

Steadfast and shrewd heroines:  
the defence of chastity in the Latin  
post-Nicene passions and the Greek novels

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*1. Introduction*

Over the past decades, the disparaging opinion of the Greek ‘ideal’ novels which goes back to at least Rohde’s pioneer modern study of 1876<sup>1</sup> has been abandoned: they are no longer viewed as literary inferior texts. Together with this renewed and favourable attention, research into the novels’ interconnections with other ancient narrative texts increased. Unsurprisingly, the interplay with the Roman novel was explored. It has been argued that Petronius parodied the Greek novels<sup>2</sup> and attention has been drawn to thematic and structural correspondences between the Greek novels and both Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*<sup>3</sup> and the *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the Christian overtone in the latter work is debated,<sup>5</sup> the novels’ interaction with

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<sup>1</sup> Rohde 1876.

<sup>2</sup> This thesis was first raised by Heinze in 1899 and has received wide acceptance since, see e.g. Conte 1996, esp. 31-34 on his adaptation of Heinze’s thesis. For objections against the thesis, see Morgan 2009, 40-47.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. the contributions of Brethes, Frangoulidis, Harrison, and Smith to Paschalis, Frangoulidis, Harrison, Zimmerman 2007.

<sup>4</sup> See Schmeling 2003<sup>2</sup>, 540-544 on both similarities and dissimilarities between the *Historia Apollonii* (*HA*) and the Greek novels, especially Xenophon of Ephesus’ *Ephesiaca*.

<sup>5</sup> On the *HA* as a Christian product, see Kortekaas 1984, 101-106, 116-118, and 2004, 17-24, and Hexter 1988, 188. For objections against the Christian overtone, see Schmeling 2003<sup>2</sup>, 531-537. On the Christian elements in the *HA*, see also Panayotakis’ recent commentary, in which he argues that the Biblical and Christian Latin in the *HA* are not meant to be religious propaganda but rather underpin the wit and learning of the text (Panayotakis 2012, 7-8). For a discussion of the ‘divided cloak’ motif in the *HA* in a pagan and Christian intertextual context, see Panayotakis 2011.

clearly Christian narratives was explored as well.<sup>6</sup> Similarities have been indicated between the Greek novels and New Testament writings (both the Gospels and the canonical book of Acts<sup>7</sup>), and, especially, the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.<sup>8</sup> The ancient Greek novel, then, is an important component of the fascinating network of ancient narrative texts. Many questions regarding the transfer of material and interconnections within this network remain, but the authors of all texts involved have a vital thing in common: they want to tell a good story. In this article, I will focus on a group of Christian texts which deserve to be part of this network but whose interconnections with the Greek novel received far less attention: the late antique passions of the martyrs. From the fourth century onwards, the so-called post-Nicene or post-Constantinian<sup>9</sup> Greek and Latin passions of the martyrs were produced in large numbers. Although these passions claim to be the expression of the historical fortunes of the martyrs and were mainly studied by Church historians and specialists in the cult of the saints, they are in fact fictional texts which deserve literary attention. They share a number of *topoi* (noble descent and extreme beauty of the protagonists, shipwreck, emphasis on chastity, ...) with the Greek novel and rhetorical exercises.<sup>10</sup> I will focus

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<sup>6</sup> For a recent overview of the interconnections between the Greek and Roman novels and different kinds of early Christian narratives, see Konstan, Ramelli 2014.

<sup>7</sup> On the Gospels and the canonical Acts in the context of the ancient Greek novels, see e.g. Pervo 1987; Alexander 1995 (both on the canonical book of Acts); Brant 1998 (Gospel of John); Fullmer 2007 (Gospel of Mark); for the opposite view, namely the Greek novels as influenced by the Gospels and the canonical book of Acts, see e.g. Bowersock 1994, 99-143; Ramelli 2001, 23-142 (both on the Gospels and the book of Acts); Reimer 2005 (Gospels).

<sup>8</sup> The bibliography is extensive. The seminal study is Söder 1932. For an overview of the Apocryphal Acts in the context of the novels, see Bremmer 1998 and Pervo 2003<sup>2</sup>, 691-706. See also numerous contributions to the recent volume by Futre Pinheiro, Perkins, Pervo 2012, i.e. the papers by Eyl, Greene, Spittler, Andújar, and Hirschberger. Unlike the others, Andújar posits influence from the Apocryphal Acts on the novels, namely of the Acts of Paul and Thecla on Heliodorus' novel; for a similar thesis, see Maguire 2005. On the *pseudo-Clementines*, the atypical Apocryphal Acts about the missionary activities of Petrus in the form of a Christian family-novel, see Edwards 1992 and Bremmer 2010.

<sup>9</sup> On the use of both terms, see Scorza Barcellona 2001, 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> For the *topoi* of the novel, see Létoublon 1993. On the similarities in subject matter and *topoi* between the Greek novels and school exercises, as known from Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* and Pseudo-Quintilian's *Declamationes Minores*, see Webb 2007, 527, with further references. On novelistic *topoi* in the passions, see Delehaye 1966<sup>2</sup>, 227-230 (late antique passions in general); Delehaye 1966<sup>2</sup>b and Hägg 2004 (both Greek *passio Eustathii*); Cataudella 1981 (Greek and Latin texts, without distinction between *vitae* and passions); Goddard Elliott 1987 (mainly *vitae* but occasional reference to a small number

on the Latin post-Nicene passions in this article. When studying the interconnections with the Greek novel, this might seem an odd choice. Further research into the interconnections between the Greek post-Nicene passions and the Greek novel will certainly be rewarding,<sup>11</sup> but I limit myself to the Latin ones due to chronological issues: whereas the Greek post-Nicene passions are not dated, for the Latin ones a dating is available, albeit sometimes tentative.<sup>12</sup> Besides, the Greek and Latin post-Nicene passions are no worlds apart. Claudia Rapp identified three channels through which Greek hagiographical material reached the Latin West.<sup>13</sup> Firstly, stories about the saints were disseminated orally by pilgrims, travellers and traders: the late antique Mediterranean world, Rapp argues, shared a ‘common hagiographical *koine*’ that transcended linguistic barriers. Secondly, so-called ‘cultural translators’ wrote down their experiences as pilgrims and thus made hagiographical stories accessible to Western Christians. Only the third pathway in the travel of hagiographical material from East to West, formal translation, required a thorough knowledge of Greek. Some Latin post-Nicene passions are indeed translations from a Greek original.<sup>14</sup> It is possible, then, that the Latin post-Nicene passions were influenced by the Greek novel via their Greek counterparts.<sup>15</sup> The Greek passions, in their turn, may have inherited the novelistic themes and literary techniques either directly from the novels<sup>16</sup> or via the

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of Greek and Latin passions); Rizzo Nervo 1995 (*topos* of the virgin in the brothel in the Greek *passio Agnetis* and *passio Luciae* and Latin *passio Anastasiae*); Huber-Rebenich 1999, 195-198 (Latin passions), Aigrain 2000<sup>2</sup>, 148-151 (late antique passions in general); Moretti 2006, 15-22 and Konstan, Ramelli, 2014 (both Latin *passio Anastasiae*); Lanéry 2008, 365-368 (Latin *passio Agnetis*).

<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Chew has researched these interconnections: Chew 2003a discusses the representation of violence in the novels and five Greek passions (Agatha, Juliana, Euphemia, Anastasia, Menodora) and Chew 2003b discusses the concept and valuation of chastity in the novels and late antique passions. In this article, Chew refers to a larger study including 53 martyrs, but the exact passions are not mentioned; those mentioned are the Greek *passio Eugeniae* and *passio Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora* and the Latin *passio Agnetis* and *passio Didymi et Theodora*.

<sup>12</sup> Datings of the Latin post-Nicene passions can be found in the *clavis patrum latinorum* (Dekkers, Gaar 1995); Gryson, Frede 2007; Lanéry 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Rapp 2004, 1250-1279.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. *passio Julianae Nicomedensis* (cf. Lanéry 2010, 19, note 8), *passio Didymi et Theodora* (cf. Lanéry 2004, 24-32), *passio Luciae* (cf. Lanéry 2010, 278).

<sup>15</sup> The Catholic Roman Church, however, did not encourage the dissemination of all post-Nicene passions: the passions of Cyricus and Julitta and of George (all three Eastern martyrs) were explicitly condemned by the *Decretum Gelasianum* (6<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>16</sup> It has been argued that Byzantine Christians read the novels of Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus and that the novels thus influenced Greek passions: see Robiano 2009, 148, with further references. Robiano argues that the passion of Galaction and Episteme (*Bibliotheca*

Apocryphal Acts.<sup>17</sup> Another possibility is that the authors of the Latin passions were directly inspired by the Greek novels and the Apocryphal Acts.<sup>18</sup> Novelistic themes and literary techniques were certainly known in Latin Christian circles by the end of the fourth century, when Rufinus of Aquileia translated the Greek *Recognitiones* into Latin.<sup>19</sup> The transfer of material within the intricate network of pagan and Christian narrative remains a complex phenomenon, and lies beyond the scope of this article. For our purposes, it suffices that (in)direct interconnections between the Greek novels and the Latin post-Nicene passions are at least possible. In this article, I will consider one aspect of these interconnections: the *topos* of the defence of chastity and the related themes of love, marriage, and fidelity. It has often been pointed out that Leucippe's belligerent self-defence against Thersander who lusts after her (Ach. Tat. 6,21-22) can be linked to Christian martyr texts.<sup>20</sup> I will argue in this article that the correspondences between the Greek novels and the Latin post-Nicene passions within this thematic realm are not confined to this specific scene but can be detected more widely.

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*ca Hagiographica Graeca* (BHG) 665-666) is specifically linked to both novels in order to provide a Christian legitimacy for the two popular pagan works. He argues that the reputation as Christians which Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus enjoyed (on this, see also Ramelli 2009) has the same aim. For allegorical interpretations of Heliodorus' novel in Byzantine circles in order to make it acceptable for a Christian readership, see Macalister 1996, 108-109 and for direct quotations from both Achilles Tatius' and Heliodorus' novel in Byzantine works see Macalister 1996, 110. In his lecture at the *Classical Association Conference* 2014, Stephen Trzaskoma (University of New Hampshire) drew attention to verbal imitations of Achilles Tatius' novel in Christian works until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, among which the 10<sup>th</sup> century *passio S. Romani* (BHG 1600z).

<sup>17</sup> In an article on novelistic literary techniques in the 5<sup>th</sup> century *Life and Miracles of Thecla*, Johnson claims that late antique Greek saints' lives inherited the literary techniques of the Greek novel via the Apocryphal Acts (Johnson 2006, 190).

