

# An Ass from Oxyrhynchus: *P.Oxy.* LXX.4762, Loukios of Patrae and the Milesian Tales<sup>1</sup>

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The rubbish dumps of Oxyrhynchus have gradually supplied scholars of the ancient novel with ever new evidence of hitherto unheard-of novels,<sup>2</sup> and there has always been the hope that one day a piece of ‘Loukios of Patrae’<sup>3</sup>’s *Metamorphoseis* might emerge. The latest find from the Oxyrhynchus archive, LXX 4762, now published by Dirk Obbink, at first sight seems to fill this gap, and supply us with a fragment of a hitherto unknown version of the ass story, on a papyrus written in the early third century AD. In this paper I will look at the papyrus’ possible link to ‘Loukios of Patrae’, but I hope to show that it is more likely something even more rare, a probable fragment of

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised and updated version of a paper written while I was a graduate student in Oxford in 1999, when Dirk Obbink invited me to work with him on the text of this papyrus. As is usual manner in papyrological editions, Obbink primarily only acknowledged some of my readings and emendations in the *editio princeps*, and I am grateful to the editors of *Ancient Narrative* to allow me to publish this revised version of my contribution. The original version of this paper was written mainly to persuade Obbink that in the papyrus we had a fragment of the lost Greek original by ‘Loukios of Patrae’. Wisely, and as I now think correctly, he toned down these overenthusiastic remarks of a graduate student in the printed edition. Now I myself have changed my initial idea, and acknowledge that a much more complicated and richer tapestry of ass-stories was available in the second century AD. Still, many readings, interpretations and supporting evidence found in the *editio princeps*, including e.g. the identification of the fragment as one of the various ass-stories circulating at that time, are based on my original work. I am grateful to Obbink, who kindly allowed me to work on this papyrus with him, the audiences at seminars in Manchester and Swansea, who heard earlier versions of this paper, Ewen Bowie, Stephen Harrison and Malcolm Heath, who commented on it, and importantly the anonymous referees for *Ancient Narrative*, who greatly helped me to improve the paper’s content and clarity.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the texts edited in Stephens & Winkler 1995; new novel fragments are constantly found, the P.Oxy. vol LXX contains several others apart from the papyrus under discussion here.

Aristeides' *Milesiaka*. This discussion will also have some implications, I hope to show, on how we judge the complicated intertextual relationship between novels and Aristeides' *Milesian Tales*.

*The Various Ass-Stories Known in Antiquity*

Antiquity knew several versions of the ass novel, of which two are still extant today, and at least one is lost. The Pseudo-Lucianic *Loukios or the Ass* (here I will use the short title *Onos*) and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* go back to the same common source by an otherwise unknown author erroneously called 'Loukios of Patrae',<sup>3</sup> whose *Metamorphoseis* were still read by Photios in the 9th century.<sup>4</sup> This is not the place to enter the discussion as to who the authors of the Greek original and the *epitome* were<sup>5</sup>, although it is evident that the over-hasty Photios must have mistaken the name of the protagonist Loukios of Patrae, who is the hero of both Greek stories, for the author of the lost original.<sup>6</sup> This indicates that also in the lost text the protagonist must have been the first-person narrator. Lacking a better candidate for the author, some scholars assume that the lost original was by Lucian, whereas the *epitome* transmitted in the Lucianic corpus, which is definitely not by Lucian, was used to substitute the original. Since we do not have a better candidate for the author of this remarkable text, he has to be referred to as 'Loukios of Patrae', until further evidence for Lucianic authorship can be found or rejected.

No other trace of or evidence for this text has hitherto survived,<sup>7</sup> and many scholars have tried to reconstruct the lost *Metamorphoseis* by comparing its *epitome*, the *Onos*, with its Latin adaptation by Apuleius, and using Photios' description of 'Loukios of Patrae's' text to validate their attempts.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the survey in van Thiel vol. I 1971, 1ff. *et passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 129.

<sup>5</sup> Discussion of several candidates in van Thiel vol. I 1971, 36-42 and Mason 1994, 1686-1692.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. the surveys in Bowie & Harrison 1993, 170 and Mason 1994, 1668ff. (both with further literature).

<sup>7</sup> There is an early parchment fragment of the *Onos*, however: P. Lit. Lond. 194 (4<sup>th</sup> century) gives *Onos* chapter 47, corresponding to Apuleius *Met.* 10.15.

<sup>8</sup> Literature about this problem is vast; cf. conveniently the discussions in van Thiel 1971 vol. 1, 23 and (more cautious) Mason 1994, 1693ff. Van Thiel assumes Apuleius to give a relatively faithful rendering of the lost Greek original, which he believes even contained many of the inset tales found in Apuleius. Others, including Mason, are more circumspect.

Photios thinks that the main difference between the nature of the two Greek texts lies in the attitude of the first-person narrator to his own story: the Pseudo-Lucianic epitome, the *Onos*, he believes, takes an ironic stance to the content: πλὴν ὁ μὲν Λουκιανὸς σκώπτων καὶ διασύρων τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν (9), whereas ‘Loukios of Patrae’ believes what he tells: ὁ δὲ Λούκιος σπουδάζων τε καὶ πιστὰς νομίζων τὰς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀλλήλους μεταμορφώσεις ... (10). ‘the only [exception being] that Lucian [i.e. the *Onos*], ridicules and disparages Greek superstition, whereas Lucius [sc. of Patrae] takes both seriously and believes to be true the transformations of men into others...’

This assessment may or may not be due to Photios’ prejudices. Believing the *Onos* to be by the satirist Lucian, he is predisposed to assume a satirical view-point in its narrator,<sup>9</sup> whereas his confusion of author and first-person narrator in his report of the *Metamorphoseis* indicates that he may also be wrong about the lack of ironic distance in this text. ‘Loukios of Patrae’ might have been as detached from his subject as the writer of the *Onos* or Apuleius, for that matter.<sup>10</sup>

The epitomator must have cut down the text of ‘Loukios of Patrae’'s book, the length of which is still a matter of discussion, by leaving out some of the inset tales, which may also have constituted a substantial part of the original, and by only retaining the outlines of the main plot. Hence he changed the title from *Metamorphoseis* to *Loukios or the Ass (Onos)*, because he only kept the story of Loukios, his metamorphosis into an ass by magic, his odyssey as an ass with changing owners, and his retransformation into a human being again by the aid of roses. Even the straightforward story of the protagonist Lucius, as represented in the *Onos*, shows evidence of epitomisation, and the resulting text appears sometimes abbreviated, sometimes taken over from the original word from word.<sup>11</sup>

The *Onos* and Loukios of Patrae’s text, according to Photios, both contained daring descriptions of erotic encounters: γέμει δὲ ὁ ἑκατέρου λόγος πλασματῶν μὲν μυθικῶν, ἀρρητοποιίας δὲ αἰσχρᾶς. (8 – ‘the work of both authors is full of mythical fictions and the practice of shameful and unmentionable vices’).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Thus also van Thiel vol. I 1971, 6. Cf. Mason 1994, 1675ff. and 1695 for a different approach with similar results.

