

MARÍLIA FUTRE PINHEIRO, JUDITH PERKINS, RICHARD PERVO (EDS.):

*The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*

*Ancient Narrative Supplementa* 16

2012. Pp. xx, 230. Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library.

Hard cover € 74.20

ISBN 9789491431210

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This interesting volume represents a fraction of the proceedings of ICAN IV (the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel), held in Lisbon on 21-26 July 2008 and organised by Marília Futre Pinheiro. It investigates, from various angles, the role played by narratives in Christian and Jewish self-fashioning in the early Roman imperial period. Twelve essays focus on Christian narratives, and one on the Jewish novel *Joseph and Aseneth*. The Prologue, by Judith Perkins, offers a brief history of the ICANs and provides the rationale for the publication of the Proceedings of ICAN IV in several volumes. Richard Pervo in the Introduction remarks upon the relatively recent “explosion of interest” in ancient Jewish and Christian narrative (XV). He rightly concludes that “Jewish and Christian fiction indicates not only the success of Greek fiction, but also the capacity of the novel to develop in manifold directions and to adjust itself to many cultures” (XVII). Pervo also gives a short survey of the contributions to the volume under review.

The first part of the book groups five papers under the heading “The Apocryphal Acts,” referring to the so-called apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Jennifer Eyl, “Why Thekla Does Not See Paul: Visual Perception and the Displacement of Erōs in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*” (3-20) notes that usually in the ancient novels the hero and the heroine fall in love at first sight, and contextualises this within ancient theories of visual perception. This is why, she argues, in the opening scene of the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* the heroine, Thekla, does not see Paul, but falls in spiritual love with him only by hearing his preaching. This strategy wards off erōs from the narrative, where Paul and Thekla are rather linked by affection (στοργή).

Robin J. Greene, “(Un)Happily Ever After: Literary and Religious Tensions in the Endings of the Apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thekla*” (21-34), explores the different versions of the ending of the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*,

showing how they reflect different religious and cultural agendas. She begins with noting that the endings of classical Greek novels represent the triumph of conventional social order, with the heroine preserving her virginity throughout a series of perilous adventures, marrying and becoming a matron. Overall, this picture is correct, although nuances have been suggested by David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). While the achievement of full social integration is the ultimate goal in the Greek romances, Greene notes that a rejection of contemporary society seems reflected in Christian narratives such as the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. It has long been observed, of course, that the disruption of existing marriages and the rejection of marital intercourse and of procreation posed a substantial threat to society and social order. In the case of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, this attitude is well grounded in Paul's own declared preference for, and recommendation of, celibacy in 1 Corinthians.

The most important aspects of Greene's paper are its investigation into the different endings of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and the passing remarks upon Thecla's apostolic role, in terms which seem to me similar to those that Origen in the same period ascribed to women presbyters. In the original version of the *Acts of Thecla*, stemming around 180-200 CE according to Jan Bremmer's plausible conjecture, which Greene accepts, Thecla, after being reunited with Paul, tells him that she wants to go back to Iconium, to which Paul replies: "Go and teach the word of God" (δίδασκε τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, *Acts of Thecla* 41.6). After Iconium, Thecla moves to Seleucia to teach women the Gospel and finally passes away in peace (*ibidem* 43.7). But in the fourth or fifth century the last two sections concerning the stay in Seleucia were replaced by a much longer development, ending with Thecla's martyrdom (preserved in Codex Baroccianus, ms. G). Greene argues that this change was influenced by the literature of acts of martyrs that was meanwhile developing. It is noteworthy that Thecla is given the task of teaching, διδάσκειν, the word of God, both in general (*ATH* 41.6) and especially to women, as is clear from *ATH* 43.7, with Thecla's teaching women in Seleucia, and also 39, where Thecla is said to have spent eight days teaching the women of Tryphaena's household. Even in the later version in ms. G Thecla is said to have spent all of her time in Seleucia teaching noblewomen Christianity and healing (45.6-14). And even in ms. G Thecla is still called apostle (ἀπόστολος, 45.58). Origen, a perfect contemporary of the earlier *Acts of Thecla*, not only admitted of the existence of women apostles and ministers in the Church, but more specifically described the task of women presbyters

as teaching and announcing the word of God, especially to women, more in a private than in a public context<sup>1</sup>—the same task as performed by Thecla.