<sup>18</sup> As suggested by Cooper 1996, 117: 'In creating these heroes and heroines, the *Gesta* [i.e. the Roman post-Nicene passions] wove together narrative strands from the ancient romances and the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles around historical personages who were partly or entirely imaginary'.

<sup>19</sup> On the *pseudo-Clementines*, see note 8.

<sup>20</sup> First noted by Shaw 1993, 9. See also Goldhill 1995, 117; Shaw 1996, 269-270; Ramelli 2001, 86-90 and 2009, 153; Chew 2003a, 138 and 2003b, 205-206; Lalanne 2006, 273; Brethes 2007, 256. The novelistic scene was linked to specific martyrological scenes by Cataudella 1981, 952 (Greek passions of Eugenia, of Anastasia and of Domna); Shaw 1993, 9 (*passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*); Morales 2004, 199-206 (Prudentius' version of the passions of Eulalia and of Agnes and the *passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*); King 2012 (4 Maccabees and the *passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*). Konstan 2009, 118-119 and Konstan, Ramelli 2014 linked the novelistic scene to the Latin post-Nicene *passio Anastasiae*.

2. *The defence of chastity*  
*in the Latin post-Nicene passions and the Greek novels*

To enable an analysis of the *topos* of the defence of chastity in the passions against the background of the Greek novels,<sup>21</sup> I selected the Latin post-Nicene passions that contain this theme. I included passions that have been dated to the time span of the 4<sup>th</sup> till 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the dating of many texts is still under debate. The list of 20 selected passions, with the corresponding *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (BHL) numbers as well as text editions, suggested datings, provenance, and an indication of the length of the texts can be found in the appendix.<sup>22</sup> All texts feature women: the defence of chastity is mainly an issue female martyrs have to deal with. Although in Christian milieux chastity was important for men too, the male martyrs in the passions generally only face physical and no sexual testing.<sup>23</sup> According to Chew, the social worth and power which Greco-Roman culture allotted to female (and not male) chastity accounts for this gender difference.<sup>24</sup> The 20 texts feature 28 women – all but two are virgins<sup>25</sup> – whose chastity is endangered. Three of them are technically speaking not martyrs<sup>26</sup> but are included since they are presented as heroines of the passion. Almost all women are of

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<sup>21</sup> I use the following text editions of the novels. For Chariton, Goold 1995; for Xenophon of Ephesus, Henderson 2009; for Achilles Tatius, Garnaud 1995<sup>2</sup>; for Heliodorus, Rattenbury, Lumb and Maillon 1994<sup>3</sup>, 1960<sup>2</sup>, and 1991<sup>3</sup>; all translations are from Reardon 2008. Longus' novel is not represented in this article. This tunes in with the fact that Chloe nowhere in the novel intentionally defends her chastity.

<sup>22</sup> The edition used is marked in bold in the appendix; all translations are my own. I have numbered the passions using Roman numerals. When referring to a character, I will mention the number of the corresponding passion between brackets.

<sup>23</sup> This observation is in agreement with Chew's findings in her corpus of 53 Latin and Greek passions (Chew 2003b, 218). See also Constantinou 1995, 21-23 for similar observations with regard to Greek late antique passions. Occasionally, a male martyr does face sexual testing: in the *passio Chrysanthi et Dariae*, Chrysanthus' chastity is endangered when the beautiful Daria is set on him to seduce him. Yet Chrysanthus' testing differs from the testing of the female martyrs, since the enemy is situated *within* himself. On this difference, see Paoli 2006, 715-716. A famous martyr narrative (albeit not a passion) which thematizes the sexual testing of a male martyr can be found in Jerome's *Vita Pauli*, 3,2-4. On this scene, see Coppieters, Praet, Bossu, Taveirne 2014, 395.

<sup>24</sup> Chew 2003a.

<sup>25</sup> Anastasia and Theodota (III) had sexual intercourse in the past. On Anastasia as a model for married women in order to raise their self-esteem, see Cooper 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Theodora (IX), Constantia (XI) and Petronilla (XVI): Theodora's and Constantia's deaths are not recounted, Petronilla dies peacefully after asking God for death.

noble descent<sup>27</sup> and the lion's share of them are very beautiful:<sup>28</sup> these characteristics already hint at affinity with the heroines of the Greek novel.<sup>29</sup> But the most striking resemblance between the novels and the passions is the erotic atmosphere, although the love involved is of an entirely different order. Whereas the novels celebrate worldly love and feature a heroine who wants to remain chaste for the hero, the passions are about spiritual love: the women want to keep their chastity for Christ.<sup>30</sup> Half of them explicitly commend their chastity to Him<sup>31</sup> and are called *virgo Christi*, *virgo Dei* or *virgo Deo devota*.<sup>32</sup> By combining dying for Christ with sexual asceticism, the

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<sup>27</sup> Of the 28 women, only four are not explicitly said to be of noble descent: Columba (VIII), Petronilla (XVI), Felicula (XVI) and Serapia (XIX). In Petronilla's case, this can be explained by the fact that she is identified as the apostle Peter's daughter, who was known as a fisherman (cf. Mt. 4:18); Felicula is presented as Petronilla's *collocatanea*. Serapia's social statute is unclear: she is a citizen of Antiochia but also a servant of the widow Sabina. The noble descent of the women tunes in with the finding that the post-Nicene passions mark the beginning of the evolution towards the medieval *Adelsheilige*; see Van Uytvanghe 2001, 210-211.

<sup>28</sup> It is unclear why the beauty-*topos* is absent in some of the passions. In the case of Anastasia and Theodota (III), the women's earlier marriage may account for its absence (they do not comply with the beautiful virgin martyr stereotype), but a similar explanation does not apply to other women.

<sup>29</sup> On noble descent and beauty of the novelistic heroines, see Létoublon 1993, 119-124. On beauty as a characteristic of both novelistic heroines and martyrs, see Cataudella 1981, 934. In the case of Aurea (IV), her beauty incites everyone to love her. For similar novelistic scenes, see e.g. Chariton 4,1,9 and 5,1,8.

<sup>30</sup> Eugenia (X) is an exception: she practices chastity and refuses marriage *before* she is a Christian; when she comes across the story of Thecla later on (p. 391, l. 42-43), she is converted to Christianity and subsequently keeps her virginity for Christ (p. 395, l. 22). On Thecla as a model for Eugenia in this passion, see Cooper 2005, 18-23. Domitilla (XVI) can be seen as Eugenia's counterexample: she is a Christian but aspires to marriage. Only when her eunuchs have elaborated on the superiority of virginity, she decides to remain a virgin for Christ.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Susanna (XX) p. 553, l. 53-54: *pudiciciam Domino Iesu Christi exhiberem* [For citations from the passions, I adopt the spelling of the edition used]. See also Agnes (II) §10; Irene (III) §17; Bonosa (V) §3, §10; Caecilia (VI) §3; Theodora (IX) §6; Basilla (X) p. 397, l.1; Constantia (XI) p. 570, l. 22-25; Felicula (XVI) §16; Rufina (XVII) §4. In three cases, the women ritually dedicate their virginity to Christ, either by receiving the veil of virginity (*velamen virginitatis*: Daria (VII) §14; Domitilla (XVI) §9) or by dedicating a lock of hair (Victoria (XVIII) §17). On consecrated virgins as brides of Christ, see Brown 1988, 259-284.

<sup>32</sup> The women who are called thus are often the same ones as those who explicitly commend their chastity to Christ, but not always: Agatha (I), Agnes (II), Bonosa (V), Daria (VII), Columba (VIII), Constantia (XI), Juliana (XII), Lucia (XIII), Marciana (XIV), Secunda (XV), Felicula (XVI), Rufina (XVII), Secunda (XVII), Serapia (XIX).

women mix bloody and bloodless martyrdom<sup>33</sup> and will obtain a double crown after death.<sup>34</sup> Yet the spiritual relationship in the passions is nonetheless experienced just as erotic as the worldly love is in the novels. Half of the women use marital and erotic language to describe their relationship with Christ:<sup>35</sup> they call Him their betrothed (*sponsus*),<sup>36</sup> husband (*vir*)<sup>37</sup> or lover (*amator*),<sup>38</sup> mention the love they experience (*amor*<sup>39</sup> or the verb *diligo*<sup>40</sup>) and even refer to the heavenly marriage bed (*thalamus*).<sup>41</sup> If one also includes the use of a similar language by either the narrator or other characters in the story, the presence of erotic language is even more striking: three quarters of the passions contain such language.<sup>42</sup> The application of the language of worldly love to a spiritual relationship aligns the passions with the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: in the Apocryphal Acts too, scholars have argued, the worldly love of the Greek novels is converted into spiritual love.<sup>43</sup> But there is a difference as well. Whereas in the Apocryphal Acts the

<sup>33</sup> See Consolino 1984; Paoli 2006, 711-722; Cooper 1996, 116-143.

<sup>34</sup> The symbolism of the double crown (one for virginity and one for martyrdom) occurs in the *passio Didymi et Theodora* §10; *passio Eugeniae* p. 396, l. 30-31; *passio Lucia* p. 108, l. 42; *passio Saturnini, Dativi et soc.* §17. The same symbolism can for instance be found in Prudentius' account of Agnes' martyrdom (*Peristephanon* XIV).

<sup>35</sup> This is in line with Chew's observations: three-fifths of the martyrs in her corpus use such language (Chew 2003b, 217).

<sup>36</sup> Agnes (II) §4; Aurea (IV) §3; Bonosa (V) §4, §11; Basilla (X) p. 396, l. 55-56; Secunda (XV) §4; Domitilla (XVI) §21.

<sup>37</sup> Aurea (IV) §16.

<sup>38</sup> Agnes (II) §3; Felicula (XVI) §16; Caecilia (VI) §4 calls the angel who watches over her virginity her *amator*.

<sup>39</sup> Agnes (II) §3, §6; Anastasia (III) §7, §21, §26; Theodora (IX) §1; Eugenia (X) p. 396, l. 39; Basilla (X) p. 396, l. 58; p. 397, l. 6; Constantia (XI) p. 570, l. 10, l. 25; Felicula (XVI) §16; Domitilla (XVI) §21; Rufina (XVII) §4; Secunda (XVII) §6.

<sup>40</sup> Anastasia (III) §27.

<sup>41</sup> Agnes (II) §3; Constantia (XI) p. 570, l. 26; Domitilla (XVI) §21.