<sup>10</sup> A view shared by most scholars, e.g. Perry 1920, esp. 32-58.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the discussion of the problem in van Thiel vol. I 1971, 21ff.

<sup>12</sup> The text of Photios is taken from van Thiel’s 1971 edition, vol. 1 p. 2f. Quotations from the *Onos* follow the edition by Macleod 1993, citations from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* that by Robertson 1956.

The scenes which are usually assumed to be adapted most closely from the original into the *epitome* are two steamy episodes, the ‘wrestling-match’ between the still human protagonist Loukios and the maid Palaistra (*Onos* 9f.), and the encounter of the asinine Loukios with an unnamed matron in Thessalonike (*Onos* 50-51), who demands extraordinary services from the ass. Any papyrus find from these scenes of Loukios of Patrae’s lost novel would be expected to show wide-ranging correspondence with the scene described in the *Onos*.

According to the *Onos*, the ass Loukios, who is on public display in Thessalonike because of his human-style eating preferences, becomes the object of desire of a rich and beautiful woman. She bribes his keeper to be allowed a night of passion with the ass, and supplies a sumptuous bed and perfumes. Alone with the ass, she undresses, perfumes herself and the ass, and kisses him. The ass hesitates at first, because he does not know what to do with her and fears that since his asinine *membrum* might be too large for her, he might kill her. She, however, kisses him again and proves to be perfectly able to accommodate him, so that Loukios spends the whole night with her, comparing himself to the lover of Pasiphae.

It is usually assumed that especially the two erotic scenes, which are the only ones elaborately described in the *Onos*, are particularly helpful in reconstructing the lost *Metamorphoseis*, because they are thought to contain less of a summary than a word by word adaptation and are thus closest to the lost original.

### *Text and Translation*

The papyrus seems to provide us with one of these scenes, i.e. the ‘Pasiphae’-scene between the matron and the ass, and thus might shed some light on ‘Loukios of Patrae’'s novel, its adaptations, or perhaps forerunners. To reconstruct what is happening in this scene, a close comparison with both the *Onos* and Apuleius’ text is necessary, before a general assessment about the papyrus’ authorship can be made:

Top margin

- 1 δεινῶς φλέγομαι[ καὶ  
 ῥεῦμά μ<οι> ἴκει δι[ὰ τοῦτ(ο)  
 3 ἴδ’ ἧ̄ τε κνωμένη [εἰμί.  
 τί ποτέ με νύσ<σ>εις; τὸ[ν

- 5 ὄνον φιλοῦσα ἀλ-  
 γ[ο]ῦντα, ὡς ποτε συν-  
 7 [κατέ]πεσ' αὐτῶν· καὶ  
 αἰ[το]υμένη λέγει·  
 9 οὐὡ, παχε<▷α καὶ μεγά-  
 λη ἴστιν, ὡς δοκός· μέ-  
 11 νε, κατὰ μεικρόν· μὴ  
 ὄλην ἔσω βάλῃς. τί ποτ(ε);  
 13 οὔκ ἔστι τοῦτο; ἀλλὰ  
 τί; οὐδὲ πᾶν τοῦτο;  
 15 ἀλλὰ ἄλλοτε; αναι  
 Bottom margin

1-3 ed. δεινῶς φλέγομαι / ῥεῦμα μ' ἤκει δι[ὰ] σέ. / ἴδητε, κνωμένη[ν.], text printed from Luppe 2006, who also assumes the preceding line (in the preceding column) to read [φησιν ὡς].

6f. ed. συν- [εἰσέ]πεσ', RM συν-[κατέ]πεσ' <sup>13</sup>

14 ed. οὐ δέ, RM οὐδὲ

#### Translation (RM):

'Look [how] I'm burning terribly, and a stream comes to me because of this, and in which way I'm being tickled: Why do you prick me?' Kissing the donkey, who was in pain as soon as she had fallen down with him, and beseechingly she says: 'Wow, it's fat and big as a roof-beam Wait! Little by little. Don't put it all the way in. What on earth...? Is this not it? What, then? Isn't this all? But another time...'

<sup>13</sup> The text in Obbink's edition reads συν- [εἰσέ]πεσ; Obbink 2006, 28 dismisses my supplement [κατέ]πεσ' as too long for the *lacuna*, but if the letters were written unusually small (as e.g. letters are in l. 9 for καί) this would allow a supplement congruent both with the traces on the papyrus and the plot of the *Onos* and the *Met.*, where the matron sinks down on her bed and pulls the ass down with her: cf. *Met.* 10,21: *capistroque me prehensum more, quo didiceram, reclinat facile* ('She then grabbed my halter, and made me lie as I had learnt to do') and *Onos* 51: με ἐκ τῆς φορβαίας λαβομένη ἐπὶ τὸ χαμεύνιον εἴλκεν. – 'grasping me by the halter, she dragged me onto the paliasse.' I note that Luppe 2006, 94 would also prefer to read [κατέ]πεσ', and for the same reasons.

*Metamorphoseis, Onos and the Papyrus: Kissing a Donkey*

There are some remarkable resemblances between the papyrus fragment and the ‘Pasiphae’-scene of the *Metamorphoses*. The strongest evidence that this fragment is related to it is l. 5, ὄνον φιλοῦσα. This takes up the beginning of the love-scene between the matron and the ass, as she starts by kissing him: εἰτά με κατεφίλησε (‘then she kissed me’ – *Onos* 51), cf. Apul. *Met.* 10,21 *exosculata pressule* (‘she kissed me with gentle pressure’) etc., but although it displays some verbal parallels with the *Onos*, it also shows some considerable differences from both adaptations as we have them, so that a closer comparison is necessary, after which I hope to be able to move towards suggesting a possible genre and author.

The speaker herself, who then must be identified with the ‘Pasiphae’-like matron of Thessalonike, speaks of her passionate love for the ass in terms often used for love-sickness in ancient novels, metaphors which are taken over from Hellenistic love poetry, and it is clear that the pain the woman is feeling is of this nature.<sup>14</sup>

This eloquent speech is not paralleled in the *Onos*, which gives a straightforward narration by Loukios, who informs us of her actions without quoting her: με κατεφίλησε [...] διελέγετο (‘she kissed me and said [all the] things...’ – *Onos* 51). Naturally, in epitomising the scene, the writer of the *Onos* would have cut out speeches and replaced them with a short paraphrasing summary of their content. Metaphors which sum up her burning love may however have been replaced by the narrator with εἰς ἔρωτά μου θερμὸν ἐμπίπτει (‘[she] fell hotly in love with me’), which retains the scope of the metaphors by using the adjective θερμὸν. It is however used before the scene transmitted on the papyrus, in the scene when she falls in love with the ass at first sight and negotiates a night with him with the servant of his owner Me-