Paola Francesca Moretti, “The Two Ephesian Matrons: Drusiana’s Story in the *Acts of John* as a Possible Christian Response to Milesian Narrative” (35-48), as the title indicates, suggests that the story of Drusiana in the second-century *Acts of John*, which is probably set in Ephesus, represents a Christian response to a kind of Milesian narrative such as Petronius’ Matron of Ephesus. Moretti is rightly prudent in formulating this hypothesis. Both stories, that in the *Acts* and that of Petronius, take place in Ephesus, both concern marital fidelity put on trial by a seducer in a tomb, and both end with the woman’s return to life, true life in the case of the *Acts*, but false in the case of the Milesian story. If Moretti’s contrasting parallelism is correct, the play on the notion of true or false life is particularly intriguing; this also involves a reflection on what is true death and – from the Christian viewpoint – true resurrection. As she notes, the *Acts of John* teach “the paradox that physical life can be spiritual death, and that physical resurrection does not necessarily mean spiritual resurrection (as the example of Fortunatus teaches us)” (42). Even though Moretti does not expand on this, the theme of spiritual death in physical life was widespread in the early imperial time. It was present also in the New Testament, especially 1 Tim. 5:6 and 1 Cor. 11:30, with the motif of a person who is physically alive, but spiritually dead, and it culminated with Origen, a contemporary of the *Acts of John*.<sup>2</sup>

Vincent Giraudet, “Virginité at Stake: Greek Novels, Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, and the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus Panopolitanus” (49-64) studies parallel scenes involving a snake that protects the virginity of a heroine in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca* (35.204-222) and in the *Acts of John* (71). Giraudet plausibly supposes that Nonnus’ attribution of a desire to protect the Bacchant’s virginity to the snakes of the Bacchantes (*Dion.* 14.363-366) suggests a dependence on the *Acts of John*, given the rarity of this peculiar task of snakes in Greek literature. In general, Giraudet notes that the *Dionysiaca* – the work of the same Christian author who wrote the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* – shares with both the ancient novels and the apocryphal *Acts of*

<sup>1</sup> Full documentation in my “Tit. 2:2-4 and a Patristic Interpretation,” in *Greeks, Jews, and Christians: Historical, Religious, and Philological Studies in Honor of Jesús Peláez del Rosal*, eds. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta and Israel Muñoz Gallarte (Cordoba: El Almendro, 2013; Estudios de Filología Neotestamentaria 10), 281-299.

<sup>2</sup> Full argument can be found in my “1 Tim. 5:6 and the Notion and Terminology of Spiritual Death: Hellenistic Moral Philosophy in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Aevum* 84 (2010) 3-16 and “Spiritual Weakness, Illness, and Death in 1 Cor 11:30,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011) 145-163.

*the Apostles* a special interest in the theme of the preservation of virginity. In the ancient novels, virginity is never in contradiction with marriage, but is preserved in view of marital fidelity; in most apocryphal *Acts*, instead, virginity is meant to be perpetual, and to be preserved even within a possible marriage. Giraudet lists as many as 138 occurrences of the virginity motif in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, and notes that Nonnus clearly shares the traditions of the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles*. Only in some cases does an ambiguity emerge, when the preservation of virginity seems to be depicted as a stubborn refusal of love and its important function in the perpetuation of the world. This, however, could be due to the fictitiously "pagan" framework of the celebration of Dionysius and his relation to love, or else to the influence of the ancient novels. In fact, the very theme of parthenogenesis in the *Dionysiaca* – which might even resonate with the birth of Jesus from a virgin at least in Nonnus' mind – is a way to allow for the creation of life without the intervention of any intercourse. In this case virginity is not detrimental to the perpetuation of life.