<sup>42</sup> Martyr called *sponsa Christi* by the narrator: *passio Agnetis* (§12), *passio Marcianae* (§3); reference to Christ as *sponsus* or *coniunx*: *passio Bonosae* (§11), *passio Chrysanthi et Dariae* (§8), *passio Nerei, Achillei et soc.* (§1, §9; in §8, Christ is presented as the *sponsus* of the Church and not of an individual martyr, for a similar symbolism, see *Ephesians* 5: 21-33), *passio Susannae* (p. 556, l. 47); reference to love (*amor*, *diligo*) between martyr and Christ: *passio Caeciliae* (§3), *passio Eugeniae* (p. 396, l. 8, 18; p. 397, l. 13, 24), *passio Maximae, Secundae, Donatillae* (§4), *passio Nerei, Achillei et soc.* (§9); reference to the heavenly marriage bed: *passio Aureae* (§5), *passio Chrysanthi et Dariae* (§8), *passio Nerei, Achillei et soc.* (§8: marriage bed of Christ and the Church), *passio Rufinae et Secundae* (§10).

<sup>43</sup> See Söder 1932, 119-148; Van Uytvanghe 1992; on erotic discourse in the ancient novels, Christian writings (Apocryphal Acts, *vitae*, passions, Church Fathers) and Byzantine novels, see Nilsson 2009.

apostle acts as a mediator between the women and Christ and thus constitutes the object of the women's love, such a mediator is absent in the passions. The martyrs aim their love directly at Christ: the love in the passions is even more spiritualized. It has been pointed out that the novelistic adulterous love triangle is inverted in the Apocryphal Acts: whereas the legitimate husband is the hero in the novels, he is turned into the antagonist in the Acts. The worldly legitimate marriage which is the ultimate aim of the novelistic heroines becomes a repugnant state of affairs for Thecla and her companions; the love for one's legitimate husband or fiancé is no longer the true love.<sup>44</sup> The same applies to the heroines of the passions. The lion's share of them receive a marriage proposal a novelistic heroine would be very happy with: highly placed men offer them a comfortable married life in accordance with their social standing. This marriage proposal of a – in the view of the pagans at least – honourable suitor occurs either before or after the martyr's arrest.<sup>45</sup> Yet unlike their novelistic counterparts, the martyrs do not consider a marriage which perpetuates the established social order a 'happy ending': they desire death and the subversion of that order.<sup>46</sup> In a way, they also desire marriage, yet not a worldly marriage but a mystical reunion with Christ after death.<sup>47</sup> Although the novels and the passions share the erotic atmos-

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<sup>44</sup> See Söder 1932, 125-126; Hirschberger 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Constantia (XI) and Petronilla (XVI) are an exception: they are not arrested. If the proposal occurs before the arrest, different scenarios can be distinguished: a pagan falls in love with the woman and proposes (Agnes (II), Constantia (XI), Petronilla (XVI), Felicula (XVI), Susanna (XX); in Susanna's case, the father of the future groom insists on the marriage), the woman's parents urge their daughter to marry (Eugenia (X), Secunda (XV)), or, most frequently, the future martyr already has a fiancé who wants to celebrate the marriage (Caecilia (VI), Basilla (X), Juliana (XII), Lucia (XIII), Domitilla (XVI), Rufina (XVII), Secunda (XVII), Victoria (XVIII); in the case of Caecilia and Victoria, their respective parents try to force them into marrying their fiancé). If the marriage proposal takes place after the martyr's arrest (Anastasia (III), Theodota (III), Aurea (IV), Bonosa (V)), the proposal is combined with an exhortation to sacrifice to the pagan gods and to enjoy a luxurious life. The exhortation to enjoy a luxurious life is of a different order as the first two: whereas the martyr will never marry or sacrifice, they lead a comfortable life before their arrest: cf. *supra*, note 27.

<sup>46</sup> On the consolidation of the social order in the novels versus its subversion in early Christian narrative and on the different ideas of a 'happy ending', see Perkins 1995, 25-75 and Cooper 1996, 20-67.

<sup>47</sup> Chew 2003b argues that since the martyrs aspire to a marriage with Christ, their observance of chastity is – just as in the novels – temporary; this might explain why the Greek passions favour the most common novelistic chastity word, σωφροσύνη, over terms as ἀγνεία and ἐγκράτεια.



phere and the emphasis on the preservation of chastity, the narrative teleology of both genres differs remarkably.

In the following sections, I will discuss the different ways in which the martyrs safeguard their chastity for Christ. Firstly, I will focus on the way in which the women avoid the unwanted marriage.<sup>48</sup> They have recourse to two approaches which are equally common within the corpus: willingness to suffer and the employment of ruse. Secondly, in the fourth section, I will discuss what happens next: in half of the cases, the women's chastity is endangered a second time and this time more violently. Both in their defence against marriage and in their defence against rape, I argue, the behaviour of the martyrs bears remarkable resemblances to that of the novelistic heroines in similar situations. While the worldly love of the novels may be turned into spiritual love in the passions, the way in which both novelistic and hagiographical heroines fight for their love is very similar.

### *3. Avoiding marriage in the Latin post-Nicene passions and the Greek novel*

#### *3.1 Willingness to suffer for the beloved*

##### *Suffering for the heavenly beloved*

When confronted with an undesired marriage proposal, many martyrs reject it and are prepared to endure the consequential severe suffering and death. Within the selected corpus, ten martyrs adopt this approach.<sup>49</sup> In most cases, the women face physical torture. When the emperor exhorts Aurea (IV) to accept a husband with whom she can enjoy the joys of life, she answers that she already has a heavenly fiancé and adds that no man will be able to separate her from her love for him.<sup>50</sup> The emperor thereupon threatens to torture and kill her (§3 *a diversis poenis te faciam interire*). He thus expects to submit the woman to his will, in which he does not succeed. Aurea points out that she is not afraid of his threats and repeats that his terrors will not sepa-

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<sup>48</sup> Caecilia (VI) and Daria (VII) actually do marry but turn the marriage into a spiritual one. For the origin, evolution, and consequences of the phenomenon of spiritual marriage, as well as its heretical connotations, see Brown 1988, 83-102 and Elliott 1993, 16-93.

<sup>49</sup> Anastasia (III), Aurea (IV), Bonosa (V), Basilla (X), Secunda (XV), Domitilla (XVI), Felicula (XVI), Rufina (XVII), Secunda (XVII), and Victoria (XVIII).

<sup>50</sup> *Passio Aureae et aliorum* §3: *ego habeo jam caelestem sponsum, a cuius amore nullus hominum me separare potest*. A similar utterance occurs in the *passio Bonosae* §4. Like Aurea, Bonosa is prepared to be physically tortured.

rate her from the love for her Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>51</sup> She is thereupon hoisted upon a wooden rack and flogged and is eventually drowned. The martyrs' determination makes time for reflection futile. Anastasia (III) is given three days to make up her mind: either she agrees to marry the *pontifex* Ulpianus or she will be tortured. She does not need time to consider the matter. As far as she is concerned, the three days are already over: she prefers torture over marriage, since torture allows her to reach her lover.<sup>52</sup> A similar eagerness for torture can be found in the *passio Rufinae et Secundae*. The sisters Rufina and Secunda (XVII) refuse to sacrifice and to marry their pagan fiancés. Hoping to deter Secunda, the prefect has Rufina flogged in her presence. Yet the action does not have the desired effect. Secunda is angry that the prefect honours her sister and dishonours her, and points out that every wound of the whip earns her an eternal crown.<sup>53</sup> In the *passio Nerei et Achillei*, Felicula (XVI) presents the torture she has to endure as her debt to Christ who suffered for her: 'I do not desert my lover, who because of me was fed with gall and quenched with vinegar, crowned with thorns and crucified'.<sup>54</sup> In Felicula's case, torture is not the only method to which the pagans have recourse in order to persuade her. Before she is tortured, the wives of the guards try to convince her to accept the *comes* Flaccus' marriage proposal by enumerating his credentials: he is noble, rich, young, elegant and powerful. Unsurprising-

<sup>51</sup> *Passio Aureae* §3: *Semel dixi, caesar, quia nec minas tuas timeo, nec terrores tui me separant a caritate Domini mei Jesu Christi.*

<sup>52</sup> *Passio Anastasiae* §27 *iam puta quia fluxit tertius dies: scias me supplicia magis eligere, per quae vadam ad eum quem diligo.* The element of time for reflection can be found in early, so-called 'authentic' passions as well (e.g. *passio Sanctorum Scillitanorum* 11, 13). In these early passions, however, marriage and sexuality are not rejected as intrinsically bad: only in times of crisis, the martyr chooses the heavenly over the earthly realm. In the post-Nicene passions things are remarkably different: these texts radically repudiate sex and marriage. On this difference between both groups of texts, see Praet 2003.]

<sup>53</sup> *Passio Rufinae et Secundae* §§4-5: *Quid est, quod sororem meam glorificas et me exhonoras? ... tot computat coronas perpetuas, quot temporalia suscepit vulnera flagellorum.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ego non nego amatorem meum, qui propter me felle cibatus, aceto potatus, spinis coronatus, et cruci affixus est.* For the corresponding passages in the Gospels, see Mt. 27: 27, 34-35; Mc. 15: 17, 23-24; Lc. 23: 33, 36; Joh. 19: 2, 17, 29. In one edition of the *passio Margaritae* (BHL 5303; edition Mombritius 1910<sup>2</sup>, p. 191, l. 29-30), a similar utterance occurs: Margarita too refers to Christ's death for our sake and states that she will not hesitate to die for Him (*Christus semet ipsum pro nobis tradidit in mortem et ego pro ipso mori non dubitabo*). The utterance is absent, however, in the *Acta Sanctorum*-edition of the passion. Moreover, the passion's dating is very doubtful: Amat 1985, 338 calls the passion 'entièrement romanesques, mais relativement anciens'. The martyrs' ordeals are linked to Christ's tribulations in the *passio Maximae, Secundae et Donatillae* §3, when the proconsul orders to give Maxima and Donatilla gall (*fel*) and vinegar (*acetum*).

ly, Felicula is not impressed and replies: 'I am a virgin of Christ and accept absolutely nobody else'.<sup>55</sup> A variation on the motif of female mediators occurs in the *passio Agathae*. The beautiful virgin Agatha (I) is the target of *consul* Quintinianus: he lusts after her and her possessions, and wants to affirm his power and hate for the Christians. He hands Agatha over to Aphrodisia, a wicked women with a telling name, and her nine wicked daughters. The women have to dissuade Agatha from her Christian beliefs. Although it is not explicitly mentioned, one can suppose that they also exhort her to give in to Quintinianus' sexual desires. Unsurprisingly, Agatha stands firm in her faith, whether the women enumerate rewards or utter threats: she desires to suffer various torments for Christ (§3 *concupiscit ... diversa pro Christi nomine supplicia sustinere*).