<sup>14</sup> Fire as a metaphor of love is a commonplace; a non-novelistic passage giving all the symptoms of love-sickness is Plu. *Demetr.* 38, the portrait of Antiochos’ love for his stepmother Stratonike. Cf. Maehler 1990, 6f. and Luchner 2004, 229-40. It is not only found in ‘burning’ Sappho (fr. 31 L-P), but also in the novels by Chariton 1,1. 4,2f.; Xenophon of Ephesos 1,5, Longos 2,7 and 8; Achilles Tatios 4,7 etc. If ῥεῦμα is to be interpreted as sweat, it has a parallel in Heliodoros 4,11 (ἰδρῶτι πολλῶ – ‘much perspiration’) etc. The ‘stream’ can however also be seen as a reference to the woman’s sexual arousal, as Luppe 2006, 94 sees it. Also ἄλγειν can be used to describe love-sickness and passion, cf. Longos 2,7 (ἄλγουν τὴν ψυχὴν – ‘I was in pain with respect to my soul’) and 2,8 (ἀλγοῦσιν ‘they are in pain’). For the (more physical) kind of pain the ass might be feeling here cf. Ar. *Lys.* 845ff. for the pain of sexual frustration. In either instance, it is interesting that both a coarsely sexual and a subtle interpretation of the words is possible.

nekles (*Onos* 50). Thus one could assume a kind of proleptic use of the metaphors in the *Onos* before their actual occurrence in the sequence of events. In an epitomisation this particular speech of the matron could have been cut out, and the metaphors of her burning love had to be mentioned somewhere in her introduction.

That there was a ‘monologue’<sup>15</sup> of the matron in the *Metamorphoseis* in exactly the scene transmitted on the papyrus may be inferred from the summary, which mentions her speaking to the ass: εἶτα με κατεφίλησε καὶ οἶα πρὸς αὐτῆς ἐρώμενον καὶ ἄνθρωπον διελέγετο (‘Then she kissed me and said all the things she would say to a beloved one who was human’ – *Onos* 51). This parallels the more elaborate version by Apuleius (*Met.* 10,21):

*Tunc exosculata pressule, non qualia in lupanari solent basiola iactari [...] sed pura atque sincera instruit et blandissimos adfatus: ‘Amo’ et ‘Cupio’ et ‘Te solum diligo’ et ‘Sine te iam vivere nequeo’ et cetera, quis mulieres et alios inducunt et suas testantur adfectiones*

‘Then she kissed me with gentle pressure’ – not the sort of kisses casually offered in the brothel [...], but those sincerely offered from the heart. She also addressed me most affectionately, with ‘I love you’, ‘I want you’, ‘you are my only love’, and the other phrases with which women both rouse their partners and attest their own feelings.’

In the papyrus, the woman describes herself as burning terribly, a sweat comes over her, (cf. ll. 1-3), but then she uses a verb (νύσσεις ‘you prick me’) which in the *Onos* is also used in a similarly elaborate and erotic scene, the ‘wrestling-match’ between Palaistra and Loukios before his metamorphosis (cf. *Onos* 9). Thus the erotic usage of this verb may provide a link between these two scenes; it should be noted that the *Onos* is generally quite conscious about word-repetitions.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> It cannot have been a proper dialogue between woman and ass, since the ass, although able to feel and think as a human being, is unable to communicate, being deprived of human language. He can only deliver sounds *asino proprium* (‘an apt expression for an ass’ Apul. *Met.* 8,29), that is *o* in the Latin version (also in *Met.* 3,29 and 7,3), and ὦ and possibly οὖ in the *Onos* (16 and 38; also in the lost original of Apul. *Met.* 7,3). Cf. Snell 1966, 200f.

<sup>16</sup> On the sophisticated and conscious use of rare and Atticising words in the *Onos* cf. van Thiel vol. I 1971 p. 211-222, and for the verb used in an erotic (albeit quite different) meaning cf. Henderson 1991, 22.

Another interesting instance is the use of δοκός (l. 10) in a metaphorical – or rather obscene – sense; its proper usage as the roof-beam in a house cannot be meant here. Henderson states that ‘weapons and other hard elongated objects form an important category of *double entendres*’,<sup>17</sup> and although this particular usage is not documented in Old Comedy, comparable metaphors can be found, e.g. δόρυ (a spear shaft or a long pole)<sup>18</sup>, ἔμβολος (a peg, ram or bar), ἔρετμόν (oar)<sup>19</sup>, or especially κῆλον (shaft or beam)<sup>20</sup>, κοντός (boat-pole)<sup>21</sup>, πάτταλος (peg)<sup>22</sup>, πηδάλιον (oar)<sup>23</sup> *vel sim.* δοκός can be either feminine or masculine, and assuming the use here to be feminine would explain the gender of the preceding adjectives.<sup>24</sup>

The reason for the author to use this rather unsubtle metaphor in this context may perhaps be found in intertextuality with preceding literary texts, such as the romantic love novels or Homer, who is also ever present in the *Onos*. Homeric tags taken out of their context also form a substantial part of the verbal comicality of the *Onos*,<sup>25</sup> and may have been taken over from the lost original. For example, the ass devouring vast amounts of unsuitable food in *Onos* 45 causes his audience to laugh like the gods on Homer’s Olympus (‘they laughed uncontrollably’ – ἄσβεστον ἐγέλων; cf. *Il.* 1,599 and *Od.* 8,326).

Perhaps another Homeric link can be found for the use of δοκός in this context: In *Iliad* 17, Menelaos and Meriones carrying the dead Patroklos from the battle-field are compared to mules dragging a roof-beam (δοκός):

Οἱ δ' ὄς θ' ἡμίονοι κρατερὸν μένος ἀμφιβαλόντες  
 ἔλκωσ' ἐξ ὄρεος κατὰ παιπαλόεσσαν ἀταρπὸν  
 ἢ δοκὸν ἢ ἐ δόρυ μέγα νήϊον·

<sup>17</sup> Henderson 1991, 120.

<sup>18</sup> All these examples are in Henderson 1991, 120-123. – δόρυ occurs as a double entendre in Ar. *Lys.* 985, cf. the Latin *hasta*, which has an obscene meaning e.g. in *Priap.* 43,1 and the *spurcum additamentum* in Apul. *Met.* 10,21.

<sup>19</sup> Pl. Com. 3,4.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. κῆλον in EM 510,51.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Epicr. 10,4.

<sup>22</sup> Also in medical texts and epigrams, but in comedy in Ar. *Ec.* 1020.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Theognis 458 etc.

<sup>24</sup> Obbink 2006, 28f. assumes they describe an understood ψολή, but see also *trabs* in Adams 1982, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Examples in van Thiel 1971, vol. 1, 168f.



‘Like mules that put out all their great strength to haul a beam or a huge ship’s timber down from the mountain along a rocky path’ (*Il.* 17,742-744, trans. Hammond)

In this Homeric simile two extremely strong men are likened to mules, literally ‘half-asses’; if this papyrus were indeed a version of the story known from the *Metamorphoses*, a certain form of irony might be conceived from the comparison: in the papyrus we find a woman who hopes that her ass, who incidentally and unbeknown to her would then be a transformed human and thus not a ‘complete’ ass, but a veritable ἡμίονος, would have a comparative prowess. Admittedly, the metaphor and the Homeric reference also work *without* the assumption that this donkey is a man turned into an ass by magic, since the donkey’s physical equipment in either case is likely to warrant the comparison with a roof beam.