Janet Spittler, "Wild Kingdom: Animal Episodes in the Apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles*" (65-77) shows that the frequent animal-related episodes in the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* do not merely serve the purpose of entertainment. Spittler, who has devoted a whole book to *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), examines here some selected episodes from the *Acts of John*, with the bedbugs episode, the *Acts of Thomas*, and the *Acts of Peter*, compared with contemporary animal-related literature, including some ancient novels such as that of Heliodorus. Spittler shows that the rejection of bedbugs by the apostle John may symbolise the choice of chastity, based on a possible wordplay between κόρεις (bedbugs) and κόραι (girls). In the *Acts of Thomas*, the herd of young wild asses that serve the apostle may represent eunuchs who have elected chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of Heavens, given the ancient belief that these colts were neutered by their own fathers. In the *Acts of Peter*, the dog that acquires human voice to denounce Simon the Magician, Peter's enemy, undergoes the opposite process to that undergone by Simon, who becomes speechless.

Spittler's sound thesis, that most of these animal scenes are not merely entertaining, would have been especially supported by the treatment of animals in the *Acts of Philip*, where it is particularly clear that a story such as this points to the transformative role of the Logos, i.e. human word and human rationality, which wild animals acquire when they meet Christ in his Apostles, but also Christ-Logos: this is why these animals begin to speak and

behave meekly after the encounter with Christ. The association between a leopard, suddenly turned meek, and a kid makes it clear that the author was thinking of the final restoration announced by Isaiah, when the leopard will sit down together with the kid instead of eating it. This means that the preaching of Christ on the part of his Apostles paves the way for such a restoration. As in Origen's allegory, wild animals may here represent the worst sinners, who are converted to virtue thanks to Christ-Logos.<sup>3</sup>

The second part, "The Jewish Novel," comprises a single but extensive paper, by Nina Braginskaya, "*Joseph and Aseneth* in Greek Literary History: The Case of the 'First Novel'" (79-106). Braginskaya tends to situate *Joseph and Aseneth* between the second half of the second century BCE and 115 CE. She considers it Jewish rather than Christian, or perhaps stemming from Jewish Christian milieux such as those of the Ebionites. In this paper she argues that *Joseph and Aseneth* neither was conceived as a novel nor was subject to the novels' influence; nevertheless, it is outstandingly relevant to the study of the novels' history. She embraces Bohak's hypothesis that the narrative at stake was composed as a fictional history aimed at justifying the establishment of the Jewish temple in Heliopolis. Braginskaya shows that *Joseph and Aseneth* displays convincing parallels more with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and Jewish Hellenistic literature, than with the ancient novels. In particular, through a series of comparisons between *Joseph and Aseneth* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (based on Burchard's references), she shows, persuasively, that the Jewish narrative had much more precise models in the LXX. As for the resemblances with *Callirhoe*, she argues that it is far more likely that *Joseph and Aseneth* inspired Chariton than the other way around. What Braginskaya suggests, in sum, is that it is the ancient novels, or at least some of them, that were inspired by *Joseph and Aseneth* and not vice-versa. It can hardly be accidental that *Joseph and Aseneth* borrowed from Genesis 3:23-24 the expression παράδεισος τῆς τροφῆς in 16.8 and the only "pagan" work that repeats the same Biblical quotation is the novel *Daphnis and Chloe* (4.3.1).

The third part is entitled "Ancient Novel and Early Christian Fictions: Intersections." Here Judith Perkins, "Jesus Was No Sophist: Education in Christian Fiction" (109-132), shows persuasively that the operation with which the Second Sophistic imposed expensive cultural education (*paideia*)

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<sup>3</sup> See my "Mansuetudine, grazia e salvezza negli *Acta Philippi* (edizione Bovon)," *Invigilata Lucernis* 29 (2007) 215-228, and, for the relationship with Origen, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 81-87.

as a mark of social superiority, with all its political and juridical implications, did not lack opposition, as some scholars seem to assume. Many early Christian fictions, and other nonfictional texts, show that Christianity tended in fact to oppose this process. I certainly agree that, in this case as well as in others, “the utilization of Christian testimony allows for thicker descriptions and more comprehensive interpretations of the early imperial period. In this case, it displays a counterargument to sophistic claims for the primacy of education for establishing social worth” (110). Perkins analyses examples from a wide range of Christian sources, such as the *Clementine Romance*, the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles*, which emphasise both the apostles’ lack of education and their power, the canonical *Acts of the Apostles*, which highlight that John and Peter are illiterate and untrained, Justin Martyr, Origen, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, where the knowledge of the untaught child Jesus trumps that of the *pepaideumenoí*, and abba Arsenius, a well educated senator who, as a Christian ascetic, became a disciple of an illiterate peasant who was a holy man. Tatian and other Christian authors proudly proclaimed that Christian knowledge was not only of divine origin, but also available to all, unlike the *paideia* reserved for few privileged and wealthy people.