Not all women are confronted with physical torture: some endure other tribulations. Domitilla's (XVI) rejected fiancé deports her to an island (§10) and has her eunuchs and friends executed (§§18-19). As these ordeals do not persuade her to marry him, in this passion too female mediators are called in. But this is of no use either: Domitilla converts the women. A similar course of events occurs in the *passio Eugeniae*: when her rejected fiancé sends a group of *matronae* to Basilla to talk her into marrying him, she manages to convert them. When the emperor thereupon decrees that she has to choose between marriage and beheading, Basilla is not put out of her countenance and bravely heads for decapitation.

Further variation within the corpus can be detected. Two martyrs have recourse to a specific approach when confronted with an unwanted marriage proposal: they try to commit suicide. This is remarkable, since at the time the post-Nicene passions were written, suicide was problematized within catholic circles.<sup>56</sup> In *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine condemns suicide in general (I, 26) and specifically points out that one should not resort to suicide in order to save one's chastity (I, 28). In Donatist circles, however, suicide was accepted.<sup>57</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, that the two suicidal martyrs can be found in Donatist passions. Victoria (XVIII) jumps out of a window so as to avoid the marriage her parents urge on her but is miraculously saved by the winds in order to suffer for Christ afterwards (§17). In the *passio Maximae*,

<sup>55</sup> *Passio Nerei, Achillei & soc.* § 16: *Accipe virum nobilem, divitem, juvenem, elegantem, Comitem et amicum Imperatoris. Audiens hæc Felicula, nullum sermonis objiciebat omnino responsum, nisi hoc: Virgo Christi sum et praeter ipsum nullum omnino accipio.*

<sup>56</sup> On suicide within Christianity and the link with the condemnation of voluntary martyrdom, see Van Hooff 1990, 194-197 and 1991.

<sup>57</sup> On Augustine's vehement rejection of suicide as spurred on by his controversies with the Donatists, see Van Hooff 1990, 196 and 1991, 368-369 and Droge, Tabor 1992, 167-183.

*Secundae et Donatillae*, the twelve year old Secunda behaves remarkably similar: she jumps from a balcony because she wants to avoid marriage and wishes to join the martyrs Maxima and Donatilla (§4).<sup>58</sup> We are not told, however, that she is saved by the winds; she simply joins the other women. It is possible, then, that the balcony is not that high and that we should not consider Secunda's jump a suicide attempt. It is remarkable that Maxima and Donatilla try to dissuade Secunda from joining them. They urge her to have pity on her old father and not to desert him and remind her of her young age and the weakness this age entails. As we have seen in other passions, this is the kind of behaviour one expects from pagans who are tied to earthly things, not from Christian women who are on the verge of changing the earthly for the heavenly realm.

*Suffering for the worldly beloved*

Although their specific tribulations differ, the martyrs I have discussed all give evidence of remarkable steadfastness in their loyalty to their lover, Christ. In the Greek novels, one comes across a similar tenacity. The novelistic heroines are also prepared to suffer in order to remain loyal to their beloved, whether they receive a marriage proposal or a less honourable offer from another man. Achilles Tatius' Leucippe proves how she has been maltreated by Sosthenes because she refused to submit to his sexual advances (5,17,4-6), and in a letter to her lover Cleitophon she explicitly enumerates the tortures she has endured in order to remain chaste (5,18,4). Like the martyrs, Leucippe is indifferent to more peaceful attempts at changing her mind too: when Sosthenes tries to convince her to accept Thersander as a lover by enumerating his qualities (he is noble, powerful, rich, virtuous and young)<sup>59</sup>, she points out that these are irrelevant to her.<sup>60</sup> In Chariton's novel, a messenger tells Callirhoe that the leader of the army (who actually is her husband Chaereas, but she is unaware of this) wants to marry her. Callirhoe is clear in her answer (7,6,8): 'Slay me, but do not make me such a promise! Marriage I cannot endure – I pray rather for death! They can torture me – goads and fire will not make me rise from here; this spot is my tomb!'.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> On the similarities between both scenes and the Donatist context, see Dalvit 2009, 26-31.

<sup>59</sup> These qualities largely match the qualities which the guards' wives list when trying to convince Felicula, cf. supra note 55.

<sup>60</sup> Ach. Tat. 6,12,5: τί μοι καταλέγεις σωρὸν ἀλλοτριῶν ἐγκομίμων; Why this recital of irrelevant virtues?

<sup>61</sup> φόνευσόν με μᾶλλον ἢ ταῦτα ἐπαγγέλλου. γάμον οὐχ ὑπομενῶ· θάνατον εὐχομαι. κεντεῖωσαν καὶ καέτωσαν· ἐντεῦθεν οὐκ ἀναστήσομαι· τάφος ἐμός ἐστιν οὗτος ὁ τόπος. Another scene in which Callirhoe prefers torture to the loss of her chastity is Chariton

Anthia behaves similarly in Xenophon of Ephesus' novel. When she has been taken prisoner by brigands and one of them tries to seduce her (4,5,1-3), she refuses everything. Nothing puts her out of countenance: not the cave where she is held, not her handcuffs nor the bandit's threats. She saves herself for Habrocomes and wants to remain only Habrocomes' wife, even if this means that she has to die or undergo terrible suffering (4,5,3). It comes as no surprise that also Heliodorus' Chariclea gives evidence of tenacity in her loyalty to her beloved, as she is the protagonist of the Greek novel in which chastity (and more specifically virginity) is elevated to a more spiritual level.<sup>62</sup> When she has received a marriage proposal from another man, Chariclea ensures her lover Theagenes that not a single force will induce her to compromise her virginity (1,25,4).

The novelistic heroines are not only willing to suffer physical torture in order to safeguard their chastity. If necessary, they also adopt the discourse of suicide. In pagan milieux too suicide was most often regarded as honourable<sup>63</sup> and the view on suicide thus aligns the novels with the Donatist passions. When Chariclea realizes that the brigand Trachinus is in love with her and wants to marry her, she decides that she shall cheat him of his desires by taking her own life (Helioid. 5,29,4). Anthia too prefers taking her own life to marrying another man and decides to drink a death potion (X. Eph. 3,6). But her situation differs from Chariclea's. Anthia thinks that Habrocomes is dead and believes that she will be reunited with him after death, a belief which aligns her with the martyrs. Moreover, Anthia points out that she refuses to wrong Habrocomes, the one she loves and the one who died for her (X. Eph. 3,6,3 τὸν διὰ σὲ τεθνηκότα). This statement strikingly reminds of the utterances of the martyrs Felicula and Margarita who also point out that they do not want to desert Christ who sacrificed himself for them.<sup>64</sup>

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6,7,7-9: an eunuch of the Persian king gives her the choice: either she agrees to be the king's mistress or she will suffer terribly as his enemy. Callirhoe is not impressed and points out that she already suffered terribly in the past. She does not believe that the king can come up with something worse.

<sup>62</sup> On the importance of virginity in Heliodorus, see Brethes 2007, 226. For a discussion of the unique nature of Chariclea's commitment to virginity, see Maguire 2005, 47-50, and for a contextualization within both pagan and Christian literary and cultural traditions, 76-163.

<sup>63</sup> See Van Hooff 1990, 131. Suicide is understood as a deed to preserve one's dignity; on suicide for the sake of chastity in these terms, see Van Hooff 1990, 117-118. On the positive view on suicide in the novels when one can no longer fulfil one's assigned role in life, see Perkins 1995, 98-103; on the denotation of suicide as 'polluted' (ἐναγέζ) in Helioid. 8,8,4 and a possible Christian background, see Ramelli 2009, 164.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *supra*, note 54.

*Suffering for the beloved**in the post-Nicene passions and the Greek novels: concluding remarks*

As the discussed scenes reveal, the hagiographical and novelistic heroines defend their chastity in a remarkably similar way. Their approach characterizes them as steadfast women who are prepared to suffer in order to remain chaste for their beloved. Unflinching fidelity grants them power and prevents their adversaries from subjecting them to their will. Yet although the similar tenacity is remarkable, dissimilarities can also be detected. Firstly, the objective of both groups of heroines differs. The novelistic heroines do not really want to suffer or die: they merely choose the lesser of two evils. Moreover, the reader knows in advance that they will see their lover again in this life. The martyrs, on the contrary, very much want to suffer and die. They consider their suffering a blessing as it earns them glory and reunion with their lover, Christ. In the passions, it is a generic necessity that the martyrs die in the end. Secondly, the novels' and the passions' approach to chastity does not run entirely parallel. Whereas chastity is presented as a straightforward ideal in the passions, it has been pointed out that the novels' treatment of chastity contains a non negligible amount of irony, humour and ambiguity.<sup>65</sup>

The perseverant behaviour of the heroines in both groups of texts does not necessarily suggest a direct link between the novels and the passions for such behaviour fits in with the general upgrading of the virtue of endurance in the first centuries AD and the power which this passive resistance yields.<sup>66</sup> A similar approach can be found in the Apocryphal Acts. Thecla is sentenced to the stake because she is an encratite Christian and therefore refuses to marry her fiancé (Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, §§20-21), and Agrippa's concubines who refrain from sharing Agrippa's bed accept to endure all the torture he threatens to submit them to (Apocryphal Acts of Peter, §33).<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, a steadfast and enduring approach is hardly surprising in a martyr narrative. Since the word 'martyr' itself hints at suffering and death for the sake of one's faith,<sup>68</sup> one does not need to resort to a possi-

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<sup>65</sup> See Goldhill 1995. For a recent discussion of ambiguous elements in the depiction of the novelistic heroines' chastity, which undermine their allegedly ideal nature, see De Temmerman 2014.

<sup>66</sup> See Shaw 1996; Perkins 1995, 104-123; Burrus 2004, 55.

<sup>67</sup> In his translation of the Apocryphal Acts of Peter, Poupon remarks that the concubines' determination has been linked to a similar behaviour in the Greek novels (Poupon 1997, 1107).

<sup>68</sup> For the connotation of suffering and death in conjunction with the more general signification of 'witness' in the earliest martyr texts, see Dehandschutter 1991.

ble influence from the novels to account for the presence of such behaviour in the passions.

### 3.2 *The employment of ruse*

#### *Inventive heroines*

Endurance is not the only approach which the women in the post-Nicene passions adopt when confronted with an unwanted marriage proposal. Another way of avoiding an undesired marriage is equally common in the selected corpus: the employment of ruse.