The ‘Pasiphae’ scene in the *Onos* features at least one more Homeric tag, too:<sup>26</sup> the lamp the woman has brought in sparkles like Hektor in battle, *Onos* 51 λύχρον [...] μέγαν τῷ πυρὶ λαμπόμενον (‘she inside lit a huge, flaming lamp’) parodies *Il.* 15,623 λαμπόμενος πυρὶ πάντοθεν (‘[Hektor] blazing with fire all round’).

In addition to the many Homeric tags the *Onos* abounds in, some mythological allusions can be found in both Apuleius and the *Onos*, e.g. in both texts the obvious comparison between the matron and Pasiphae is drawn.<sup>27</sup>

At any rate, the need for sophisticated and less sophisticated metaphors for the *membrum virile* in literature must have been vast, and a glance at Henderson’s compilation shows that all literary genres of all times have been very productive in giving new meaning to oblong instruments. Still, a knowing nod to a reader’s knowledge of Homer is common in novels of this kind, which combine the crude and the sublime, often to a comic effect.

### *Some Important Differences between the Onos and the Papyrus*

Whatever the origin of the metaphor, it is evident that the woman at first begs her lover for a certain restraint towards the end of the papyrus passage as we have it, thus offering the most important difference between the papyrus text and those of the two novels: μένε κατὰ μεικρόν· μὴ ὄλην ἔσω

<sup>26</sup> Cf. van Thiel 1971, vol. 1, 169 with note 12.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Onos* 51 and Apul. *Met.* 10,19.

βάλης.<sup>28</sup> The latter part of the phrase is very close to *Onos* 51 εἴσω ὅλον παρεδέξατο ('[she] took the whole length'), but it remains a fact that the papyrus seems to say the opposite of the epitome in the *Onos*, where the matron is very single-mindedly pursuing her aim. The lady on the papyrus is initially hesitant, her equivalent in the novels the exact opposite and rather pushy.

The ass in both Apuleius and the *Onos*, too, has some qualms as to the size of his asinine *membrum*:

*Apul. Met.* 10,22,1 *Sed angebar plane non exili metu reputans, quem ad modum tantis tamque magnis cruribus possem delicatam matronam inscendere [...] novissime quo pacto, quanquam ex unguiculis perpruriscens, mulier tam vastum genitale susciperet.*

'But I was sorely exercised and considerably fearful, wondering how I could mount such a fragile lady with my four hulking legs; [...] finally, how that woman could admit my massive penis, however much she yearned for it from the tips of her toes.'

Similarly in *Onos* 51:

καὶ μὴν καὶ τοῦτό μ' εἰς δέος οὐχὶ μέτριον ἦγε, μὴ οὐ χωρήσασα ἢ γυνὴ δισπασθείη, κἀγὼ ὥσπερ ἀνδροφόνος καλὴν δώσω δίκην.

„Indeed, this fact aroused in me an excessive fear that the lady could not accommodate me and she would be torn apart and I would have a fine penalty to pay as her slayer.'

In both these cases the ass gets the matron's reassurance (in Apuleius verbal, in the *Onos* non-verbal) of her ability to accommodate him, and the scene can draw to its inevitable close.

In neither of the extant versions is there however an allusion to a δοκὸς, and to the woman's reluctance in connection with it. If this text were the unproblematic equivalent of the two extant novels, the plot of this scene would have to be more complicated in the original than in both the adaptations, and that in a scene where the *Onos* has widely been believed to be very close to the lost original. Furthermore, there are some important obsta-

<sup>28</sup> For this specific use of βάλλειν cf. Henderson 1991 p. 121 (on ἔμβολος) with his cross-references.

cles to the identification of the papyrus fragment with the common source of Apuleius and the *Onos*. Whereas in both Apuleius and the *Onos* the woman sets out to seduce Loukios the ass in a rather determined manner and persuades him to go along with her, there is a hint of an initial doubt on her side in the papyrus, and as far as we have the text, no hesitation from the side of the donkey, thus neatly inverting what we might expect from the scene from our novelistic knowledge. When seeing his huge asinine *membrum*, she hesitates (playfully?) and asks him at first not to ‘put it all the way in’, but she then immediately realises that this is not sufficient for her purpose, and giving a kind of running commentary on the disappointing action, she then demands to be given more than she initially asked for. The papyrus, it seems to me, must have had an at first doubtful matron who hesitated at the first sighting of so large an instrument, but who very soon decided that she could (or even would have to) take ὄλην [sc. δοκὸν] to achieve what she came for when the ass’ more careful approach was not enough for her. Her initial hesitation does not have to be real, and may only be instigated by the highly exaggerated metaphor she herself uses (δοκὸς). The problem however of two different persons hesitating, the woman in the papyrus and the donkey in the novels, remains a conundrum which cannot easily be explained away and which casts serious doubt on the easy identification of the author as that of the lost *Metamorphoseis*.

While in the papyrus, the woman expresses her disappointment in this monologue, culminating in her complaint (l. 14): οὐδὲ πᾶν τοῦτο;, the *Onos* does not give an equivalent here. The Latin matron’s speech is interesting here:

*Molles interdum voculas [...] iterabat illa, et in summa: ‘Teneo te’, inquit, ‘teneo, meum palumbulum, meum passerem’ et cum dicto vanas fuisse cogitationes meas ineptumque monstrat metum.* (Apul. Met. 10,22,2-3)

‘Meanwhile she was repeatedly whispering gentle endearments [...] and as climax she murmured ‘I have you, I have you, my fond dove, my sparrow.’ As she spoke, she showed that my reservations were needless, and my fear unfounded.’

It may not only show traces of a second summary (cf. *molles ... voculas ... iterabat; in summa*) and monologue, but a monologue which must have been heavily adapted by Apuleius with the help of animal-metaphors found in

Latin love elegy.<sup>29</sup> Thus it is evident that Apuleius reworked the speech of the original extensively and cannot help in reconstructing the lost original of this particular passage. It is however possible that Apuleius replaced a Greek dialogue with something very Latin and allusive to erotic poetry in his own language.<sup>30</sup> It is unlikely that he and the author of the *Onos* also inverted the *dramatis personae*, allowing the human donkey to hesitate where the woman does not.

In reconstructing the events in the lost novel with the help of the scene on the papyrus, it would then have to be inserted in the events of *Met.* 10,21 = *Onos* 51, after the matron's first address to the ass, and after she pulls him down on her bed beside her by his halter (if my conjecture συν[κατε]πῆσ' is correct), because after that the ass in both versions, Apuleius' and the *Onos*', expresses his own hesitation and doubts in some detail.