Clement in the *Clementine Romance* denounces “the inherent folly of rejecting truth for grammatical or stylistic reasons” (113); this reminds me of what Augustine realised at the end of the fourth century, after rejecting the Bible for stylistic reasons (in his case one might perhaps sympathise, given the poor linguistic quality of the *Vetus Latina*). Origen argued against Celsus (*Cels.* 1.62) that, if Jesus had chosen people “with the power of speaking and giving an ordered narrative by the standards of Greek dialectic or rhetorical art, then they would have seemed too much like other philosophers, and their appeal could have been attributed to human means” (114). I note that the same argument is employed in the Seneca-Paul pseudepigraphic correspondence: the divine message is better conveyed by, and through, people who lack human education; in this way it is clearer that it is not human, but divine. When on p. 113 Perkins rightly observes that the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* “showcase the marvellous power and knowledge of the apostles, a group of uneducated men,” I would just add “and women” with regard, for instance, to Thecla, the colleague of Paul, Mary Magdalene, and Mariamme, the sister-colleague of Philip: in the *Acts of Philip* she is even portrayed as a better apostle than Philip.

Two last remarks: Perkins’ title is drawn from Justin Martyr’s assertion in 1 Apol. 14.5: “Jesus was no σοφιστής, but his word was the power of God”, and Perkins with good reason comments: “in this scheme, authority is

conveyed by the power of God, not rhetorical and linguistic expertise” (114). First of all, I would observe that this motif was especially emphasised by Paul, who contrasts the “power of God” and the wisdom of God with that of the world and proclaims that he is preaching “not with wisdom and eloquence” (1 Cor. 1:17). Then, I wonder whether Justin, who certainly was reminiscent of Paul, may also have wanted to turn upside down his contemporary Lucian’s description of Jesus as σοφιστής (*Per.* 13). In this case Justin would have perceived a negative connotation in σοφιστής, which is not necessarily there, as Laurent Pernot and I think.<sup>4</sup> Lucian’s own description of the dire consequence of a lack of *paideia* in his *Somnium*, quoted by Perkins herself (110-111) as an example of the elitism of the Second Sophistic, corroborates this suspicion. Lucian seems to have been aware that Christianity was trying to present itself as a philosophy and a culture.<sup>5</sup>

Oliver Ehlen, “Reading the *Protevangelium Jacobi* as an Ancient Novel” (133-138), in a very brief and slightly undeveloped but captivating study, analyses the second-century *Infancy Gospel of James* and argues that it has borrowed motifs and strategies from the ancient novels, which at the time of its composition were very popular. Ehlen also thinks that the author used “narrative techniques which can be called prefigurations of modern narrative strategies, including indirect given thoughts and the stream of consciousness” (138). Even though the last sentence might be pushing the evidence too far, the analysis is generally sound. First he expounds the plot of the *Gospel*, then he examines some specific passages, from the viewpoint of the stance of the narrator (extra- or intradiegetic) and the voice (externally or internally focalised): the mourning of Anna for her sterility, with the immediate apparition of the angel to announce to her the birth of baby Mary, and the killing of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, by the men of Herod. This is presented as the murder of the (high) priest at the altar. Even if this parallel is not touched upon by the author, it may be worth remarking that a very similar construct of Zacharias’ murder is found in Matthew 23:35: “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar.” The identification of this

<sup>4</sup> See my “Lucian’s Peregrinus as Holy Man and Charlatan, and the Construction of the Contrast between Holy Men and Charlatans in the Acts of Mari,” forthcoming in the Proceedings of RICAN 6, Sixth Rethymnon International Conference on the Ancient Novel, *Holy Men/Women and Charlatans in the Ancient Novel*, University of Crete, Department of Philology, 30-31 May 2011, eds. Michael Paschalis and Stelios Panayotakis.