In the *passio Caeciliae* and *passio Anastasiae*, one comes across a variation on the theme: Caecilia (VI) and Anastasia (III) do not use a ruse to avoid marriage, but to prevent its (further) consummation. Caecilia cleverly lures her fiancé into a spiritual marriage on their wedding night: like Callirhoe in Chariton's novel (Chariton 3,2,4), she has a hidden agenda and makes him swear an oath in a marriage-context.<sup>69</sup> Anastasia feigns an illness to avoid sexual intercourse with her legitimate husband and thus uses the same ruse as Anthia when she ends up in a brothel (X. Eph. 5,7,4). Most often, however, the women in the passions use a ruse to prevent worldly marriage. These ruses can take different forms. Agnes (II) lets her suitor believe that she already has a worldly fiancé, but is actually referring to Christ. Susanna (XX) subtly eroticizes the familial kiss her uncle wants to give her and makes his access to such kiss conditional upon baptism. Since Claudius is sent to convince her to marry, his conversion entails postponement of the marriage.<sup>70</sup> Lucia (XIII) is betrothed to a pagan fiancé, but persuades her mother to spend her dowry supporting those in need. She thus pleases her real fiancé, Christ. When her worldly fiancé finds out that she is selling her possessions, Lucia's nurse first manages to keep him happy with an excuse (she tells him that Lucia plans to buy an interesting property for him). But when almost all Lucia's possessions are sold, he finds out how the matter stands and impeaches her for being a Christian. Unlike the other women in the corpus, then, Lucia does not have to reject her fiancé: as she is no longer a wealthy bride, he is no longer interested in marrying her. By selling her possessions, she kills two birds with one stone: she pleases her heavenly fiancé and gets rid of her worldly one. For she can suppose that the

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<sup>69</sup> On Caecilia's astute rhetorical behaviour, see Bossu, De Temmerman, Praet, *Mnemosyne* forthcoming.

<sup>70</sup> On Susanna's approach, see Bossu, Praet, De Temmerman, *Latomus* forthcoming.

man's greed - greed is a stereotypical characteristic of the pagans in the post-Nicene passions<sup>71</sup> - will make him abandon his marriage plans.

The most common ruse to avoid marriage in the passions once again aligns the hagiographical heroines with the heroines of the Greek novel: like the novelistic heroines, the women in the passions resort to feigned consent and requested postponement. This is a ruse the novelistic heroines are famous for: Anthia agrees to marry Perilaus, but comes up with an excuse to postpone the marriage (X. Eph. 2,13,8), and she fools Psammis into believing that she is dedicated to Isis until she is of marriageable age and that there is still a year before that time comes (X. Eph. 3,11,4). Chariclea feigns to be happy to marry Thyamis but claims that she has to resign from her priestly office first, preferably in Memphis (Helioid. 1,22,5-7). The novelistic heroines not only postpone marriage with clever schemes, they also admit doing so: Anthia points out that she has practised every device of chastity (X. Eph. 5,14,2 *πᾶσαν σωφοσύνης μηχανήν*) and Chariclea admits that she managed to fend off a marriage by various artifices (Helioid. 6,9,6 *διεκρουσάμην ἐπινοίαις*). Five women in the selected corpus use the same ruse: they also feign acceptance and use schemes to gain time when confronted with an undesired marriage proposal.<sup>72</sup>

The *comes* Leucadius wants to marry the Christian Theodota (III),<sup>73</sup> who ran away from her hometown in Bithynia and is brought before the emperor in Pannonia. Leucadius promises the emperor that he will convince Theodota to sacrifice to the pagan gods; if not, he will kill her. Theodota tells Leucadius that if he aspires marriage in order to gain possession over her goods, she invites him to go to her hometown and seize all she possesses. Theodota thus appeals to Leucadius' greed; once again, greed is foregrounded as a stereotypical characteristic of the pagans.<sup>74</sup> Upon his return, Theodota continues, she will marry him. This ruse buys her time: Leucadius has to go from Pannonia to Bithynia and back.

<sup>71</sup> For the stereotypical depiction of pagans as greedy people, see also *passio Agathae* §2, *passio Anastasiae* §23, §26, §32, *passio Aureae seu Chryses* §17, *passio Caeciliae* §22.

<sup>72</sup> This observation nuances Goddard Elliott's statements about the post-Nicene passions: 'The world of hagiography as depicted in the passions is black and white. Words mean what they say; what men say corresponds to what they do' and 'only villains attempt (unsuccessfully) to lie' (Goddard Elliott 1987, 34-35).

<sup>73</sup> Moretti 2006, 17 briefly notes that Theodota's approach resembles Anthia's when dealing with Psammis.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *supra*, note 71.



Petronilla (XVI) employs the same ruse. Her story in the *passio Nerei, Achillei & soc.* is a rewriting of a passage from the Apocryphal Acts of Peter.<sup>75</sup> Accompanied by his soldiers (*cum militibus*), the *comes* Flaccus visits Petronilla and wants to marry her. She gives him to understand that sending soldiers to an unarmed girl is improper; if he wants to marry her, he has to send *matronae* and *virgines honestae* in three days time. These women will then escort her to his house. During the three days of postponement, Petronilla fasts and prays and on the third day, she dies after having received the sacrament of Christ. Although the content of Petronilla's prayers is not recorded, it is likely that she prays Christ for death. Such a request would align the scene with the Apocryphal Acts of John<sup>76</sup> and the passions of Agatha and of Chrysanthus and Daria<sup>77</sup>, and would tune in with the extensive glorification of virginity in the passion: virginity is presented as the queen of all virtues (§6 *sicut Reginae persona*). The repudiation of sex is so extreme that the Christian God is presented as a godhead who lets a woman die in order to prevent her from having sexual intercourse.<sup>78</sup> If Petronilla indeed asks the Lord for death, her promise to Flaccus qualifies as a ruse to buy her time. The combination of a ruse to gain time with the choice of death when that extra time has passed, reminds of Anthia's approach when she is forced to marry Perilaus: when the delay which she has obtained with an excuse has passed, Anthia asks a physician for a death potion (X. Eph. 3,5,7). For both Petronilla and Anthia, then, losing their chastity is not an option. But the contexts of both scenes differ substantially: whereas Anthia's behaviour fits in with a story which glorifies love and sexual intercourse within legitimate marriage, Petronilla's approach gives evidence of an extreme repudiation of sex.

Juliana (XII) also has recourse to the ruse of feigned acceptance and request for postponement. When her fiancé wants to marry her, Juliana answers that she cannot marry him as long as he does not hold the office of

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<sup>75</sup> It concerns a passage which has been passed down in Coptic, cf. Poupon's translation 1997, 1049-1052. Vouaux 1922, 157-158 lists the differences between the version of the story in the passion and in the Apocryphal Acts.

<sup>76</sup> In the Apocryphal Acts of John (§§63-65) Drusiana convinces her husband to agree upon a spiritual marriage. Thereupon, another man falls in love with her and tries to seduce her. Upset about the passion she arouses, she asks God for death.

<sup>77</sup> In both passions, a female martyr asks God for death, albeit not in a marriage context. Agatha (I, §12) implores God to receive her spirit since she has suffered enough; in the *passio Chrysanthi et Dariae* (VII, §21), Hilaria prays Christ for death when she is about to be arrested.

<sup>78</sup> In the story's original version, God paralyzes Peter's daughter to the same end.

prefect (§1). This undoubtedly qualifies as a ruse: as a Christian, Juliana attaches no importance to worldly offices. As a friend of the emperor, her fiancé has little trouble to become a prefect and again exhorts Juliana to marry him. Juliana now answers that she is willing to marry on the condition that he is converted to Christianity. Juliana's second condition makes it likely that her first request was not randomly chosen. For as a Christian prefect, her fiancé will not survive for a long time. Unsurprisingly, he refuses to give in to Juliana's request out of fear of death: if he is converted, he rightly points out, the emperor will hear about it and will chop off his head (§3 *caput meum gladio amputabit*). In the *passio Iulianae Nicomedenis*, then, we once again come across an extreme repudiation of sex: Juliana asks for her fiancé's death in order to safeguard her virginity.

Another example of the same ruse can be found in the *passio Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli*. The story goes as follows. Gallicanus is a commander in the Roman army and has subjugated the Persians. As a reward, he asks for the emperor Constantine's daughter Constantia's hand in marriage. This poses a problem: Gallicanus' request cannot very well be refused (the emperor needs him to fight the Scythians) but Constantia has commended her chastity to Christ. Constantia herself comes up with the solution: she tells her father to grant Gallicanus' request but to ask him two favours for the sake of the engagement. Firstly, Gallicanus has to allow his two daughters from an earlier marriage to stay with Constantia until the day of the marriage. Secondly, Constantia's two servants Johannes and Paulus are to accompany Gallicanus on his expedition. That way, Gallicanus and Constantia will learn to know each other indirectly. Unsurprisingly, this is a ruse: Constantia converts Gallicanus' daughters and Johannes and Paulus convert Gallicanus. Gallicanus' conversion entails the solution to the problem as he abandons his marriage plans. That it is a woman (Constantia) who tells a man (her father) how to solve the problem with a ruse, is not insignificant: it once again reminds of the Greek novels. In the novels, the heroes also employ rhetorical ruse, yet it is telling that in most cases the heroines are the instigators of their husbands' rhetorical manipulation. An example can be found in Heliodorus' novel (7,21-26): when Theagenes has to deal with Arsace, a powerful woman who is in love with him, Chariclea advises him to feign acceptance (7,21,4 *πλάττου τὸ συγκατατίθεσθαι*) of her advances and to keep her happy (and therefore harmless) with promises and postponements.<sup>79</sup> The advice

<sup>79</sup> On the scene, see De Temmerman 2014, 269-277. Similar ideas about keeping a powerful opponent happy by feigning compliance to advances can be found in Heliod. 1,26,3-4 and Ach. Tat. 4,8,5-6.

which Chariclea gives Theagenes strikingly fits Constantia's approach in the passion.

The fifth and final example of the ruse of feigned acceptance occurs in the *passio Eugeniae, Prothi et Hyacinthi*. When her father asks Eugenia to accept *consul* Aquilinus' son as her husband, she answers that one should select a husband not on the basis of noble birth (p. 391, l. 40 *natalibus*) but on the basis of nobility of character (*honestate*). She thus implies that Aquilinus' son does not have a noble character but that she is willing to marry a man who has. Yet in the following sentence, we are told that she rejects a large number of other suitors as her mind is set on chastity (*animo castitatis*). It seems, then, that Eugenia uses the focus on nobility of character as an excuse to postpone marriage.

