

The *Acts of John*, the *Acts of Andrew* and the Greek Novel

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The study of the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (henceforth: *AAA*) has been doing reasonably well in recent times. Swiss colleagues have been working for years on critical texts of the major *Acts*, those of *John*, *Andrew*, *Peter*, *Paul*, and *Thomas*. Moreover, we now have a proper journal, *Apocrypha*, dedicated to the apocryphal literature. Yet it is clear that there is an enormous amount of work still to be done. Until now, we have only one critical authoritative text from the Swiss équipe, that of the *Acts of John*; the one of the *Acts of Andrew* by Jean-Marc Prieur (1947-2012) has not been able to establish itself as authoritative after the blistering attack on its textual constitution by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta (§ 2). Appearance of the editions of the other major texts does not seem to be in sight, however hard our Swiss colleagues have been working on them. But even with the texts as we have them, there is still much to be done: not only on the editions and contents as such, but also on their contextualisation within contemporary pagan and Christian culture. Moreover, these texts were not canonical texts whose content could be changed as little as possible, but they were transmitted in the following centuries by being supplemented, abbreviated, modified, and translated in all kinds of ways. In other words, as time went on, people will hardly have seen any difference between them and other hagiographical writings celebrating the lives and, especially, deaths of the Christian saints.¹ It is obvious that these versions all need to be contextualised in their own period and culture. It is also obvious that a better understanding of this process transcends the ability of one person and is more the task of a whole équipe than of a single individual.

Given, then, the fact that the *AAA* constitute a living genre with a long life and the limits of my own knowledge, I will try to contribute to their contextualisation within contemporary culture by concentrating in this article on the influence of

¹ Cf. Bremmer 2017.

the Greek novel on the earliest *Acts*, that is, *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Andrew*. It is not that I am the first to note the connection between the novel and the *AAA* in general. In 1932, a young German scholar, Rosa Söder (1903-1991), about whose life I have been unable to find any details, published a dissertation, in which she looked in quite some detail at the novel and the *Acts*, but in the end concluded that they did not influence one another.² Later students of the novel have not displayed the same interest. Tomas Hägg (1938-2011) and Niklas Holzberg pay some attention to the *AAA* in their well-known introductions to the ancient novel, but they are clearly happy to pass on to more congenial subjects.³ In the 1990s, the three collections by Jim Tatum, John Morgan, and Richard Stoneman, and Gareth Schmeling contained between them only three, not always satisfactory contributions on the *AAA*.⁴ It was only Kate Cooper, in *The Virgin and the Bride*, who once again discussed both the ancient novel and the *AAA* as manifestations of the same literary genre, but in recent years we have not seen a study that looks at this subject with a fresh eye.⁵

Yet we should be careful in speaking of the same genre, as the novel and the *AAA* have very different purposes with their writings. Even the *AAA* themselves are rather varied and clearly derive from a wide spectrum of early Christianity, although they share a similar kind of hagiographical discourse, the term introduced by the Belgian early medievalist Marc Van Uytfanghe in order to look for the similarities in hagiographical content beyond the differences in genre.⁶ On the other hand, as I have argued elsewhere, the earlier *AAA* all belong to about the same period of time as the latest novels, except for Heliodorus, and derive from Asia Minor, the same area in which most of the surviving novels seem to have originated.⁷ Consequently, some of the similarities we see may well have been determined by the fact that the authors of the novel and the *AAA* lived in the same world. A good example of this shared world is the theatre, which in the novel and the *AAA* plays a prominent role, and which indeed in the first and second century gradually replaced the agora as the meeting place for the assembly.⁸

Another point is the similarity caused by the subject of the *AAA* and the canonical Acts of the Apostles. The latter focuses on Paul and his travels, which

² Söder 1932; note also the reviews by R.M. Rattenbury, *CR* 47, 1933, 39; S. Lange, *CPh* 29, 1934, 78-79; K. Kerényi, *Gnomon* 10, 1934, 301-09.

³ Hägg 1983, 154-64; Holzberg 1995, 22-26.

⁴ Perkins 1994, reprinted in Perkins 2007, 124-41, 223-24; Pervo 1994, 1996.

⁵ Cooper 1996.

⁶ Van Uytfanghe 1988, 1993, 2001a and b, 2005, 2011. There is a certain development in these articles that still needs to be charted and discussed.

⁷ Bremmer 1998, reprinted, abbreviated but updated, in Bremmer 2017a, 221-34.