<sup>5</sup> See Ilaria Ramelli, “Ethos and Logos: A Second-Century Debate between ‘Pagan’ and Christian Philosophers,” forthcoming in *Vigiliae Christianae*.

Zacharias with the father of John the Baptist mentioned in Luke 1:5-25 is first found (in a datable work) in Origen, who lived shortly after the composition of the *Gospel of James* and was probably inspired by it. This tradition seems to find archaeological support. The historic Yad Avshalom monument in Jerusalem's Kidron Valley, revered for centuries as a Jewish shrine and built in the first century CE, was also a Christian holy place in the fourth century. In 2003, a fourth-century inscription was discovered on one of the walls near the monument, which marks the site as the burial place of the Temple priest Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist: "This is the tomb of Zachariah, the martyr, the holy priest, the father of John" (transcription by Émile Puech).<sup>6</sup>

Rosa M. Andújar, "Charicleia the Martyr: Heliodorus and Early Christian Narrative" (139-152) demonstrates in a detailed manner that Heliodorus was very probably influenced by the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* in his presentation of Chariclea and her beauty, which does not elicit desire, as it generally happens in the ancient novels, but admiration, and conveys the idea of her purity. The similarities between the descriptions of Chariclea and Thecla emerge especially in trial scenes, both in the *Aethiopica* and in the *Acts*. This is an interesting instance of the fact that not only was early Christian narrative influenced by the ancient novels, but also the latter were probably influenced by Christian stories and texts, as I have argued extensively in *I Romanzi Antichi e il Cristianesimo: Contesto e Contatti*, prefaced by Brian Reardon (Madrid: Signifer, 2001; new edition Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012). It is also interesting that the beauty of Chariclea is described by Heliodorus in 2.33.3 as an ἀρχέτυπον ἄγαλμα, "a statue of ideal beauty," as Andújar translates (146). Now, also in the light of other intriguing resonances with Christian Neoplatonism detected in Heliodorus by Svetla Slaveva-Griffin and myself, and the arguable characterisation of Chariclea as a Platonic idea or a divine emanation, it seems to me very interesting that the Christian Neoplatonist Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century called ἀρχέτυπον κάλλος the divine beauty which must be reflected in human souls. If they do not reflect the beauty of God, which is the model of all beauty, souls become as ugly as chaotic matter is.<sup>7</sup>

Martina Hirschberger, "Marriages Spoiled: The Deconstruction of Novel

<sup>6</sup> See Amiram Barkat, "Jewish Yad Avshalom revealed as a Christian shrine from Byzantine era," *Haaretz* Jul. 22 (2003).

<sup>7</sup> See Ilaria Ramelli, "Good / Beauty, Agathon / Kalon," in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa* (eds. Giulio Maspero and Lucas F. Mateo-Secco, Leiden: Brill, 2010), 356-363.



Discourse in Early Christian Novel Narratives” (153-168), shows how, contrary to the ancient novels, in which chastity is pursued with a view to marriage, the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* – which like Paul support chastity *per se*, against marriage – regularly depict apostles who, albeit of low social class, with their preaching break marriages even in very high strata of society. Examples are drawn from the *Acts of John*, the *Acts of Paul*, the *Acts of Peter*, the *Acts of Andrew*, and the *Acts of Thomas*. Hirschberger concludes that the *Acts of Peter*, in which the antagonist of Peter, Agrippa, has four concubines and is said to be in love with all of them, in fact “satirise the ideal of romantic love” and “thus the sublime ideals of conjugal love displayed in the romantic novels are exposed as mere sexual passions” (164).