### *Employing ruse*

*in the post-Nicene passions and the Greek novels: concluding remarks.*

Like the novelistic heroines, the women in the passions not only resort to steadfast endurance but have recourse to ruse too in order to defend their chastity. It is remarkable that the ruse which is most commonly used in the passions is the famous novelistic ruse of feigned consent and requested postponement. This similarity between the novels and the passions suggests – more forcibly than in the case of the common steadfast approach – a direct link between both groups of texts. Firstly, this specific ruse does not occur in the Apocryphal Acts,<sup>80</sup> nor in the Latin novels. Secondly, whereas one does not need to posit a possible influence from the novels to account for the presence of steadfastness and endurance in a martyr narrative – these are straightforward traits which one is likely to encounter in such a narrative – this is different in the case of the women's recourse to the ruse of feigned consent. Feigning consent qualifies as an ambiguous approach. This is explicitly thematized in Heliodorus' novel. Both Chariclea and Theagenes raise moral objections when they are urged to pretend to accept the advances of another lover (Heliod. 4,13,4 and 7,21,5).<sup>81</sup> It has been pointed out that these objections echo Aristotelian guidelines, which hint at the inextricable connection between speech and intention and between saying and doing.<sup>82</sup> In

<sup>80</sup> Ruses to avoid sexual intercourse are used in the Apocryphal Acts, but not the ruse of feigned consent and requested postponement. In the Apocryphal Acts of Andrew (§17), Maximilla lets a slave girl take her place in the marital bed in order to avoid sexual contact with her husband; in the *pseudo-Clementines*, Mattidia invents a dream to get away from her brother-in-law who is in love with her.

<sup>81</sup> For detailed analyses of both scenes, see De Temmerman 2014, 259-277.

<sup>82</sup> See Brethes 2007, 239-249 on Ari. *Rh.* 2,6,21-22 and Ari. *Int.* 1.

Christian circles too, the ruse of feigned consent may have raised questions. In *De Mendacio*, Augustine points out that bodily purity does not exist without mental integrity and that one inevitably loses the former if one loses the latter. One should therefore not corrupt one's mental integrity with a lie on behalf of the body.<sup>83</sup> If feigning consent to a marriage proposal is not unproblematic, why, then, do the women resort to this ruse? In the case of the novelistic heroines, the answer is clear: the ruse increases the chance that they achieve their aim, namely reunion with their worldly lover as chaste women. Yet this explanation does not hold true for the hagiographical heroines who are not interested in keeping themselves chaste for a worldly lover. Why, then, do they not adopt the steadfast approach, which earns them glory and, in the case of the martyrs, precipitates their reunion with their heavenly lover? In a few cases, one can think of an explanation. Theodota (III) takes advantage of the time she gains to take care of the imprisoned Christian saints; Constantia's ruse (XI) brings about Gallicanus' conversion and access to the eternal life.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, many of Gallicanus' soldiers follow his example. Yet benefit for the good Christian cause<sup>85</sup> does not explain all instances of feigned consent. This is self-evident in Eugenia's case, as she is not yet a Christian when she uses the ruse, but also Juliana's and Felicula's ruses entail no advantage for the Christian faith. Unlike in the novels, then, the ruse of feigned consent and requested postponement does not always seem to have a reason in the passions – except, of course, enhancing the suspense and entertainment value of the texts. The absence of a plot-related reason for the insertion of this ruse into the passions as well as the observation that this specific ruse does not occur in the Apocryphal Acts nor the Latin novels, suggest that the Latin post-Nicene passions might have adopted this element from the Greek novel.<sup>86</sup> One could however also hypothesize

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<sup>83</sup> Aug. *De Mendacio*, 10: ... *facile responderi potest nullam esse pudicitiam corporis, nisi ab integritate animi pendeat; quia disrupta cadat necesse est, etiamsi intacta videatur; ... Nullo modo igitur animus se mendacio corrumpat pro corpore suo* (edition Combes 1937).

<sup>84</sup> A similar benefit for the 'victim' of the ruse occurs in the *passio Caeciliae*: Caecilia sends her fiancé on his way to baptism and the eternal life.

<sup>85</sup> According to Augustine (*De Mendacio*, 11), converting people is no justification for lying either.

<sup>86</sup> One of Hägg's arguments for claiming that the Coptic passion of St. Parthenope was modeled after the (fragmentarily preserved) novel of Metiochus and Parthenope is the untypical death of the heroine (Hägg 2004, 246-247, 258): Parthenope does not publicly declare her faith but feigns to accept a marriage, asks for respite to rest and throws herself on a fire in her bedroom. Apart from the striking link with Felicula's story, Hägg's

that the presence of the ruse of feigned consent in the passions stems from social reality: their vulnerable position in society might have required women to adopt a similar approach.

4. *Defending chastity in the event of rape  
in the Latin post-Nicene passions and the Greek novel*

Once the hagiographical heroines have avoided the undesired marriage, for many of them the danger has not been averted yet. Half of the women subsequently face a more violent threat: rape. Two scenarios can be distinguished. In a few cases the rejected fiancé can no longer control his desire,<sup>87</sup> but more frequently the woman is submitted to violation as a legal punishment for not sacrificing to the pagan gods.<sup>88</sup> Most often she is put in a brothel. To this last group, we can add 5 extra cases<sup>89</sup> of women who were not confronted with an unwanted marriage proposal but are also submitted to rape for not sacrificing, or in the case of Marciana (XIV), for demolishing a statue of a pagan god. In the *passio Anastasiae*, the sisters Agape, Chionia and Irene are in danger of being raped: the *praeses* Dulcitus is overcome with a filthy desire (§12 *turpissimus spiritus*) and visits them in prison. The vicissitudes of the sisters are also handed down in a pre-Nicene Greek passion (BHG 34).<sup>90</sup> Unlike the post-Nicene text, this earlier version of the martyrdom does not contain the scene in which Dulcitus wants to rape the women. The inclusion of this passage in the later passion indicates both the heightened anti-sexual atmosphere of the post-Nicene passions as well as their greater emphasis on excitement. The threat of rape which many martyrs face indeed adds to the suspense and erotic flavour of the texts and underpins the observation that the post-Nicene passions go to the trouble of meeting their public's need of entertainment.<sup>91</sup>

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argument suggests that the absence or postponement of the typical steadfastness in the passions can have a novelistic origin.

<sup>87</sup> Domitilla (XVI), Anastasia (III), and Susanna (XX).

<sup>88</sup> Agnes (II), Theodota (III), Bonosa (V), Theodora (IX), Lucia (XIII), Rufina (XVII), and Secunda (XVII). In the *passio Didymi et Theodora* (§2) the judge explicitly refers to the emperors' decision that virgins have to sacrifice to the pagan gods or will be put in a brothel. In §5, he stresses that he is not willing to violate this imperial regulation.

<sup>89</sup> Irene (II), Daria (VI), Columba (VII), Marciana (XIII), and Serapia (XVIII).

<sup>90</sup> On the relation of the *passio Anastasiae* to the earlier Greek passion, see Moretti 2006, 40-41.

<sup>91</sup> On entertainment in Christian texts, see Huber-Rebenich 1999, 187-190; on entertainment in the passions, see Chew 2003a, 137-138.

While it goes without saying that the sexual threat never persuades the women to renounce Christ or their faith, different reactions can be identified. In an article which treats the theme of virgins in a brothel, Rizzo Nervo distinguishes between two: either the martyr implores Christ for help or she points out that chastity is a matter of intention.<sup>92</sup> To be sure, both reactions are present in the selected corpus, but the larger amount of studied passions reveals more variations on the theme.<sup>93</sup> As Rizzo Nervo points out, some martyrs implore Christ for support. Serapia (XIX) faces violation by two lecherous young men because she refuses to renounce her faith and claims to be the temple of God (§4 *templum Dei*).<sup>94</sup> If she is raped, the *praeses* reasons, she will no longer qualify as God's temple. When faced with the sexual threat, Serapia implores Christ for help: 'Help me now, I beg you, and have mercy upon me, your wandering servant Serapia, and free me of the filthy intentions of these young men'.<sup>95</sup> In other passions, one can suppose that the woman asks Christ for help, as the exact words of her prayer are not recorded.<sup>96</sup> Imploring the godhead for support when faced with the threat of rape is an approach which can be found in Xenophon of Ephesus' novel as well. When Anthia is in danger of being raped by Polyidus, she becomes a suppliant (ικέτις) of the goddess Isis, who has saved her before (4,3,3) and implores the goddess to be her saviour once more: 'Let Polyidus spare me as well, since I am keeping myself chaste for Habrocomes, thanks to you'.<sup>97</sup> The same approach occurs in the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas too: when Charisius is about to rape his wife Mygdonia (§98), she implores Christ for help and deliverance before she flees from the room, wrapped in the bedroom curtain. A variation on the approach of imploring the godhead for support is the expression of the certainty that Christ will indeed provide protec-

<sup>92</sup> Rizzo Nervo 1995.

<sup>93</sup> Rizzo Nervo refers to the Greek *passio Agnetis* and *passio Luciae* and the Latin *passio Anastasiae*.

<sup>94</sup> For the faithful as the temple of God, cf. I Cor. 3:16-17.

<sup>95</sup> *Passio Serapiae et Sabinae* §5: *Adesto nunc, precor, et mihi miserere peregrinae ancillae tuae Serapiae, et libera me a sordida cogitatione juvenum istorum*. Serapia's designation as 'wandering' (*peregrina*) can have two explanations: either it refers to the fact that she, a citizen of Antiochia, ended up in the North-Italian town of Vindena, or, more likely, it refers to her pilgrimage on earth before she reaches the eternal life; for Biblical passages expressing this idea, see Heb. 11, 13-16 and I Pe. 2, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Susanna (XX, p. 558, l. 14-16) and Daria (VII, §22) are very likely to ask Christ for support in their prayers as they both know that they are in danger of being raped. In the case of Anastasia (III, §§27-28), and Agape, Chionia and Irene (III, §13) this is less clear: the women are already praying when a lustful pagan arrives.