⁸ Crowd and theatre: Söder 1932, 158-62; Saïd 1994, 221-22; Chaniotis 1997, 2007.

makes it likely that the other apostles also travel, the more so as they all are preaching the gospel of Christ. It is not that the authors of the *AAA* follow in any way the story line of the canonical Acts but it seems not implausible that the travelling of the apostle Paul has exerted some influence on the later authors of the *AAA*, be it orally or via a written text, despite the fact that a direct influence of the canonical Acts on the apocryphal ones is very hard to establish.⁹ This may seem strange, certainly to those who have been raised with the authority of the Bible, but the rise of the canon was slow, and in the oldest *AAA* there is less influence of the books of the later Old and New Testament than one would have expected.¹⁰ Consequently, the prominence of travelling in both groups of writings may be due to different causes, although a certain influence of the novel even on the canonical Acts can hardly be excluded.

A final point is the problem of the very texts that are our sources. As is well known, there is a textual uncertainty in the case of Chariton, and the text of Xenophon has been much debated, but the textual tradition of the apocryphal *AAA* is much more complicated, as we do not have the full text of any of the older Acts, but in all cases have to do with texts that are constituted from various sources, sometimes, as in the case of the *Acts of Peter* and *Acts of Paul*, even from various languages, and always incomplete. It is therefore hard to present sustained analyses of the main figures in the *AAA* in the same way as is possible with the surviving Greek novels. Despite these problems, I will try to offer some thoughts showing that it is well worth to try to compare these writings. I will start with the *Acts of John* (§1), continue with the *Acts of Andrew* (§2) and end with a few conclusions (§3).

The Acts of John

Fortunately, the *Acts of John* is reasonably well preserved in parts, which enables us to make some observations, even though, given these preliminary considerations, any comparison can only be partial and tentative. I have discussed its place and time of composition elsewhere and will not repeat my discussion here.¹¹ Let it suffice to say that I locate the *Acts* in Asia Minor, plausibly Nicomedia, dating

⁹ See the balanced survey of Snyder 2019.

¹⁰ For influence of the New Testament on the *Acts of John*, see Lalleman 1998, 69-98. For the absence of the NT in the *Acts of Andrew*, see Calvet-Sébastien 2012; Roig Lanzillotta 2014.

¹¹ Bremmer 2017a, 111-14.

to the 160s.¹² The beginning of the work is lost, and our surviving text starts with John hastening from Miletus to Ephesus. Just before the apostle John enters Ephesus, he is met by a certain Lycomedes, who beseeches the apostle to heal his wife, who has been lying paralysed for a week. The husband is desperate as he tells John that his situation is so catastrophic that he considered suicide (19, 20, also 49),¹³ just as in *Chariton* Chaereas considers suicide when hearing of the unfaithfulness of Callirhoe (1.4.7, cf. 3.1.1) – in both cases in the beginning of the story.

The name Lycomedes is most intriguing, as the father of Habrocomes in Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* is also called Lycomedes and, of course, also lives in Ephesus (1.1.1). The name itself is not without interest. Its most famous bearer was the king of the island of Scyros, at whose court Achilles, dressed up as a girl, was hidden by his mother Thetis in order to prevent him from joining the Trojan War. This was all in vain, as we know, as he was unmasked as a male youth by the clever Odysseus. This episode in his life was enormously popular in later antiquity and it figures on wall paintings, mosaics, and (above all) sarcophagi. As Alan Cameron (1938-2017) has observed: 'the surprising popularity of this motif is no doubt its status as the turning point in Achilles' life. As such, it lends itself (especially on sarcophagi) to symbolic interpretation: no man can escape his destiny'.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, this popularity influenced the novel writer, who in turn influenced the author of the *Acts of John*, but it is very unlikely that the author had in mind a literal translation of the name, as has recently been argued in a study of the speaking names in these *Acts*.¹⁵

Surely, names were highly important in antiquity, but not all names at all times. Curiously, the author starts with names in Athenian and Roman comedy, but the importance of names in the novel is well attested and analysed, for example, for the Ninos novel, Xenophon of Ephesus, Antonius Diogenes, Longus, and even Heliodorus.¹⁶ Yet not every name is significant, and there seems no reason to think that the name Lycomedes was chosen for any other reason than that it occurred in Xenophon's novel.

¹² I follow the standard edition of Junod and Kaestli 1983 and use the translation by Schäferdieck 1992². For a survey of modern studies of the *Acts of John*, see Jakab 2000; add especially Snyder 2014, 90-141.

¹³ For the motif, see MacAlister 1996.

¹⁴ Cameron 2009, updated in Trzaskoma and Smith 2013, 253-88.

¹⁵ Paschke 2015.

¹⁶ Hägg 1971, reprinted in Hägg 2004, 199-229; Bowie 1995; Herrero Ingelmo 1996; Jones 2006; Ruiz-Montero 2017; López Martínez 2019.

