*in nuce*) and the *ScL* (in more profiled fashion).

3. The Narrator in Hagiography

In what I have discussed by way of examples in the hagiographical literature at the turn of the 15th century, several narratorial functions could be documented which resemble similar strategies and devices in later fiction but also historical or other factual narratives. Hagiography is a factual genre, at least it was considered as such until the Reformation. When comparing narratological analyses of narratorial agency conducted on examples of novelistic, i.e. fictional, literature with medieval texts like the ones I have treated here, one important distinguishing element is the fact that English novels after the mid-18th century are unequivocally fictional, and their authors are telling stories that their audiences accept as inventions, even if the reality and (higher) truth of such narratives is paradoxically asserted. We know that Anthony Trollope invented Barchester and Bishop Proudie and Archdeacon Grantly, but the narratorial persona in *Barchester Towers* claims to know the characters in the fiction personally and yet (illogically), *qua* authorial narrator, knows the minds of Mr. Slope or Eleanor Bold or the precentor very well indeed. By contrast, in the saint's legend, the tale is given and has been handed down in the manner of epic literature. The writers of the texts, anonymous until Chaucer and the 15th-century hagiographers, reproduce stories that have come down to them in formulaic structure and language, with a minimal level of narratorial agency and foregrounding. Their sources (in contrast to the epic) are written lives, mostly in Latin, and it is the choice and combination of accessible plot elements and practices of elimination or expansion that allow some individuality to the retellings.

As I have tried to show, the late 14th century is the moment when the narratorial function becomes more clearly marked in the genre with several typical strategies and devices appearing in the *ScL*, Chaucer and Lydgate. Whereas in the *ScL* this narratorial voice (except in the Prologue, where the 'author' refers to himself as elderly) does not greatly differ from that of a minstrel or bard, in Lydgate the actual author, the monk John Lydgate, is prominently involved in the reader's image of the narratorial persona so that the narrator role often merges with the author's actual homiletic and literary aspirations. In Chaucer's legend of St. Caecilia, the ostensible narrator is the second nun, but the narratorial voice is very much that of the teller of traditional hagiographical stories, and to this extent we have the creation of a narratorial voice, though not a very personalized one. The second nun, one assumes, simply retells an available version of St. Caecilia's martyrdom and serves as an enunciator rather than a real narrator of the
legend. In Lydgate’s case, by contrast (as later in Bokenham), there is a very explicit teller character.

In reference to hagiographic narrative, it may be useful to return to an inventory of narratorial functions and strategies. Although I have so far found Nünning’s typology extremely useful in the discussion of novels, I would like to conclude this article with a different but not corrective schema that best describes my material gathered in analyses of hagiography. I distinguish between seven headings which overlap with Nünning’s categories but inflect them in a manner conducive to dealing with the genre at hand.

A first category (A) – compare Figure 2 – relates to the framing of the legend by a number of strategies – prayers, apostrophes to God or saints, envois at the end, but also the more epic prologue and proëmium and the invocation of a muse. In the novel, the prologue or introduction and afterword or coda fulfil similar functions and are associated with the author; yet, the invocation of a muse is an epic device which – as a formula – belongs not only to the author but also to the bard; it is therefore a formula associated with an implied (rather than historical) author. It is a set piece that can be inflected in different ways but constitutes a standard element like epitheta ornantia or epic formulae in the Milman Parry and Albert Lord sense.

My second category (B) refers to plot-related aspects of the narratorial discourse. Though this includes the delineation of the plot and the presentation of the fictional world, i.e. the referential functions. The notable elements are the structural rearrangements in the discourse like digressions, the telling of the backstory, prolepsis and the shifting between plot strands. This clearly involves issues of order in the Genettean framework, i.e. the order of discourse elements in relation to their chronological order on the story level; digressions, plot shifts and (explanatory) flashbacks are also very narratorial in terms of a strategy of how to tell the story. Even prolepses in hagiography are narratorial when they explicitly tell us about the future martyrdom of the saint, announcing rather than describing it.

Category (C), which I have dubbed narrative management, concerns metadiscursive statements such as ‘as I have told you before,’ ‘as you have heard in Book II,’ etc. I here also include the medieval entrelacement formula, which marks shifts between plot strands; discourse-metaleptic formulae like ‘while X is riding to London, let us explain,’ as well as standard phrases marking the return to the plot after narratorial comments and digressions.

### A frames
- prologue/proëmium
- invocation of the Muse
- apostrophe to God or saint (sometimes in the function of a muse)
- prayer
- envoi

---

28 See Spearing (2012, ch. 7), though Spearing sees him as a writer not teller.
### B plot-related aspects
(part of referential function)
- prolepsis
- back-story
- digressions

### C narrative management
- metadiscursive cross-references
- 'scene shift' formulae

### D narratorial presentation devices
- 'freezes' of action
- allegorization of characters

### E narratorial discourse relating to communicational situation
- address to audience (listen)
- reference to the narratorial process (I will tell)
- giving sources for story (authentification)
- admitting lack of knowledge
- providing reasons for telling the tale

### F narrator persona as distinct person
- situation of composing/aims
- authorial self-reference
- 'Ich mit Leib'
- modesty and detraction from self as author

### G narrator persona as evaluator, commentator and emotionally involved teller figure
- generalizing comments (gnomic comments)
- explanatory comments
- evaluative comments
- exclamations
- apostrophe to characters
- empathetic identification with situation of characters