<sup>97</sup> X. Eph. 5,4,6 φεισάσθω μου καὶ Πολύιδος τῆς διὰ σὲ σώφρονος Ἀβροκόμη τηρουμένης.

tion. When the prefect threatens to put Agnes (II) in a brothel if she refuses to sacrifice to the pagan gods, she replies as follows: ‘Since I know the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, I absolutely scorn your threats in the belief that I will neither sacrifice to your idols, nor be defiled by filthy practices. For an angel of the Lord accompanies me and guards my body. The only-begotten son of God, whom you do not know, is an impenetrable wall for me, a guardian who never sleeps and a defender who never lets me down’.<sup>98</sup> A similar confidence in the support of the godhead can be found in Achilles Tatius’ novel. When Thersander threatens to rape her, Leucippe points out that Artemis will protect her (6,21,2): ‘Tell me, have you no fear of your own patroness Artemis, that you would ravish a virgin in the city of a virgin? Lady goddess, where are your arrows?’<sup>99</sup>

The second reaction Rizzo Nervo identifies is the most remarkable: the woman points out that even if she would be sexually assaulted, this would not compromise her fidelity to Christ. Quite on the contrary: since Christ judges from intention, rape only adds to her glory. Irene (III), Theodora (IX),<sup>100</sup> Lucia (XII), and the sisters Rufina and Secunda (XVII) adopt this approach. When the judge threatens to put her in a brothel, Lucia replies: ‘A body cannot be defiled, unless the mind agrees ... For He judges from thoughts and free will. ... If you have me violated against my will, my chastity will be doubled when I receive the crown’.<sup>101</sup> Rizzo Nervo links this distinction between corporeal and spiritual virginity to the contemporary problematization of suicide for the sake of chastity in catholic circles.<sup>102</sup> Augustine’s condemnation of suicide in order to safeguard one’s chastity in

<sup>98</sup> *Passio Agnetis et Emerentianae* §7: *Unde ego quia novi virtutem Domini mei Iesu Christi, segura cōtemno minas tuas, credens quod neque sacrificem idolis tuis, neque polluar sordibus alienis. Mecum enim habeo custodem corporis mei Angelum Domini. Nam unigenitus Dei filius, quem ignores, murus est mihi impenetrabilis et custos mihi est numquam dormiens et defensor mihi est numquam deficiens.* Columba (VIII) §4 and Marciana (XIV) §3 express themselves similarly. Bonosa seems certain of Christ’s support too (§10): when the *praeses* decides to put her in a brothel, she simply states that she will never give up her virginity which she consecrated to Christ, and is thereupon saved by a miracle.

<sup>99</sup> Ach. Tat. 6,21,2 οὐδὲ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν, εἰπέ μοι, τὴν σὴν φοβῆ, ἀλλὰ βιάζει παρθένον ἐν πόλει παρθένου; δέσποινα, ποῦ σου τὰ τόξα;

<sup>100</sup> Theodora combines this approach (§2) with a declaration that Christ will protect her (§§3,6) and a prayer to Christ for support when she is put in the brothel (§7).

<sup>101</sup> *Passio Luciae*, p. 108, r. 38-42 : *Numquam inquinatur corpus nisi de consensu mentis. ... Nam sic de sensibus et voluntatibus iudicat [i.e. Deus]. ... Nam si me invitam violari feris: castitas mihi duplicabitur ad coronam.* For the double crown (of virginity and of martyrdom), cf. supra, note 34.

<sup>102</sup> Rizzo Nervo 1995, 94-97, with references to Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*.

*De Doctrina Christiana* indeed reminds of Lucia's words: '... to some of the sufferers it may have appeared that continence is to be counted as a good among bodily goods and that it is present just so long as the body has not been subject to anyone's lustful tampering. They may not have understood that the sanctity of both body and spirit depend on strength of will alone divinely assisted and that it is one of those goods that cannot be taken away, as long as the mind refuses consent'.<sup>103</sup> The distinction between corporeal and spiritual virginity and the idea that violation only adds to their glory incite the martyrs to some of the most defiant replies in the corpus of the Latin post-Nicene passions. Both Lucia (XIII) and Rufina (XVII) reply exceedingly provocative: 'Behold, my body is ready for every torment. What are you waiting for? Start and submit me to the punishments you long for, son of the devil' (Lucia)<sup>104</sup> and 'Bring fire, swords, whips, stones, sticks and rods: every punishment you submit me to, I will add to the glory of our martyrdom' (Rufina).<sup>105</sup> These defiant utterances strikingly remind of Leucippe's reply when she is threatened to be raped by Thersander: 'Bring on the instruments of torture: the wheel – here, take my arms and stretch them; the whips – here is my back, lash away; the hot irons – here is my body for burning; bring the axe as well – here is my neck, slice through! Watch a new contest: a single woman competes with all the engines of torture and wins every round (Ach. Tat. 6,21,1-2) .... Arm yourself, then; take up the whips against me, the rack, the fire, the sword (Ach. Tat. 6,22,4)'.<sup>106</sup>

Not all martyrs actually react to the threat of rape: some women are miraculously rescued without saying or doing anything that is directly related to the sexual threat. Domitilla's fiancé who locked her up in order to rape her

<sup>103</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I, 28. ... *quibusdam, quae ista perpessae sunt, potuit videri continentiae bonum in bonis corporalibus deputandum et tunc manere, si nullius libidine corpus adtrearetur; non autem esse positum in solo adiuto diuinitus robore uoluntatis, ut sit sanctum et corpus et spiritus; nec tale bonum esse quod inuito animo non possit auferri* (text and translation Page, Capps, Rouse, Post, Warmington, McCracken 1966<sup>2</sup>). Similar ideas can be found in Augustine's *De Mendacio*, 10 (cf. supra note 83).

<sup>104</sup> *Passio Luciae*, p. 108, 44-46: *Ecce, corpus meum paratum est ad omne supplicium. Quid moraris? Incipe desyderia poenarum tuarum in me exercere, fili diaboli!*

<sup>105</sup> *Passio Rufinae et Secundae* §6: *Applica ignes, gladios, flagella, saxa, fustes et virgas: quot tu poenas intuleris, per tot ego gloriam martyrii nostri numerabo.*

<sup>106</sup> Ach. Tat. 6,21,1-2: τὰς βασάνους παράστησον. φερέτω τροχόν· ἰδοὺ χεῖρες, τεινέτω. φερέτω καὶ μάστιγας· ἰδοὺ νῶτος, τυπτέτω. κομιζέτω πῦρ· ἰδοὺ σῶμα, καιέτω. φερέτω καὶ σίδηρον· ἰδοὺ δέρη, σφαζέτω. ἀγῶνα θεάσασθε καινόν· πρὸς πάσας τὰς βασάνους ἀγωνίζεται μία γυνή καὶ πάντα νικᾷ ... Ach. Tat. 6,22,4 ὀπλίζου τοίνυν, ἤδη λάμβανε κατ' ἐμοῦ τὰς μάστιγας, τὸν τροχόν, τὸ πῦρ, τὸν σίδηρον· On the correspondences between Leucippe's utterance and other Christian martyr texts, see supra, note 20.



cannot stop dancing and eventually drops dead (XVI §23) and the man who has to escort Theodota to a brothel gets punched in the face by a figure who stands next to her (III §31). A similar miracle saves the women in three quarters of the cases: the pagans cannot move them, walls miraculously pop up to screen them off, angels or wild animals appear out of nowhere, the assaulter is blinded or gets possessed by the devil, ... In two cases, the pagans' plan to rape the martyr is forestalled in a more cunning way. Theodora (IX) is visited in the brothel by a Christian man who changes clothes with her. In the man's clothes, she can leave the brothel and escapes rape. It is striking that the instigator of the ruse is identified as none other than God himself (BHL 8072, §11: *Deus me misit ut hoc facerem*). Irene (III), in her turn, is rescued by two fake soldiers; it is unclear if these are angels or other Christians (§18). In only one case the pagan abandons his plan to have the martyr raped: once Rufina (XVI) has explained that chastity is a matter of intention and will not compromise their fidelity to Christ, he submits her and her sister to physical and no sexual torture.

### 5. Conclusion

As texts which not only aim to edify their audience but want to tell a good story too, the Latin post-Nicene passions qualify as an interesting component of the network of ancient narrative texts. In this article, I analyzed the passions' handling of the literary *topos* of the defence of chastity and highlighted the variation which can be detected within the topical elaboration. I focused on the passions' interconnections with the Greek novel within this thematic realm. Like the Apocryphal Acts, the passions tailor the novelistic erotic atmosphere to their Christian environment: whereas the novelistic heroines safeguard their chastity for their worldly lover, the heroines of the passions want to remain chaste for Christ. In their defence of this chastity, the women behave strikingly alike, whether they face an undesired marriage proposal or the threat of rape. They share some approaches with other heroines within the network of ancient narrative texts. Steadfast endurance or imploring the godhead for support qualify as examples. Similar correspondences indicate that the Greek novelists and the hagiographers of the Latin passions shared a common literary culture. Other approaches, like the ruse of feigned consent and requested postponement, set the novelistic and hagiographical heroines apart from other heroines within the network and might hint at direct influence of the novels on the passions. Novelistic heroines, it

seems, do not disappear as soon as the novels themselves do after Heliodorus; instead, they live on in the heroines of the post-Nicene passions.<sup>107</sup>

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*Appendix: List of Latin passions  
featuring a woman who has to defend her chastity  
and dated to the time span 4<sup>th</sup> until 6<sup>th</sup> centuries*

*Abbreviations*

ASS = Acta Sanctorum, Antwerp.

Delehaye = Delehaye, H. 1936. *Étude sur le légendier romain. Les saints de novembre et de décembre*, Bruxelles: société des Bollandistes.

CPL = Dekkers, E., Gaar, A. (eds.) 1995<sup>3</sup>. *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, Turnhout: Brepols.

Fabrèga Grau = Fabrèga Grau, A. (ed.) 1955. *Pasionario hispanico, siglos VII-XI*, vol. II (*Monumenta Hispaniae sacra, series liturgica 6*), Madrid: CSIC.

GF = Gryson, R., Frede, H., 2007. *Répertoire général des auteurs ecclésiastiques latins de l'Antiquité et du Haut Moyen Âge*, Freiburg: Herder.

Lanéry = Lanéry, C. 2010. 'Hagiographie d'Italie (300-550): les passions', in: G. Philippart (ed.), *Corpus Christianorum: Hagiographies V*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1-369.

Mombritius= Mombritius, B. *Sanctuarium seu vitae sanctorum (1480)*, monachi Solesmenses (eds.), 1910<sup>2</sup>, Paris: Fontemoing (reprinted Hildesheim, Olms, 1978).

Saxer = Saxer, V. 1994. 'Afrique Latine', in: G. Philippart (ed.), *Corpus Christianorum: Hagiographies III*, Turnhout: Brepols, 25-95.

Upchurch = Upchurch, R. (ed.) 2007. *Aelfric's Lives of the virgin spouses, with modern English parallel-text translations*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press.



*List of passions*

The edition used in the article is marked in **bold**; the women whose chastity is endangered are underlined.