Our Christian Lycomedes is a *stratêgos*, that is, a member of the executive council of Ephesus.¹⁷ We note that other protagonists in the *Acts of John* are equally of high birth and, like some of the protagonists of the novel, are called ‘a first of (the Smyrnaeans, etc.)’, such as Antipater (56), just as Lycomedes in the *Ephesiaca* (1.1.1), and some others whom we will meet shortly. The expression, which also occurs in Chariton (2,5,4; 4,3,1; 4,4,3; 6,7,10) and Achilles Tatius (5,19,4; 6,12,2 and 16,5; 7,3,6), is typical of Northern Lycia and Southern Caria,¹⁸ and from there spread eastwards, so that it is also found in the canonical Acts of the Apostles (13.50): in Pisidian Antioch, the Jews stirred up ‘the first of the city’ against Paul, although the nature of this vocabulary is not recognised in the Bible commentaries. Given that our *AAA* were probably composed in northern Asia Minor, this is also a derivation from the novel. The fact that in *Chariton* Callirhoe is the daughter of a *stratêgos* (1.3.6), although in this case a general, might not be fortuitous and must have given a contemporary ring to the reader.

Lycomedes’ wife is called Cleopatra, which was not a common name in Ephesus and may well have evoked the name of the Egyptian queens, the more so as the Ptolemies controlled Ephesus for a while,¹⁹ and the famous Cleopatra banished her sister Arsinoë to Ephesus before having her murdered. Cleopatra is described by Lycomedes as follows: ‘Look, my lord, at this withered beauty, look at her youth, look at the famous flower(-like bloom) of my poor wife, for whom the whole of Ephesus was beyond itself’ (20). We have here not only the typical characteristics of a novel heroine, such as youth and beauty, but the comparison and metaphor of the flower irresistibly remind one of Anthia, the heroine of Xenophon’s *Ephesiaca*, not only because of her name but also because the latter was equally the subject of more than normal admiration by the Ephesians (1,1,7). At the same time, though, we note that Callirhoe was also the object of admiration of ‘the whole of Sicily’ (1,1,1).

However, just as Cleopatra is not introduced in a splendid manner like those novel heroines, so Lycomedes is not introduced like Habrocomes or Chaereas. We do not hear anything about his age or physical attractions, but we see him humbling himself by falling twice at the feet of the apostle (19, 20) when entreating him. Supplication is an old ritual in Greece, and self-humiliation is one of its prominent characteristics.²⁰ However, even when John tells him to pull himself up, Lycomedes again falls on the floor, presumably to entreat the apostle once

¹⁷ The discussion by Paschke 2015, 128-30 is unsatisfactory, as it does not consider the inscriptions; Schwahn 1954 is totally out of date, cf. the index s.v. of Engelmann 1979-84.

¹⁸ See the rich epigraphical evidence in Bremmer 2017a, 164f.

¹⁹ Meadows 2013.

²⁰ Letoublon 1980; Gould 2001, 22-77; Naiden 2006.

again (21). Moreover, he is lamenting and crying in such a manner that the apostle has to firmly address him to control himself, but without success: it seems that Lycomedes has collapsed completely (21).

But whereas Lycomedes clearly does not obey the apostle, it is different with Cleopatra. When John tells her to rise from her bed, she immediately cries out: 'I arise, master, save your Cleopatra'. She gets up, after seven days, and the whole of Ephesus is moved by the astonishing sight (23). Whereas in the novels people admire young women because of their beauty, Cleopatra is admired because of her performance of a miracle of God. As a good wife, Cleopatra asks for her husband, and when seeing Lycomedes lying dead in her bedroom – one wonders if the couple had separate bedrooms like modern royalty or the present American president – she loses her voice, closes her eyes and cries, but she still remains attentive to the apostle. Admiring her calm and self-control, the apostle calls upon Jesus to have mercy so that she will not follow Lycomedes and die. And indeed, he instructs Cleopatra as how to raise Lycomedes from the dead. She follows these instructions and *euthus*, 'immediately' raises him (24). The qualification 'immediately' is typical of pagan and Christian miracle stories and helps to make the miracle even more impressive.²¹ Yet, subsequently, Lycomedes shows that he has not really understood the nature of the new faith by having a portrait made of the apostle and worshipping it (26-29). Unfortunately, the end of this episode has been lost and we then only hear of the couple caring for old women (30), a category not exactly typical of the novel!

There is now a kind of narratological interlude, as we hear no more of couples. For a while, the apostle turns his attention to the inhabitants of Ephesus and, in particular, their famous temple of Artemis. The moment that he addresses the Ephesians is dated very precisely: during the 'birthday' of the *eidôleion*, that is, 'the temple of the idol' (38); the term is a Jewish neologism, which was later taken over by the Christians. Now we do not know of any celebration of the anniversary of Artemis' temple, or any other temple for that matter, but we do know of the birthday of Artemis, and it seems fairly certain that we have to think of that festival, which was celebrated in the spring on the sixth of the month Thargelion. We know through an inscription about an endowment of C. Vibius Salutaris that in AD 104 additional civic rituals and sacrifices were created, timed to coincide with the celebration of the mysteries of Artemis each year on the sixth of May, which clearly would have added to the festivities on the birthday of the goddess. Because of the endowment, a complex scheme of lotteries and cash distributions was doled out to individuals and civic institutions of the polis during the birthday, together

²¹ Henrichs 2019, 588, with several examples from the *Cologne Mani Codex*; Bremmer 2017a, 395.

with an impressive procession.²² One may wonder if there is not a tie to Xenophon's beginning here, which also refers to a festival—although the latter is called 'the native festival of Artemis' (1,2,2). In both cases, however, one cannot escape the impression that the author was not really at home in Ephesus, and neither of these designations recurs in the rich epigraphical evidence.