Figure 2: Narratorial Features in Narrative, especially Medieval Narrative

Under (D) I focus on 'presentation devices' like allegorizing descriptions and 'freezes' in the action which present a kind of vignette of the situation. I am here thinking of passages like the following in "The Man of Law's Tale" (B1):

> The sorwe that this Alla nyght and day
> Maketh for his wyf, and for his child also,
> Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
> But now wol I unto Custance go,
> That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo, […] (Chaucer 1970, 148; ll. 897-902)
Here, we have a description of the situation of Alla on the part of the narrative voice, deploying the inexpressibility topos and 'freezing' a longer period of time by means of the historical present tense. This is followed by a typical plot shift formula, which likewise immobilizes Constance drifting across the Mediterranean in her boat. My assumption is that such vignettes are no longer in use in the novel but that descriptive pauses serve a similar function. Such passages in novels are often combined with commentary (category [G] below).

(E) corresponds to Nünning's category 4, i.e. functions relating to the level of narrator-narratee communication. Here, addresses to the audience and readers/narratee figure prominently (Nünning's appellative function), but also references to the narratorial process ('I will tell'), giving reasons for writing, providing sources for the story and feigning to lack sufficient knowledge about details of the story could be mentioned.

By contrast, (F) profiles the narrator persona on a scale that runs from the expressive function in Nünning to the 'Ich mit Leib,' i.e. the projection of an authorial persona with a biography and positioned by his (or her) act of composition and writing. The modesty topos or formula of 15th-century hagiography also belongs to this category.

Finally, category (G) conjoins Nünning's analytic and synthetic functions but also includes some of the expressive devices in his schema. In this category, the narratorial voice explains, evaluates and generalizes, but it also employs exclamations to give vent to the narratorial persona's feelings, especially when empathizing with protagonists. In this category, I therefore also include the (metaleptic) apostrophe to characters (or the protagonists of hagiography).

The categories I have here presented are not meant as a rival model to Nünning's but as an ad hoc list of elements relevant in hagiographical narratorial discourse. They are arranged in a manner that moves from structural elements (A, B) to features of the narrative text that do not prominently involve a narratorial persona (C, D) on to features that require the projection of a narrator with both clearly foregrounded articulatory practices (like addressing the audience, expressing opinions and emotions) and, possibly, even a suggestion of physical presence and existence (E, F).

There is of course nothing specifically 'medieval' about the categories, though some of the devices included within the categories do not or only rarely occur in post-renaissance texts: prayers and proëmiums, empathetic addresses to protagonists or allegorizing depictions of saints/heroes may be mentioned here. What I have tried to demonstrate is the uncanny similarities of hagiographical narration with narratorial strategies familiar from novels – paralleling the insights of Harald Haferland in his contribution to this volume, though in relation to a different issue. At the same time, an essential dissimilarity has been remarked, namely the alleged factuality of the saint's legend with its uneasy relation to verisimilitude, especially in the depiction of miracles. While psychological analysis increases in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, extensive presentation of protagonists' minds does not belong to the genre (with the exception of Capgrave's novel-like life of St. Katherine, not treated in this essay).

29 A counter-example are some of the passages of the historical present tense in Dickens (see Fludernik 1996, 249-256).
The functions of the hagiographer-narrator's discourse on the whole shift between different stances that alternate between typical hagiographical set pieces (the prayers), formulaic references to sources and to the act of telling in metadiscursive cross-references and 'how I will tell' phrases on the one hand and instances of a more profiled evaluative, emotionally involved and homiletically active narrative voice on the other. The 'Ich mit Leib' depiction of the narrator as author surrogate, which appears to be autobiographical, according to Spearing (2012, 231-235) is another stereotypical device, a topos. In reference to Bokenham's 'self-presentation' in the prologues to his legends, he says that the reference to a traveller's experiences in "St. Margaret," where the narrator-author comments on his last visit to Italy, serves to create "authenticating detail:"

The holy legend comes through, and is held in place by [...] experience, here that of an astute and convivial man of the world [...] The point of the detail is not to contribute to a Bokenham autobiography; it is to create the literary effect of a human medium through which ancient holiness is transmitted to the fifteenth-century present. (2012, 231)

Later Spearing talks of the "constant play with the functions of the first person and other proximal deictics" (2012, 254). His point is that the various roles of the narrative voice do not add up to a consistent portrait of a narrator, nor are they all expressions of the historical author in propria persona, which is why Spearing creates the term (medieval) autography. However, since the consistent depiction of an authorial narrator figure is rare even in the novel, this autography, i.e. the narratorial use of self-reference, can be claimed to share essentially the qualities of later authorial narratorial voices and their narratorial strategies. As Spearing himself admits, the 'narrator' role is a fiction, but he is also right to see that in Bokenham (and in Lydgate) this fiction is used for the purpose of authenticating the (factual) story of the saint's life. The main difference to the familiar antics of authorial narrators therefore lies less in the specific devices employed in the text than in the frame conditions, namely the patent fictionality of the novel and the historiographical quality of the legends, which are overdetermined by the hagiographical source material.

Works Cited


Spearing calls these "tags" of "telling and asseveration" (2012, 18).
NARRATORIAL INVOLVEMENT IN HAGIOGRAPHY