Passio and BHL number	Edition	Dating	Provenance	Length
Passio <u>Agathae</u> (BHL 133) (I)	- <b>Bollandus, J. (ed.) 1658. ASS Feb. I, 615-618</b>	- CPL: probably 6 <sup>th</sup> century (contemporaneous with <i>passio Luciae</i> ) - GF: 6 <sup>th</sup> century? (contemporaneous with <i>passio Luciae</i> ) - Lanéry, 284: before mid-fifth century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 285: Catania	Approx. 2130 words
Passio <u>Agnētis</u> et Emerentianae (BHL 156) (II)	Numerous editions, due to attribution to Ambrose in the past. I consulted the following editions: - Mombritius, vol I, 40-44; - <b>Bollandus, J., Henschenius, G. (eds.) 1643. ASS Ian. II, 350-354;</b> - Bartolini (1858), 1-22 (with Italian translation); - Jubaru (1907), 358-363; - Fabrèga Grau, 176-182.	- CPL: reference to Saliou (1990), 286, note 8, who does not deem Ambrosian authorship impossible. - GF: 5 <sup>th</sup> century? - <u>Lanéry, 200-201</u> : during the pontificate of pope Symmachus (498-514) - Tomea (2010), 27-29: before the rewriting of the <i>passio Eugeniae</i> (BHL 2666), which can be dated to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 6 <sup>th</sup> or to the 7 <sup>th</sup> century.	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 198: Rome	Approx. 2240 words

Passio <u>Anastasiae</u> (BHL 1795 + 118 + 8093 + 401) + <u>Theodota</u> + <u>Agape</u> , <u>Chionia</u> , <u>Irene</u> (III)	- Delehaye, 221-249 - <b>Moretti (2006)</b>	- CPL: no dating mentioned - GF: 5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 51-60</u> : first half of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Rome - Lanéry, 54-56: Rome	Approx. 6330 words
Passio <u>Aureae</u> seu Chryses (BHL 809) (IV)	- <b>Pinius, J. (ed.) 1739. ASS Aug. IV, 757-761</b>	- CPL: 6 <sup>th</sup> century - GF: 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 317-318</u> : presumably 9 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 317-318: Ostia	Approx. 3280 words
Passio <u>Bonosae</u> (BHL 1425) (V)	- <b>Sollerius, J. (ed.) 1725. ASS Iul. IV, 21-23</b>	- CPL: 6 <sup>th</sup> century? - GF: possibly 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 298</u> : 12 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 298: Rome	Approx. 1750 words
Passio <u>Caeciliae</u> (BHL 1495) (VI)	- Mombritius, vol. I, 332-341; - Delehaye, 194-220; - Fabrèga Grau, 25-40; - <b>Upchurch, 172-217.</b>	- CPL: after Victor Vitensis († after 489) - GF: 6 <sup>th</sup> century: after Victor Vitensis - <u>Lanéry (2009)</u> , 536-550: 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Rome - Lanéry (2009), 536: Rome	Approx. 6320 words
Passio Chrysanthi et <u>Dariae</u> (BHL 1787) (VII)	- Mombritius, vol. I, 271-278; - Bossue, B. (ed.) 1864. ASS Oct. XI, 437-487; - Floss (1869), 156-170; - <b>Upchurch, 218-249</b>	- CPL: before Gregory of Tours († 593) - GF: before the <i>passio Anastasiae</i> and Gregory of Tours - <u>Lanéry, 141-6</u> : 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: no location mentioned - Lanéry, 142: Rome	Approx. 4645 words
Passio <u>Columbae</u> (BHL 1893) (VIII)	- <b>Fabrèga Grau, 116-118</b>	- CPL: 6 <sup>th</sup> century? - GF: before the 9 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Beaujard (2000)</u> , 226-7: end of the 6 <sup>th</sup> century, possibly 7 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Gaul or Germania - GF: no location mentioned - <u>Beaujard (2000)</u> , 226-227: Gaul	Approx. 840 words

Passio <u>Didymi et Theodorae</u> (BHL 8072/8073) (IX)	- Papebrochius, D. (ed.). 1675. ASS April. III, 572-574; - <b>Lanéry (2004), 34-49</b>	Lanéry (2004), 20-23: 5 <sup>th</sup> , possibly even end of the 4 <sup>th</sup> century	Lanéry (2004), 22-23: BHL 8073: Italy, probably northern Italy; BHL 8072: Italy?	Approx. 1530 words
Passio <u>Eugeniae</u> , Prothi et Hyacinthi (BHL 2667) + <u>Basilla</u> (X)	- <b>Mombritius, vol. II, 391-397</b>	- CPL: before Avitus of Vienne (†518) - GF: 5 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 130-137</u> : 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 135: Rome	Approx. 4475 words
Passio Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli (BHL 3236 + 3238) + <u>Constantia</u> (XI)	- <b>Mombritius, vol. I, 569-572</b> (the only edition which combines BHL 3236 and BHL 3238)	- CPL: no dating mentioned - GF: possibly 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 212-214</u> : after 514, but before 550	- CPL: Italy - GF: Rome - Lanéry, 211-212: Rome	Approx. 2170 words
Passio <u>Julianae</u> Nicomedensis (BHL 4524) (XII)	- Mombritius, vol. II, 77-80; <b>Bollandus, J. (ed.) 1658. ASS Feb. II, 873-877</b>	- CPL: before Beda (†735) - GF: before Beda - <u>Lanéry, 19, note 8</u> : translated from the Greek before the end of the 6 <sup>th</sup> century.	-CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 19, note 8: Campania	Approx. 2865 words
Passio <u>Luciae</u> (BHL 4992) (XIII)	- <b>Mombritius, vol. II, 107-109</b>	- CPL: 6 <sup>th</sup> century? - GF: possibly 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 286, note 615</u> : between the 5 <sup>th</sup> and the 7 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 285-286: Syracuse	Approx. 1500 words

Passio <u>Marcianae</u> (BHL 5257 – 5259) (XIV)	- Mombritius, vol. II, 256-257 (= BHL 5259) - <b>Bollandus, J. Henschenius, G. (eds.) 1643. ASS Ian. I, 569</b> (= BHL 5257). BHL 5257 and BHL 5259 betray only minor differences; the plotlines are very similar	- <u>Saxer, 69</u> : presumably 5 <sup>th</sup> century, possibly end of the 4 <sup>th</sup> century	- Saxer, 69: Caesarea in Mauretania	Approx. 770 words
Passio Maximae, Donatillae et <u>Secundae</u> (BHL 5809) (XV)	- <b>De Smedt (1890), 110-116</b>	- CPL: 4 <sup>th</sup> century, with Donatist additions. - GF: 4 <sup>th</sup> century with Donatist additions or even originally Donatist - Saxer, <u>60-62</u> : end of the 4 <sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century in a Donatist environment	- CPL: Africa - GF: no location mentioned - Saxer, 61-64: Africa	Approx. 1255 words
Passio Nerei, Achillei & soc. (BHL 6058 – 6066) <u>Domitilla</u> , <u>Petronilla</u> , <u>Felicula</u> (XVI)	- <b>Henschenius, G. (ed.) 1680. ASS Mai III, 6-13</b> (the only edition which combines all BHL numbers)	- CPL: apparently 6 <sup>th</sup> century - GF: possibly 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 123-124</u> : 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Rome - Lanéry, 119: Rome	Approx. 4340 words
Passio <u>Rufinae</u> & <u>Secundae</u> (BHL 7359) (XVII)	- Mombritius, vol. II, 444-445 - <b>Pinius, J. (ed.) 1723. ASS Iul. III, 30-31</b>	- CPL: mid-fifth century - GF: 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 300</u> : between 550 and 650	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 300: Silva Candida	Approx. 1000 words

Passio Saturnini, Dativi & soc. (BHL 7492) <u>Victoria</u> (XVIII)	- Franchi de' Cavalieri (1935), 49-71; - <b>Maier (1987), 57-92</b>	- CPL: under Diocletian - GF: possibly beginning of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century – Donatist additions - <u>Saxer, 61-62</u> : Donatist redaction of the end of the 4 <sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Africa - GF: Abitinae, Africa - Saxer, 61-62: Abitinae, Africa	Approx. 4700 words
Passio <u>Serapiae</u> & Sabinae (BHL 7586 + 7407) (XIX)	- <b>Stiltingus, J. (ed.), 1743. ASS Aug. VI, 500-504</b> (only edition which combines the BHL numbers)	- CPL: 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> century - GF: 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 305-6</u> : presumably between the end of the 6 <sup>th</sup> and the end of the 8 <sup>th</sup> century	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 305-306: close to Terni	Approx. 2245 words
Passio <u>Susannae</u> (BHL 7937) (XX)	- <b>Mombritius, vol. II, 553-559</b> ; - Bollandus, J. (ed.) 1658. ASS Febr. III, 61-64 (first part of the passion) and Cuperus, G. (ed.) 1735. ASS Aug. II, 631-632 (second part of the passion) Susanna's passion is divided into two parts in the ASS edition because, according to the passion, her fellow martyrs died earlier.	- CPL: 6 <sup>th</sup> century? - GF: possibly 6 <sup>th</sup> century - <u>Lanéry, 153</u> : between 450 and 550	- CPL: Italy - GF: Italy - Lanéry, 152: Rome	Approx. 3630 words

Passio Agathae (BHL 133) (I)

Edition: **Bollandus, J. (ed.) 1658. ASS Feb. I, 615-618**

Dating:

- CPL: probably 6th century (contemporaneous with *passio Luciae*)
- GF: 6th century? (contemporaneous with *passio Luciae*)
- Lanéry, 284: before mid-fifth century

Provenance:

- CPL: Italy
- GF: Italy
- Lanéry, 285: Catania

Length: Approx. 2130 words

Passio Agnetis et Emerentianae (BHL 156) (II)

Numerous editions, due to attribution to Ambrose in the past. I consulted the following editions:

- Mombritius, vol I, 40-44;
- **Bollandus, J., Henschenius, G. (eds.) 1643. ASS Ian. II, 350-354;**
- Bartolini (1858), 1-22 (with Italian translation);
- Jubaru (1907), 358-363;
- Fabrèga Grau, 176-182.

Dating:

- CPL: reference to Saliou (1990), 286, note 8, who does not deem Ambrosian authorship impossible.
- GF: 5<sup>th</sup> century?
- Lanéry, 200-201: during the pontificate of pope Symmachus (498-514)
- Tomea (2010), 27-29: before the rewriting of the *passio Eugeniae* (BHL 2666), which can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 6<sup>th</sup> or to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Provenance:

- CPL: Italy
- GF: Italy
- Lanéry, 198: Rome

Length: Approx. 2240 words