Be this as it may, after the destruction of the temple, the conversion of the Ephesians and the raising of the priest of Artemis, the apostle sees in a dream that he has to walk outside the gates. He does so and meets a young man, who had been reprimanded by his father not to take the wife of his fellow labourer for himself. However, instead of obeying, the youth kicked his father. And as a result, the latter became unable to speak (48). Now the striking aspect of this scene is that only in the next chapters do we hear that the father has actually died (49-50). Fortunately, the apostle raises him, and the old man starts to believe. His son, however, takes his sickle, cuts off his private parts and throws them in front of his former girlfriend. The apostle, for his part, does not condone this act and exhorts the youth to repent, which he duly does. Now exactly this same sequence of kick in the stomach with the result of speechlessness, is found in *Chariton*, where Chaereas kicks Callirhoe in the stomach, who then loses her ability to speak; in fact, the kick is referred to several times so that it need not be surprising that the author of the *AJ* uses the event in his own novel.²³

The precise order of the chapters of the *Acts of John* is not quite clear and for our purpose we proceed now, after a long passage which might well be an addition made at a later stage,²⁴ to another couple, who are also protagonists in these *Acts*. Having been in Smyrna, the apostle returns, via Laodicea (58-59), to Ephesus, where we rejoin him and his company. Part of this company is the couple Andronicus and Drusiana. Andronicus has already been mentioned in connection with the caring for the old women (31). At that moment, though, he clearly was not a follower of Christ, but, like Lycomedes, he belongs to the elite of the city: he is both a *stratēgos* and a member of the 'firsts', the local aristocracy (31). Later, however, he clearly has converted and is following John together with his wife Drusiana (58).

Unfortunately, the chapter in which Drusiana is introduced in the story has been lost, so that we meet her without knowing how the author has characterised her. All we get to know about her, apart from her religious activities, is that she was born in Ephesus (64), which suggests that she also was of the same social class as her husband. Apparently, she had converted first as, from allusions in the

²² *I. Ephesos* 27, cf. Rogers 2012, 184.

²³ *Chariton* 1,4,12-1,5,1; 1,8,3; 1,14,7; 2,5,10; 4,4,10; 5,8,5.

²⁴ Cf. Czachesz 2006.

Acts of John and the *Manichaean Coptic Psalter*, it appears that after her conversion Andronicus had locked up Drusiana and John together in a tomb.²⁵ After two weeks they were released, the husband also converted, and the couple started to live together as brother and sister (63).²⁶ It is obvious that we are far from the novel in this situation. Yet the novel may still help us to note some other motifs than we have seen so far.

However, we first return to familiar territory. A young man had fallen in love with Drusiana the moment he saw her (63). Such a *coup de foudre* we also find in *Chariton* (1.1.6), where Chaereas and Callirhoe fall in love when they see one another, just as in Xenophon (1,3,1-2) where Anthia and Habrocomes see one another in the sanctuary where they were going to sacrifice. In our case, though, the gaze is asymmetrical: we do not hear of Drusiana seeing her suitor. On the contrary, as we will see momentarily. Interestingly, we are not told the name of the young man in love with her until nearly the end of the episode that interests us. There we hear that he is called Callimachus, a rare name in Ionia,²⁷ which is presumably chosen to appeal to well-educated readers. Does it mean that our author had also read Callimachus? Pieter Lalleman has ingeniously compared the notice in c. 113 that despite the fact that Christ wants the young John to preserve his virginity, the future apostle three times plans a marriage. However, all three times John is frustrated by illness.²⁸ Now exactly the same sequence is found in Callimachus' version of the myth of Acontius and Cydippe (Call. fr. 75.14-19 Harder), with the difference that in that case it is Cydippe who falls ill three times. Koen De Temmerman has suggested the possibility, if not plausibility, that the author of *Chariton* precisely used this myth from Callimachus.²⁹ Had the author of the *Acts of John* noted this too? On the other hand, Longus also seems to have alluded to this myth,³⁰ which was perhaps more popular than we can see nowadays.