Shortly before the papyrus breaks off, there seems to be an indication of a second attempt, still in the matron's monologue (l. 15): ἀλλὰ ἄλλοτε, but unfortunately too many words start with ἀναί to decide how the scene draws to a close.<sup>31</sup>

These are important objections to regarding the papyrus story as consistent with those of the various ass novels; another major difficulty of this identification is that the ass, who is a first-person narrator in both novels, is referred to in the third person in l. 7 αὐτῶι. There are admittedly instances when the narrator does so in the novels: The *Onos* gives us several examples of the narrator's self-conscious contrast of his human feelings with his asinine form, cf. *Onos* 33, 40, 45 etc., and especially in the very scene with the 'Pasiphae' of Thessalonike (50), where in the same sentence he talks about himself as 'the ass' and 'me': τοῦτο μὲν τὸ κάλλος ἰδοῦσα τοῦ ὄνου, τοῦτο δὲ τῷ παραδόξῳ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ('not only because she saw what a beautiful ass I was, but also because the amazing nature of my talents [stimulated her]'). In this scene the ass-narrator speaks of himself at first in the third person, since he cannot help wondering at the woman's motives, but he focalises the scene through what the woman can see, i.e. a donkey, not 'me'. There does not appear to be this kind of focalisation in the papyrus. Thus, although an argument could be made that despite the use of the word

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the famous Catullan passer-poem (Catul. 2) with its various interpretations; other examples in Zimmerman 2000, 286.

<sup>30</sup> Apuleius in both the *Apologia* and the *Met.* likes to quote archaic Latin love poetry, cf. Mattiacci 1985 and 1986.

<sup>31</sup> My suggestion in the *editio princeps* is a form of ἀναίνεσθαι, "to refuse one's favours" (see Obbink 2006, 29), but there are a number of possibilities, and Luppe 2006, 94 discusses a few.

ὅσων this passage could just have been narrated by a first-person narrator who intermittently comments on his situation in the past while narrating the tale, the use of αὐτῶι in a first-person narrative would be unusual, and it is more natural to take the story here to be a third person narrative. This problem remains a major obstacle to the identification of this fragment with Loukios of Patrae's *Metamorphoseis*.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, despite many startling parallels between the two extant novelistic versions and the papyrus of the asinine sex scene, some important discrepancies arise: the narration seems to be in the third person rather than the first, and importantly, in the novels it is the donkey, or rather a man turned ass, who hesitates, while in the papyrus it seems to be the woman who does so. In view of these discrepancies between the text of the papyrus and that of the *Onos*, some possible alternative attributions to different authors describing similar scenes should be tried, and, given the salacious theme, there is a surprising flurry of candidates.

#### *Other Possible Authors*

To start with, I will eliminate possible realistic scenarios as the source of this text, before discussing possible identifications. A description of a scene which really might have happened is quite unlikely, although in 80 AD a real

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<sup>32</sup> The text as printed in the *editio princeps* raised another problem: Reading the verb in l. 3 in the second person plural suggests the presence of at least one more person, which may indicate a possible mime performance. There is no evidence for that in the extant novels, because the matron has already sent away her slaves (*quattuor eunuchi [...] nec dominae voluptates diutina sua praesentia morati, clausis cubiculi foribus facessunt*. – ‘Four eunuchs [...] did not postpone the pleasures of their mistress by lingering long, but closed the doors of the chamber and made off.’ – *Met.* 10,20). The *Onos* (51) at least suggests the closeness (within hearing?) of her servants: οἱ μὲν τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ που πλησίον πρὸ τοῦ δωματίου ἐκάθευδον – ‘then the lady’s servants laid themselves down to sleep somewhere near the room.’ It is unlikely that the woman would invite her servants to be the spectators of her pleasures! Although the ass is surely the main addressee of her persuasive coaxing, the identity of the other addressees would remain a mystery. A possible solution would be to assume that this scene contains elements of a performance for an audience, which is the context for many of the sex scenes in Petronius which have audiences knowingly or unknowingly to the participants. For an analysis of observed and observers in Petronian sex scenes cf. Sullivan 1968, 232-253, although I do not accept Sullivan’s conclusion that Petronius was a scopophilic. Luppe 2006’s ingenious emendation of the text of the *editio princeps*, however (ἴδ’ ἢ τε), is not only convincing given the traces on the papyrus, but it solves this conundrum: the woman’s singular imperative is directed at the donkey, and no other people’s presence needs to be assumed.

‘Pasiphae’-scene was staged in Rome, involving a woman and a bull, possibly as a fatal charade, a theatrical performance involving the real execution of a criminal on stage.<sup>33</sup> Such an execution is indeed planned for the murderess of five in *Met.* 10,23ff., and Lucius the ass is an intended accessory to the execution. He only narrowly escapes the intended intercourse with the murderess during an elaborate staging of the Judgment of Paris and escapes the theatre for fear of the wild beasts which are also scheduled to take part in the performance and to devour, presumably, both him and the murderess. Such a fatal charade is too public, given its performance context, and the whole structure of the papyrus story is too literary, the dialogue is too intimate to be a mere description of a *ludus* in the circus, and also the careful layout of the papyrus indicates a literary text. Furthermore, the intercourse of a woman with an ass might have been a literary commonplace, cf. *Iuv.* 6,334: *quo minus imposito clunem submittat asello*,<sup>34</sup> especially since asses were generally considered as lewd.<sup>35</sup> The papyrus scene, though, has nothing to do with a performance of a ‘fatal charade’ – the woman does not at all appear to be punished for a misdemeanour, but takes an active and voluntary part.

People could also dress up as animals in mimes, or have animals take part in them.<sup>36</sup> Trained animals could also take part in a Pyrrhiche, although donkeys are not mentioned in our animal sources (cf. *Pliny Nat.* 9,4-5 (elephants), *Babrius* 80,3-4 (camels), *Lucian Pisc.* 36 (apes), but again this seems to be not really a script to a pyrrhic performance, since they were silent ballets rather than Atticistic staccato dialogues.<sup>37</sup>

If this is not a realistic scene, as we may assume it is not, we should look in turn at the two literary rival candidates to ‘Loukios of Patrae’: the first is the author of the *spurcum additamentum* in Apuleius.

There is a famous problem involved with the text of Apuleius in *Met.* 10,21. Some MSS of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, among them  $\phi$ , contain the

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Mason 1994, 1682 (with footnote 101), who refers to Perry 1920, 62 (with note 2); *Mart. Sp.* 5 and *Suet. Nero* 12,3 (who evidently considers the scene as a hoax). On staged executions see Coleman 1990.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also Mason 1994, 1682f. Anderson’s (1984, 201f.) Sufi parallel, besides being based on too many assumptions, follows a slightly different plot structure. In Anderson 1976, 47f., however, he gives some interesting parallels from 1st and 2nd century art and literature, which he discards as irrelevant in Anderson 1984.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. e.g. *Onos* 32 and *Scobie* 1975, 31 with note 18.