The fourth and final part of the book deals with “The New Testament and Hagiography.” Warren S. Smith, “We-Passages in *Acts* as Mission Narrative” (171-188) tackles one of the most hotly debated issues in the New Testament: the passages narrated in first person plural in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Smith offers an analysis of the switches between first and second person in early Christian narrative and, also in this light, interestingly suggests that the use of “we” aims at involving readers and at having them (as well) participate in the Pauline mission, especially when the Christian message begins to be preached in Europe, after the passage to Macedonia. With this, Smith does not rule out that the “we” passages entail a source based on an eyewitness. One of the most thrilling interpretations of the latter kind, I find, is that by Joan Taylor, in a study that could not have been known to Smith.<sup>8</sup> Taylor suggests that these passages go back to the witness of Thecla, who accompanied Paul as a colleague and apostle during his preaching. The Twelve themselves were twelve pairs of men and women working together in preaching and healing, as “two by two” (δύο δύο) in Mark 6:7 suggests, with a reference to Genesis 6:21. The same is repeated for the Seventy disciples in Luke 10:1 (ἀνὰ δύο δύο). Paul and Thecla formed one of these celibate couples of apostles (see also Andronicus and Junia, Prisca and Aquila etc.), where Thecla was one of the “sisters” who accompanied the apostles according to Paul, 1 Cor. 9:1-6.

Petr Kitzler, “*Viri mirantur facilius quam imitantur: Passio Perpetuae* in the Literature of the Ancient Church (Tertullian, *Acta martyrum*, and Augustine)” (189-202) delves into the earliest reception of the *Passio Perpetuae* in Tertullian, North-African Acts of Martyrs, and Augustine. Tertullian seems

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<sup>8</sup> Joan Taylor, “‘Two by Two’: The Ark-etypal Language of Mark’s Apostolic Pairings,” in *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts* (ed. Eadem; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 58-82.

to have distorted the text when he claimed that Perpetua in her vision saw only martyrs in Paradise, because he wanted to support his theory that only martyrs enter Paradise directly upon death, prior to the final Judgment. Pontius' prologue to his *Vita Cypriani* first reveals the subversive nature of the *Passio Perpetuae*, devoted to laypersons and catechumens who were martyred, instead of an authoritative figure such as the bishop and martyr Cyprian. Augustine later is aware of the subversive potential of the *Passio Perpetuae* in many respects. From the theological viewpoint, the story of Dinocrates, Perpetua's dead brother who was saved from hell (where he desired a pool of water, which strongly hints at baptism) to Paradise by the prayers of his sister, intimated that one could be saved also without baptism. From the social point of view, the *Passio Perpetuae* was a celebration of a woman who yielded neither to her father nor to her husband, from a certain point onwards did not take care of her child, was regarded as authoritative, and was presented as superior to presbyters and bishops, as the vision of Saturus makes clear. Augustine tries hard to explain away and normalise all this, although with meagre results, as Kitzler points out. As far as the composition of the *Passio Perpetuae* is concerned, Kitzler admits that the Perpetua and Saturus passages go back to Perpetua and Saturus themselves, possibly with some editing from the redactor. I argued for this position elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

Timo Glaser, "Telling What's Beyond the Known: The Epistolary Novel and the Afterlife of the Apostle Paul in the Pastoral Epistles" (203-213), treats the Pastoral Epistles as an epistolary novel, a literary genre whose contours have been delineated especially by Niklas Holzberg. This epistolary novel, like other such novels in antiquity, fills in the gaps of Paul's last days and provisions for the future, after his death. As Glaser observes, the real Paul communicated with his communities by means of letters, and not through delegates installed as his successors. The author of this novel alludes to other stories known about Paul from his authentic letters, but at the same time also contradicts them; Glaser shows that this was a feature of other ancient epistolary novels as well. Even if this is not made explicit in the article, the most striking contradiction between these letters and Paul's authentic letters concern women's leadership in the church and Paul's preference for celibacy over marriage and childbearing, which the false letters instead recommend to women as their only way of salvation.

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<sup>9</sup> "Il dossier di Perpetua: una rilettura storica e letteraria," *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo, Accademia di Scienze e Lettere* 139 (2005) 309-352.

The careful Indexes were prepared by Maaïke Zimmerman. I caught only a few typos throughout the book, e.g. τέχνη for τέχνη and πανουργῶ for πανούργω (112). This stimulating contribution will certainly fuel further research. It will be engaging to put it in conversation with the volume *Ancient Christian and Jewish Narrative: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.