Our Callimachus is also one of the first of the city, and he is young (73). The latter quality suggests that Drusiana is also young, as toyboys of older women are not really the stuff of the novel. The young man tried to win Drusiana, but she

²⁵ Junod and Kaestli 1983, 2.549, rightly point to the novel for this motif; add Letoublon, 1993, 74-78. Note the frequent mention of the name Drusiana in Manichaean texts as a testimony to the success of the *Acts of John* in those circles: Gardner 1999, no. 19.62, 73; 21.20; 28.31.

²⁶ Junod and Kaestli 1983, 1.86-91.

²⁷ As can be seen from the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (http://clas-lgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/lgpn_search.cgi, accessed 10-1-2020).

²⁸ Lalleman 1997: ὁ θέλοντί μοι σωματικὴν οικονομῆσας ὁ τρίτον βουλευθέντος μου γῆμαι παραντίκα ἐμποδίσας.

²⁹ De Temmerman 2014, 77f.

³⁰ Cf. Bowie 2019, 3, 96, 125.

refused his *avances*. Afraid to be insulted, I guess, by his friends because of his failure to win Drusiana, Callimachus falls into a state of melancholy, which we may perhaps diagnose as love-sickness – a well-known feature in antiquity and most famously attested for the stepson of the Seleucid queen Stratonice.³¹ Surprisingly, it is now Drusiana who becomes despondent because of Callimachus' despair and she even dies, rather dramatically, in the presence of the apostle, who apparently was ignorant of the true state of affairs (64).

After her burial, John hears the real background to her death from her husband, but instead of acting in connection with Drusiana he delivers a long oration to exhort the brethren to despise transitory things. The young man, however, who still is not mentioned by name, does not give up his lust. He bribes the steward, *oikonomos/vilicus*, of Andronicus for a large sum of money to open the tomb of Drusiana for him (70). This bribing of an employee is clearly also taken from the novel. In *Chariton* (1,4,2), it is the suitor from Acragas who has a friend persuade the trusted servant of Callirhoe with presents and a suicide threat to let him into the house, and in Xenophon (3,2,7-8) it is the rich Aristomachos who bribes the father of Hippothoos to let him near his son; in fact, the latter case is rather remarkable as the father must belong to the elite of the town, given that his son was training in the gymnasium (3,2,2).

They start to undress Drusiana and when they are at the point of removing the last garment, the rather expensive *dikrossion*,³² at this decisive moment, a snake appears who kills the steward with a bite and nestles on the young man, who had fallen on the ground, and keeps him there.³³ It seems obvious that Callimachus intended to perform a necrophiliac act, not something one immediately expects in an early Christian text and, surely, significant regarding its intended audience, which presumably liked this *risqué* theme. We should realise, though, that the theme was not unusual in ancient literature. Achilles fell in love with the corpse of Penthesileia and the tyrant Periander with his dead wife Melissa. Closer to our time, we have two authors coming from Asia Minor: necrophilia appears in one of the vignettes of the *Erotika pathemata* of Parthenius (31), an author living at the end of the first century BC, and in Phlegon of Tralles' *Mirabilia* (1), an author living at the time of Hadrian.³⁴

It is thus, perhaps, not surprising that we find hints of necrophilia also in the novel. In *Chariton* (3,7,6), we hear that Callirhoe loves Chaereas even though he

³¹ For the fullest enumeration of the sources and the secondary literature, see Lightfoot 2003, 373-9; add Falconi 1960; Garofalo 1990; Coers 2000.

³² The discussion by Lalleman 1998, 258-59 has to be corrected in the light of the full collection of references to this type of garment in Adrados 1997, s.v. *dikrossion* and *dikrossos*.

³³ For the snake, see Spittler 2008, 110-16.

³⁴ For these and other examples, see Lightfoot 1999, 535, where our case has to be added.

is dead, but Xenophon (5,1,9-11) goes further and hints at this love twice. First, when an old woman tells Habrocomes that his Anthia has died but that her tomb has been looted and her corpse disappeared,³⁵ he laments: ‘which robber is so amorous that he lusts for you even as you are a corpse?’ (3,10,2) When searching for Anthia, he is received by an old man, Aigialeus, who has embalmed his wife Thelxinoe and lives with her as if she is alive. The sexual act is not mentioned, but he certainly sleeps with her and kisses her (5,1,9-11). The author of the *AJ* is more outrageous and clearly suggests a proper necrophiliac act, even though at the very last moment this has been prevented by the snake. In fact, her husband explicitly tells John when they have arrived at the grave that Callimachus avowed to many people; ‘Even if she would not give in to me when alive, now she is dead she will be violated’ (74).