<sup>36</sup> There is no thematic overlap in the available evidence for an ‘Eselsmimus’ and our scene. Cf. May 2006, 304 and Reich 1903, 478f.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. May 2008, 352, on pyrrhiche in general: Ceccarelli 1998.

so-called *spurcum additamentum* ('Sordid Addition')<sup>38</sup> inserted in its margin, an explicitly pornographic addition to the love-scene between the matron and the ass, for which there is no parallel in the *Onos*. Its attribution to Apuleius is generally denied, because it lacks the subtlety this author displays even in the most indecent contexts. Attempts to attribute the *spurcum additamentum* to a Milesian Tale by Sisenna,<sup>39</sup> which would have been inserted accidentally into Apuleius' text later, would at least provide us with the suggestion that the original of the 'Pasiphae'-scene could be attributed to Sisenna's forerunner Aristeides. Mariotti,<sup>40</sup> however, definitely proves that the *spurcum additamentum* must be mediaeval, denying it a possible early date on linguistic grounds and linking it with 11th century medical literature, a view corroborated by Zimmerman 2000 and Hunink 2006. In addition, there is neither a lexical nor a contextual link between the *spurcum additamentum* and the new papyrus fragment: the *spurcum additamentum* does not contain any monologue, and although it features several Greek words (*orcium pigam*, *cephalum* etc.) due to the wide use of medical vocabulary, there is no lexical overlap. It also does not fit easily into the course of events in any of the three versions, jarring even with that of Apuleius.

Thus, although the *spurcum additamentum* describes an erotic scene between a woman and an ass, it cannot be taken into consideration as a possible adapted version of the new papyrus. It must have been written in the 11th century with the Apuleian passage in mind and has no Greek forerunner, offering no help with determining the authorship of the new papyrus.

Although the *spurcum additamentum* does not provide a link to Aristeides, his candidacy as the author of the new papyrus needs a closer analysis in its own right. We have barely anything left of his *Milesian Tales*, and only 10 sentences of Sisenna's translation.<sup>41</sup> The *Milesian Tales*, as far as one can reconstruct this genre, contained short stories of erotic content, with no moral attached to them, possibly embedded in a longer first person narrative,

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<sup>38</sup> For text and transmission of the *spurcum additamentum* cf. the *apparatus criticus* in Robertson 1956 *ad loc.*, and the careful editions and analyses in Mariotti 1956, 231ff. and Hunink 2006, 277-79, which includes a translation. For a survey of the studies concerned with the *spurcum additamentum* cf. Zimmerman 2000, 433-439 and Hunink 2006, who convincingly refutes the idea in Lytle 2003 that the *spurcum additamentum* could be considered Apuleian.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Merkelbach 1952, 234f. and Mazzarino 1950, 43f.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Mariotti 1956, 246ff. with further literature.

<sup>41</sup> Collected in Buecheler 1912, 264f.

studded perhaps even with shorter tales in *narratio in personis*.<sup>42</sup> Their large literary influence on the picaresque novels,<sup>43</sup> especially on Petronius' *Satyrical* and some of the adultery tales in *Met.* 9, is undisputed: Apuleius himself refers to his novel as using *sermone isto Milesio*. ('this Milesian mode of story-telling') and inserts references to the Milesian nature of his narrative in strategically important passages of the *Metamorphoses*, e.g. as an introduction to Apollo's oracle to the parents of Psyche in *Met.* 4,32, where the oracle of Miletus speaks Latin as a favour to the Latin speaking author of this Milesian tale.<sup>44</sup> Many scholars have assumed that the 'Pasiphae'-scene was originally a Milesian Tale, which then was incorporated into the longer novel by 'Loukios of Patrae', an assumption I find most convincing.<sup>45</sup> The close relation of both literary genres, and the possible adaptation of a Milesian Tale into the novel makes the attribution of the new papyrus to Aristides a distinct possibility, despite, or better even because of, its verbal and contextual links with the ass-novels. In this case, the papyrus would not give us a fragment of 'Loukios of Patrae', but of his immediate predecessor, and thus prove a (hitherto only conjectured) close link between the novel and the *Milesiaka*, even stretching to verbal parallels. Such an association would explain both the striking parallels and the crucial differences between the papyrus and the novels.

### *The Papyrus Format: Novel or Milesian Tale?*

The small format of the papyrus might be another point to consider as it is not an unusual one for Greek novels: The column is less than 7 cm high, and there are between 12 and 17 letters per line. Although it is a rather carefully edited text (cf. e.g. the correction in l. 1 and the lavish margin), it is written on the back of accounts, i.e. across the fibres. Traces of a second column indicate it is part of a longer text. Novel fragments are frequently written on

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<sup>42</sup> For a survey on the *Milesiaka* and the Roman novel, cf. Harrison 1998, 61ff, who also revives the argument that the *Milesiaka* actually consisted of a frame narrative, in which the short stories were embedded: 'Plainly, then, Aristides' work was in some sense a first-person narrative with Aristides reporting tales which had been told to him.' (Harrison 1998, 65. Jensson 2004 argues for inserted tales narrated *in personis*, which can be first or third person narratives. A more sceptical approach can be found in Walsh 1995, 10ff; all studies provide further literature.)

<sup>43</sup> The first to notice this interrelation is Bürger 1892, 352ff.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Apul. *Met.* 1,1 *et passim*.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the surveys in Mason 1978, 7 and Zimmerman 2000, 438.



the back of documents or other texts,<sup>46</sup> and a few other novel fragments listed in Stephens & Winkler feature a similar layout: For example, a Chariton-papyrus of unknown provenance from ca. 150 has 18-22 letters per line (P. Michaelides 1), and 18 lines per column; the 'Initiation'-papyrus from Antinoopolis (ca. 200) has 17-20 letters per line, the amount of lines per column is unknown. Also the Oxyrhynchus-papyrus 'Kalligone' from ca. 150 features 17-22 letters (PSI VIII 981), but the column length is 42 lines.

The closest papyrus in format is however P.Oxy. XLII 3012 (from the same provenance as the new papyrus), with a fragment of Antonius Diogenes, which has 15 letters per line by unknown column length. The ductus of the handwriting of P.Oxy. XLII 3012 is very similar – but not identical – to that of the ass-papyrus, and its editor dates it to the end of the second or early third century AD.

One testimonium in Plutarch (*Crass.* 32) for Aristeides' ἀκόλαστα βιβλία (sc. his *Milesiaka*) is perhaps also of interest here: After the battle of Carrhae, a copy of Aristeides' *Milesian Tales* was found in the luggage of a defeated Roman, a fact which amused the victorious Parthian officer immensely, since he saw the naughty text as a proof for the weakness of the Romans and their just defeat. For a text to fit into a soldier's tightly filled luggage, especially with a content that his superiors might not particularly approve of and therefore had better not see, its format must have been extremely small. Another example for a rather indecent text written on a small-format papyrus is P. Oxy LIV 3723.

All these parallels in layout and format provide evidence for a peak of interest in novelistic or sub-novelistic genres in Oxyrhynchus at this particular time, which goes along roughly with their heyday in the times of the second and third centuries AD, to which both the lost original and its Pseudo-Lucianic epitome belonged. The unusual format of the papyrus, attested for Greek novels, and occasionally for other texts of an erotic nature to which *Milesian Tales* could be added tentatively, indicates that it belongs to this group of texts and that both genres display similar layout patterns.