Interestingly, John first raises Callimachus from the ground, who duly converts. But Andronicus and the other brethren then entreat John to raise Drusiana from the dead, which he of course does. She, hardly surprisingly, shows herself a bit perplexed by being in her undergarment – one has the feeling of some very soft porno here – and dresses herself again. She then asks John to resurrect the dead steward. Callimachus speaks against it, but the apostle berates him for wanting to return evil for evil and charges Drusiana to do it. She performs the resurrection without any hesitation, but the raised steward does not convert and flees the tomb. Apparently, salvation is for the upper class, not for the workers, in the eyes of the author. With this episode we approach the end of the *Acts of John*, which concentrates on his last act of worship and passing away, aspects that are not relevant for our theme. So let us now turn to the *Acts of Andrew*.

The Acts of Andrew

The textual situation of the *Acts of Andrew* is pretty distressing, but Janet Spittler has given a good summary of the present situation.³⁶ She persuasively argues that we should take a kind of middle road between the all too generous textual constitution of Prieur and the all too strict version of Roig Lanzillotta.³⁷ In any case, it is clear that we have very little left from the original *Acts of Andrew*, and mostly speeches and the material regarding the apostle’s martyrdom – the latter being *the*

³⁵ For the theme of the empty tomb, see Bremmer 2017b.

³⁶ Spittler 2008, 76-80.

³⁷ Prieur 1989, whose numbering I follow, tr. Prieur and Schneemelcher 1992², 2.101-51; Richter 1998; Roig Lanzillotta 2007, summarised in Roig Lanzillotta 2010, who has shown that the oldest and most primitive text is that of the *Codex Vaticanus 808*; Lequeux 2013. Other translations: MacDonald 2005; Roig Lanzillotta and Luttikhuisen 2008.

element of the apostles' lives in which the later Christians were interested most and which, perhaps, also had the least chance of being 'infected' with heretical ideas. Gregory of Tours had, apparently, still access to the original version, but he abbreviated and 'updated' the text so that we can use his version only with the utmost care. Yet the fact that he gives us a number of names of minor characters which are modelled on famous Greek authors, such as the lyric poet Alcman (4, *AAlat* 34: Alcmanes), the highly popular comedy authors Cratinus (*AAlat* 5) and Antiphanes (15; *AAlat* 29), and the proconsul Lesbios, whose name in this literary company evokes the island of Lesbos, which was famous for its poets Alcaeus and Sappho (*AAlat* 22), suggests that Gregory certainly stuck to the original to some extent. At the same time, these names suggest that the author of the *Acts of Andrew* was somebody with a literary interest who also presupposed that interest among his readers. Given the close verbal parallels between the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Andrew*,³⁸ it seems reasonable to suppose that they were written in contemporary proximity, perhaps even in the same city of Nicomedia.³⁹

As far as I can see, there are only a few parallels between the *Acts of Andrew* and the novel and mostly at a more general level. Let me start with two fairly close parallels. When Andrew is in prison, he is visited by Maximilla and her trusted servant Iphidama. 'And having put his hands on her eyes and taken them to her mouth, she (Maximilla) began to relate...' (37 Prieur = 5 Roig Lanzillotta). We find nearly the same gesture in the same situation in Achilles Tatius (5,27), where Melite visits Clitophon in prison, kisses his hands and brings them to her eyes and heart. A second example is the outburst of Andrew when talking to Maximilla about her husband's threats: 'As for me, let him inflict on me not only the tortures of prison, but let him throw me to the beasts, burn me with fire or throw me off a cliff' (39 Prieur = 7, tr. Roig Lanzillotta), which we may compare with the, albeit more dramatic, outburst of Leucippe to Thersandros: 'Set out your tortures, bring up the wheel. Here are my arms, stretch them out. Bring your scourges too: here is my back, smite upon it. Bring your fire: here is my body, burn it, etc.' (Ach. Tat. 6,21).

An example of 'real life' is perhaps the case of Maximilla and her slave Euklia. Maximilla is the wife of the Roman governor Aegeates, who has been converted by the apostle Andrew and, consequently, no longer wants to sleep with her husband. However, she does not confront her husband directly regarding this

³⁸ Junod and Kaestli 1983, 2.698; Prieur 1989, 1.394-400; Lalleman 2000. Add to the latter 'verbal parallels' (143) the, probably, Christian neologism *θρήσκευμα*, 'religious practice', in *Acts of John* 39-40 and *Acts of Andrew* 7, which does not re-appear before Synesius, *Aegyptii sive de providentia* 1.18.

³⁹ See the discussion of the date and place of the *Acts of Andrew* in Bremmer 2017a, 115-20, 222.

matter but she bribes her young, beautiful slave Euklia to sleep with her husband instead of her – a ruse that was possible as the Roman upper-class customarily made love in the dark.⁴⁰ Such a bribing of a subordinate was not unusual in the novel, where we hear of such practices in Chariton, who mentions the bribing of a female slave (1,4,1-2), and Xenophon (3,2,7-8), but also in the *Acts of John* where the youth enamoured of Drusiana bribes a subordinate of her husband (70,4-5) and the *Acts of Paul* (18), in which Thecla bribes the door keeper and the goaler to give her access to Paul.

Through Euklia, then, Maximilla could go to the meetings with Andrew, but when the latter hears in a dream that there will be trouble in the house of Aegeates, she ‘changed her dress, as was usual, in the sight of everybody’ (19). The latter detail is intriguing and suggests some *frisson*, as normally other males, surely, would never see a Roman *matrona* change her clothes. Perhaps it suggests her rejection of female sexuality? A similar change of clothes we find a bit later when Maximilla asks her trusted servant Iphidama to find the prison in which Andrew has been locked up (27). The latter changes from her usual dress, ‘loyal as she was’ (28). In any case, change of clothes is a not unfamiliar motif in the novel. We find it in Achilles Tatius (6.1), where Clitophon puts on the clothes of Melite in order not to be recognised, and in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, where Thecla puts on a male dress.⁴¹ Obviously, the function of these changes is not identical in all these cases, but they show how the pagan and Christian novelists could use objects and things in their writings.

Let us now turn to two passages which have parallels in the novel, but which might also have been derived from ‘real life’. In Gregory’s *On the Miracles of the Holy Apostle Andrew* (23), we are told that a former concubine of the proconsul, Trophime, who had subsequently lived with another man, had abandoned her lover in order to follow Andrew. He complained about her desertion to the wife of the proconsul, who condemned her to prostitution, and she was immediately put into a brothel. Similarly, in Xenophon’s novel (5,7), Anthia is sold to a brothel keeper who puts her, well dressed, in front of the door. The penalty was not wholly unusual in antiquity,⁴² but in the novelistic and later hagiographical versions the girl of course manages to save her virginity.⁴³ In the novel, Anthia pretends to be struck by epilepsy, but in Gregory the woman shields herself from unwanted customers by wearing a miniature gospel on her bosom. Such miniature codices are

⁴⁰ Ovid, *AA* 2,619-20, *Am* 1,5,7-8; Martial 11,2,4; 11,04,5; 12,43,10; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15,37.

⁴¹ Cf. Welch 1996; see also Tommasi 2017.

⁴² Rizzo Nervo 1995.

⁴³ Geffcken 1910.

well known for apotropaic purposes, but they only occur from the fourth century onwards:⁴⁴ evidently, at this point Gregory has ‘updated’ his source.

Our final example brings us back to southern Anatolia.⁴⁵ In Macedonian Philippi, Andrew prevented a wedding between two pairs of cousins (*AAlat* 11), the children of two brothers. The moment itself is narrated with a feeling for drama, since the marriage is nearly consummated and the parents are already wearing the wedding garlands, as befitted such a festive event. At that very moment, the apostle arrived and spoilt the party. Now incest between cousins was not an issue in those days. In fact, the prohibition of a marriage between cousins appears first in the Councils of Epaon (AD 517: *canon* 30) and Toledo (AD 531: *canon* 5), that is, right at the time of Gregory. Consequently, in the original *AA* the episode will have been directed against marriage rather than against incest.

For us, though, it is interesting to observe that we find a similar union in Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*, since the homonymous protagonists of the novel are children of two brothers (1,3,6-4.1). This is hardly chance. As I argued before, Achilles Tatius probably came from southern Anatolia,⁴⁶ and precisely such marriages are particularly found in the cities of Lycia and neighbouring regions, whereas the evidence for close-kin marriage in western, northern and central Anatolia (Ionia, Lydia, Bithynia, Phrygia) is very scanty by comparison.⁴⁷ Another interesting example can be found in Apuleius (*Met.* 4,26), whose Greek model, the *Metamorphoseis* ascribed to ‘Lucius of Patrai’, probably was also composed in Southern Anatolia.⁴⁸ Here a girl relates that, on the very day of her wedding, bandits had taken away her *consobrinus*, ‘cousin’, whom *omnis civitas* had elected as *filium publicum*, that is, a ‘son of the city’, a honorary title especially popular, once again, in Southern Anatolia in the second century.⁴⁹

Conclusions

With these examples we have come to the end of our survey. What can we conclude? First, we note that the *Acts of John* has used motifs and scenes from

⁴⁴ Turner 1977, 22, 30; add now *P.Kell.* 91, 92, 94 and *P.Kell.Copt.* 1; Kruger 2005; Kraus 2010, 2012.

⁴⁵ I use here, albeit in updated form, Bremmer 2017a, 118f.

⁴⁶ Bremmer 1998, 165-68.

⁴⁷ Thonemann 2017, 149; further evidence in Schürr 2019.

⁴⁸ Bremmer 1998, 168. Note that her husband-to-be was also three years older than herself, an interesting indication of the age difference at marriage in the region; the example has to be added to Bremmer 2017a, 134.