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<sup>46</sup> Novels written across the fibres listed in Stephens & Winkler 1995 include the following: PSI 1177 (Antonius Diogenes), P. Dubl. Inv. C3, (Antonius Diogenes), PSI 726 (*Antheia*), P.Oxy 1368 (*Phoenikika*), P. Berol. Inv. 11517 (*Daulis*), PSI 151 & P.Mil.Vogl. 260 (*Apollonios*), P.Oxy. 416 (*The Apparition*), PSI 725 (*Goatherd and the Palace Guards*), and PSI inv. 516 (*The Festival*).

*A Milesian Tale?*

Fragment 10 of Sisenna is sometimes thought to provide a parallel for the very scene found in the papyrus:<sup>47</sup> *eum penitus utero suo recepit* ('she took him wholly into her uterus'), as the source for Apul. *Met.* 10,22: *totum me prorsus, sed totum recepit*. ('[she] admitted me absolutely all the way.')

The parallel in *Onos* 51 is (as already quoted above): εἶσω ὄλον παρεδέξατο. It would be tempting to see a verbal parallel with the papyrus fragment, which would make a case for a tentative attribution of the papyrus to Aristeides. There are however some reasons against this simple equation.<sup>48</sup> First, it is not at all clear whether the Sisenna-fragment has anything to do with bestiality or even intercourse. Secondly, *uterus*, besides being an inaccurate medical expression,<sup>49</sup> is not mentioned in any of the three versions, either; Apuleius does not have it at all, and the two Greek versions both have ε(ἴ)σω without object. Thus the novels and the papyrus at least seem more closely related to each other than to the Sisenna fragment, and the danger involved in comparing *obscura* with *obscuriora* might preclude the Sisenna fragment from being used to prove the authorship of the papyrus.<sup>50</sup> There is no evidence for or against bestiality between women and donkeys in our extant fragments, although all *testimonia* on the tales agree on their obscene nature.

The assumption that the papyrus was a Milesian Tale, though, may be aided by its apparent third person narration. Our evidence for Milesian Tales allows for both first and third person narration, whereas the ass novels require a first person narration.

The papyrus with its ὄνον φιλοῦσα and ἀντῶι might indicate a third-person narrative with a narrator telling the story of an ass and a woman. The two overtly Milesian Tales in Petronius feature both sorts of narrative: the

<sup>47</sup> Scholars arguing for the identification are listed in Mason 1978, 7 with note 61 and Mason 1994, 1691f. – Cf. e.g. Reitzenstein 1912, 59f. for a comparison of Sisenna fr. 10 and 4 with Apuleius.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Mason 1978, 7 for arguments against the identification of Sisenna fr. 10 as a source of the *Met.*

<sup>49</sup> Thus Mason 1978, 7 with note 63. Of course, the inaccurate use of *uterus* might just be intended to stress the length of the ass' *membrum* (since this is mentioned several times in both *Onos* and Apul. *Met.*), but especially the writer of the *Onos* (and possibly also that of the *Metamorphoseis*, seems to have had a large knowledge of contemporary medical texts (cf. van Thiel 1971 vol. 1, 148f.; 164f.), so that he would have corrected this inaccuracy. The fact that neither the incorrect term *uterus* nor a similar exaggeration is found in the extant versions suggests only a small connection between Sisenna fr. 10 and the several ass novels.

<sup>50</sup> Equally careful is Walsh 1995, 17 with note 1.

Matron of Ephesus<sup>51</sup> is a third-person narrative, and the Boy of Pergamon<sup>52</sup> a first-person narrative, by one and the same character in the *Satyrice*, Eumolpus. Both stories, regardless of their narrator, contain a considerable amount of dialogue and possibly some literary allusions.<sup>53</sup> Both stories, too, relate unusual and naughty sex scenes. In addition, of the 10 fragments by Sisenna, at least five<sup>54</sup> contain dialogue or at least direct speech. Thus the more natural assumption, i.e. that the papyrus was told in the third person, could link it more closely with the *Milesiaca* than with the narrative of a man-turned-ass in the two novels.

### *The Milesian Tale and the Novel: Prosimetric Parallels*

If we recall here the three major obstacles to an identification of the author as Loukios of Patrae, it seems that an interpretation of the new text as a Milesian Tale meets the criteria more easily. It could easily have been told in the third person, about the woman and the ass rather than as a later reminiscence of the ass in first person. The presence of other people (if we retain the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural), observing the scene and even addressed by one of the participants, would not be surprising in an obscene Milesian Tale, and the possible initial hesitation of the woman may be then the inversion of expectation which has been associated with Milesian Tales. It may even indicate a continued fruitful interaction between the novel and the Milesian Tale. An originally Milesian Tale of a woman and a donkey could be given an interesting twist in the tail in the novel, i.e. an inversion of the participants' emotions and characteristics: a hesitant woman and an eager donkey turned into

<sup>51</sup> Petr. 111-112.

<sup>52</sup> Petr. 85-87.

<sup>53</sup> Although the Matron of Ephesus is heavily adapted by Petronius to suit the network of literary allusions generally found in the *Satyrice* (e.g. the slave girl quoting Verg. *Aen.* 4,34 to her mistress is clearly a Petronian addition), this does not exclude the original Milesian Tale from featuring literary allusions itself; fr. 1 Sisenna (*nocte vagatrix*) is metrical and could be used ironically as a poetic tag similarly to the very short Homeric passages in the *Onos*. On literary allusions in Petronius cf. e.g. Barchiesi 1999, 129, for the discussion of this particular scene, and on whether the original Milesian Tale had similar poetic tags *id.* p. 135 with note 26 (where he denies this assumption), cf. also Walsh 1995, 12f. Courtney 2001, 166f. is sceptical about the Milesian connection, and Habermehl 2006, xxiv f. is neutral.

<sup>54</sup> Fr. 3, 4, 8, 9 contain direct speech or second-person verb forms, fr. 2 possibly a vocative.

their opposites would fit the pattern of adaptation of Milesian Tales into novels, as advocated by Lefèvre.<sup>55</sup>

Ultimately, the papyrus' authorship must remain a conjecture: we have no ultimate evidence that Aristeides' *Milesiaka* contained an ass-story comparable to that found in the novels. If the papyrus was indeed rather a Milesian Tale than part of the lost novel, it would indicate that those two genres are more closely linked than assumed before,<sup>56</sup> not even stopping short of verbal parallels, and that the influence of the Milesian Tale on the more sexually explicit ancient novels has to be reassessed, as it has partly been done by Jensson 2004 with view to the *Satyrica*.

One last but very important observation would tilt the evidence in favour of Aristeides: lines 9 to 12, although not set out as such, can be taken as two comic trimeters.

οὐαί, παχεῖα καὶ μεγάλη ἴστιν, ὡς δοκός·  
μένε, κατὰ μεικρόν· μῆδ' ὄλην ἔσω βάλης.

This means the papyrus text is prosimetric. This may therefore place it in the category of primarily picaresque novels which display verses as part of their texture: 'Iolaos', P.Oxy XLII 3010, and Petronius' *Satyrica* are the most obvious examples, but one of our earliest novels, *Kallirhoe*, too, has verse passages, albeit mostly citations from higher literary genres such as Homeric epic.