⁴⁹ Van Bremen 1996, 167-69.

Chariton and Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*, but not from Achilles Tatius' novel.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the *Acts of Andrew*, which knows the *Acts of John* and thus is later, perhaps dating to the 170s, does use Achilles Tatius. Did the novel of Achilles Tatius only reach Northern Asia Minor well after its publication?

Secondly, when we look at the comparisons, we note that the references to the novel seem to be more prominent in the beginnings of the episodes discussed by us than in the other parts of these *AAA*. Perhaps it was enough for the authors of these *AAA* to signal to his readers that they were well acquainted with the current popular literature? In any case, the usage of the novel as well as the reference to Callimachus in the case of the *Acts of John* and the references to classical authors in the *Acts of Andrew* suggest cultured authors who, presumably, wrote for cultured readers.

Thirdly, there are obvious differences between the novel and the *AAA*. Whereas the novel ends in the reunion of the couple, who will enter now a happily married life with plenty of sex, one presumes, the couples in the *AAA* ideally end up in a chaste Platonic relationship. So why did the authors of these narratives look to the novel? The answer may lie in the intended readership. It is striking how in the oldest two *AAA*, those of *John* and *Andrew*, it is the women who are steadfast and decisive, especially of course, but not only, in the new faith, whereas the males are wavering and sometimes not very masculine in their behaviour. Now we know that the males of the senatorial class did not convert before Constantine, and our evidence for the layers immediately below that class is rather meagre.⁵¹ I have argued before that in Asia Minor plenty of women of the higher classes were able to read and write as could many other women in the Roman Empire.⁵² In fact, the evidence of reading and writing women is still increasing, although the early Christian evidence remains neglected in the most recent studies of female literacy.⁵³ Given the resistance to conversion of upper-class males, it is hardly strange that the authors of the *AAA* directed therefore their attention to the women, as may already have been done by the authors of the novel.⁵⁴ Admittedly, Kim Haines-Eitzen has argued that the rather later papyri and parchments of the *AAA* do not point to women readers.⁵⁵ Now apart from the fact that the very slim evidence we

⁵⁰ Lalleman 1998, 149 convincingly rejects the comparison between *Acts of John* 21,12ff. and 48,8-9 with Achilles Tatius 7,14,5, as suggested by Junod and Kaestli 1983, 2.517 n.1.

⁵¹ See now Weiss 2015; note also Urciuoli 2018, 329-36, with a helpful chart of early Christians from the highest classes; add Alkan and Nollé 2017.

⁵² Cf. Bremmer 2017, 225-34.

⁵³ Enos and Peterman 2014; Huebner 2018.

⁵⁴ See the spirited defence of this old thesis by West 2003.

⁵⁵ Haines-Eitzen 2012, 53-68.

have in this respect—only about 13 examples⁵⁶—can hardly be representative, it is also clear that we do not know who owned or read these papyri. Moreover, from the much later, mostly fourth-century usage in Egypt it is hardly admissible to extrapolate a usage in later second-century Asia Minor.

Finally, against my own and others' suggestions, the socio-linguistic and narratological study of the *Acts of John* by Julia Snyder has persuasively argued that this text was intended for an established Christian audience, and was not produced for missionary purposes,⁵⁷ and the same will have been the case with the *Acts of Andrew*. Yet that result does not exclude the fact that the author of the *Acts of John* had several intentions. It seems clear that his stress on a moderate asceticism – castration clearly went too far and we nowhere hear of a divorce being favoured – was one of the important incentives for the author to compose his Christian romance. As such, he may have inspired the author of the *Acts of Andrew*, even though the latter seems to have had a more philosophical than ethical interest.⁵⁸ And given the prominent place of 'strong' women in his Christian alternative to the novel, it seems plausible that the intended readership were indeed higher-class women, perhaps those who served as pillars and patronesses of local churches. That our authors used the ancient novel with its glorification of physical love for this ascetic purpose remains one of the intriguing aspects of these *Apocryphal Acts*.⁵⁹

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⁵⁶ But note a parchment fragment of the *Acts of Paul* (P.Oxy. inv. 8 1B.192/G(2)b) amongst the papyri returned to the Egypt Exploration Society by the Museum of the Bible (Washington DC): <https://www.ees.ac.uk/news/professor-obbink-and-missing-ees-papyri> (accessed 8 November 2019).

⁵⁷ Snyder 2014, 137-39.

⁵⁸ Roig Lanzillotta 2007, 191-265.

⁵⁹ A first version of this article was my contribution to the conference 'Novel Saints. Novel, Hagiography and Romance from the 4th to the 12th Century' in Ghent (2018) and a more elaborate one was presented to the Centre for Advanced Studies 'Beyond Canon' in Regensburg (2019). I am most grateful to both audiences for comments and to Janet Spittler for her kind and skilful correction of my English.

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