Menippean Satire, the only other extant prosimetric genre with its mix of prose and verse, may therefore be just about another possible identification, although the (sizeable) extant fragments of Varro's satires do not offer anything as sexually explicit as our fragment (and are in Latin). Petronius, of course, is often said to give a unique combination of Menippean Satire and the novel in his work, which is sexually explicit enough. Astbury argues convincingly against any link between Petronius and Menippean Satire on

<sup>55</sup> Although Lefèvre 1997 frequently attempts to show the inferiority of the Latin texts over what he thinks the reconstructed Greek texts should be like, this idea of a reworking of Milesian Tales by the novelists by adding additional twists is quite convincing, and accepted e.g. by Hunink 1999 in his review.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. also Barchiesi 1999, 131 on the vanishing of the boundaries between these different genres.

generic terms:<sup>57</sup> their subject matter is different, and our papyrus shows little evidence of philosophical moralizing, too. So despite the prosimetric form which the *Satyrica* and Menippean Satire share, I would argue against this papyrus as a Menippean Satire. If possible, it is even further away from philosophical content than Petronius' novel, and, importantly, verse elements may point at novels or, again, Milesian Tales.

It has sometimes been argued that Milesian Tales may have been written in prosimetric form, and most recently Jensson has made this point very strongly indeed, placing Petronius' prosimetric novel and other prosimetric novels into the category of 'Milesian tales': these will then have been nothing else but what we would otherwise call novels, told by seedy *cinaedi*. Milesian Tales and the ancient novel may not be mutually exclusive terms, with both genres merging into each other or borrowing from each other to large extents, relying on their audience's ability to enjoy Milesian scenarios adapted into the novels.<sup>58</sup>

Our prosimetric papyrus could then most naturally be a Milesian Tale, as told by Aristeides, with some similarities to extant novels showing a possible cross-fertilisation of the two genres. In other respects, too, the papyrus fits the description of a Milesian Tale rather well. It is lewd, and indeed a tale with a sting in the tail, which is basically what Milesian Tales had, as we can infer from Petronius' Milesian Tales with their unexpected endings.

Whatever happens in the lost part of our scene, the woman seems not to get what she asked for initially, and that may be a typical ending of a Milesian Tale, if we take the sudden reversal of the narrator's sexual satisfaction into exhaustion at the end of Petronius' Pergamene Boy into account.

Assuming the story to be a Milesian Tale, the action could be reconstructed as follows: a woman wants to have a dalliance with a donkey. She kisses and coaxes him, charms him with flattering words, and describes his asinine prowess in flattering terms, and given the proverbially large equipment of donkeys, she playfully at first urges the donkey not to 'put it all the way in'. The ensuing monologue then shows her disappointment at the result and how she sets about getting more out of the situation than previously,

<sup>57</sup> Astbury 1999, cf. Schmeling 1996. Branham 2005, 22-29 however argues for a more important and formative influence of Menippean Satire on the formation of Petronius' novel.

<sup>58</sup> Jensson 2004, 288f. and 297f. gathers the evidence for prosimetric Milesian tales: e.g. Sisenna is listed as a poet by M. Cornelius Fronto (*Aur.* 4,3,2), Sisenna fr. 1 (*nocte vagatrix* / 'a female wanderer by night') is metrical, and Martianus Capella refers to 'delightful Milesiae of poetic diversity' (*poeticae etiam diversitatis delicias Milesias*) in *de Nupt.* 2,100, itself a prosimetric text.

with a willing donkey at hand. In this case, the donkey could be an ordinary donkey and would not have to be a man-turned-ass. The twist in the tale would then be the lack of the woman's initial satisfaction, despite the donkey's enormous 'roof beam'. Any adaptation of this story into the novel of 'Loukios of Patrae' could easily then have inverted the woman's hesitation and the donkey's easy collaboration of the Milesian Tale as yet another twist in the tale, and in addition turned the simple donkey from a sex object into a more emotionally complicated metamorphosed creature. I am not suggesting that this is anything other than speculation, but this speculation is the only way I can explain the striking similarities as well as the differences between the papyrus and our extant ass novels.

### *Conclusion*

If a decision as to the genre of these fifteen lines of papyrus has to be made, two main candidates emerge ultimately: we either have a fragment of the lost 'Loukios of Patrae' or of his equally lost predecessor, Aristeides, with the latter emerging more and more as the more likely candidate.

If the papyrus were a passage of the lost *Metamorphoseis*, the differences between it and its epitome, the *Onos*, would be greater than expected.<sup>59</sup> It would offer a short glimpse of a scene that, although present in both extant versions, is not there to this extent, since there the matron's seduction of the ass is straightforward, without any hesitation on her part. Although on the lexical level the papyrus contains many of the words (e.g. ἔστω) or concepts ('burning' love) of the *Onos*, the plot of the *Metamorphoseis* would turn out to be more complicated, with the love-making being much less straightforward and the woman less assertive. Although it is more likely that these in some way are "generic" words and concepts, and both the *Onos* and the papyrus describe a well-known story about a woman and a donkey, both texts are told with similar words but contrary emotions.

Taking the more intricate plot, the dialogisation of the story, as well as the presence of literary allusions, into consideration, the *Metamorphoseis* would then altogether have been longer, more sophisticated and with a more demanding plot than hitherto assumed. If the author of the *Metamorphoseis*, however, had adapted a pre-existing Milesian Tale of a woman and a donkey into his novel, he was able to play with his audience's expectations as to

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<sup>59</sup> On the general differences between Apuleius' and 'Loukios of Patrae''s version cf. the survey in Mason 1994, 1699.

their reactions, just as he had done with Homeric allusions, which makes Loukios-the-donkey's gentle hesitation perhaps both more humanely poignant and funny. In either case, literary allusions would add to the sense of inappropriateness of the situation and the humour resulting from it, similar to the inappropriate citations from Vergil in the story of the Widow of Ephesus.<sup>60</sup>

It also emerges from this discussion that the boundaries between the two genres 'novel' and 'Milesian Tale' are fluctuating in style and content. The papyrus re-raises another sequence of questions, namely the relationship between the novel and the Milesian Tales, whether the *Metamorphoseis* contained only some or indeed many of the inset tales found in Apuleius, and if this is a structure anticipated by Aristeides' *Milesian Tales*, as argued by Harrison and Jensson. The prosimetric form and the similar theme dissolve the boundaries between the two perceived genres.<sup>61</sup> This papyrus may offer just the missing link of evidence that we hitherto have been lacking. Genres at this time seem to have been rather more fluid and experimental than usually anticipated, and novels may play intertextually not only with Homer and other "serious" authors, but also with Aristeides' lost obscene stories.

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<sup>60</sup> See above footnote 52.

<sup>61</sup> An attempt to reconstruct the structure of the Milesian Tales from their adaptations in Petronius etc. is made by Lefèvre 1997, and Jensson 2004 even argues that some of our extant novels are in fact Milesian Tales.

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