



### *Reviews of the Enoch Seminar 2017.07.08*

**Marília P. Futre Pinheiro, Judith Perkins, Richard I. Pervo, eds., *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*. Ancient Narrative Supplementum 16. Eelde: Groningen: Barkhuis; Groningen University Library, 2012. ISBN: 9789491431210. Pp. xx + 230. €70.00. Hardcover.**

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#### Introduction



*The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections* offers select papers presented at the fourth meeting of the International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN IV) in 2008. The conference subject was “Crossroads in the Ancient Novel: Spaces, Frontiers, Intersections” and was meant to examine Jewish and Christian texts and their interactions with other novelistic texts of antiquity. The book itself—being the sixteenth in the series of *Supplementa* to *Ancient Narrative*—is a sampling of Greek, Jewish, and Christian novels each with a specific evaluative interest.

Judith Perkins’s prologue and Richard Pervo’s introduction succinctly detail the purpose and approach of the book. Both are helpful to the reader because they bring a sense of continuity to the diverse materials.

Although the book is comprised of a collection of unconnected essays, together they expand upon the groundwork laid by previous monographs about the ancient novel and Jewish and Christian fiction (e.g., Ben Perry’s *The Ancient Romance*, 1967). Its general premise is that some type of connection exists between the ancient novel and Jewish and Christian fiction. These connections are extrapolated to analyze a variety of nuanced elements shared between the texts. The thirteen authors present topics related to literary, social, educational, religious, and philosophical issues. Although there is no central argument per se for the book, there is a recurring theme in all but two of the essays: strong evidence exists that literary elements present in ancient Greek or Latin novels also appear in Jewish and Christian fiction between the first century BCE and the third or fourth centuries CE. (Giraudet and Braginskaya argue the opposite.) This collection considers these shared aspects, expanding on issues of origin and development of Jewish and Christian narrative.

## Methodology

The thirteen authors make comparisons primarily between a focal text, such as the Acts of Paul and Thecla (the central text for three authors) and one major Greek or Latin novelistic text. Many of the authors pull examples from other narratives and genres (e.g., Greek, Latin, Jewish, and Patristic) as a means of reinforcing their theories. As they work through their comparisons, the authors introduce an array of textual examples which show how widespread a literary convention may have been.

## Structure

The thirteen essays are grouped under four category headings: “Apocryphal Acts” (five), “Jewish Novels” (one), “Novel and Christian Fiction” (four), and “New Testament Hagiography” (three). My observations shall follow the book’s layout.

## Essay Sections

The first of five essays under the Apocryphal Acts section compares the Acts of Paul and Thecla to the trope “love at first sight” found in Greek novels. Jennifer Eyl argues that this theme has a common usage for the authors and readers of Greek novels. It occurs early in the narrative, typically when the two protagonists first meet or see each other. This first encounter is described with details, such as the progress from a tangible prompt by the god Eros, to the character’s subsequent visual impression, followed by physical symptoms of “love sickness.” This notion is rooted in sexual desire, which ran contrary to the church’s teaching regarding chastity and *porneia* (14). Eyl compares this stock usage of Eros and love at first sight, found in writings such as Tatius’s *Kleitophon and Luekippe*, Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, and Longus’s *Daphne and Chloe*, to the obvious omission of both Eros/eros and the love-at-first-sight moment in the Acts of Paul and Thecla. For Eyl, this omission is not happenstance but intentional. The author of Acts of Paul and Thecla is attempting to counter the common sexually explicit usage found in Greek novels through what she calls “desire displaced” (11). While the rest of the text has similarities with other Greek novels, the difference between them is that Thecla’s gaze is not set on Paul’s physical attraction but on his teachings about Jesus (12-13). In this way the author instructs the reader how to see truly and avoid the sexual deviance that submission to Eros eventually results in. Eyl makes this point by showing how the Acts of Paul and Thecla eliminates *eros* as the type of love shared between characters in Greek novels and replaces it with the much less sexually oriented *storge* between Paul and Thecla (16).

Eyl provides excellent examples of how “love at first sight” is used in a variety of Greek novels and explains the philosophical and physiological conceptions connected with vision and *eros*. She offers a plausible explanation for the reversal of the Greek trope: the author removes its sexual connotation and aligns it with a message of sexual purity.

Robin Greene's "Unhappily Ever After" examines the alterations made to the narrative ending of the Acts of Thecla in comparison with common endings for lead female characters found in Greek novels. On the basis of these similarities, Greene suggests that the Acts of Thecla originally ended with a positive conclusion: Thecla continued a peaceful living, teaching other women, and "sleeps the blessed sleep" (22). Greene's central idea is that this original ending functioned well at an early stage, during the second century CE, when Greek novels were flourishing; the ending reflected the common intentions of contemporary authors and wants of their readers. The paradigmatic formula has a heroine maintaining her chastity in the midst of all manner of challenges, only to be vindicated in the end, with a "happy ending" of sorts. Greene's main argument is that the ending in the Acts of Thecla was switched at a later period to something more akin to Christian martyrdoms because of social developments in Christian expectations for their novels (26). Greene traces this shift to a fourth or fifth century CE manuscript (Codex Barocciano = manuscript G) that includes a longer and more detailed ending to Thecla's life (22, 29). This ending includes more of what was expected (and probably popular) from martyrdom tales: the suffering of the heroine and her eventual demise as a martyr for God. Greene's point is that this adjustment to Thecla's ending demonstrated the changes in both the expectations of a martyr and the cult that had developed around Thecla. If she was a martyr or proto-martyr, according to the new standards of the third through the fifth centuries, then her narrative needed to include more of the suffering (demonic torments, etc.) that other martyrs were thought to have endured (28–30).

Greene's essay is extremely helpful in demonstrating the relationship in antiquity between the narrative world and the real world. The expansions to the Acts of Thecla show the necessity of considering a text's literary transmission and understanding the ideological states it represents. In this case, Greene successfully argues that the longer ending to the Acts of Thecla represents changes in the views of martyrdom and the cult built on them occurring in Eastern Christianity. One question (outside the scope of the essay) related to the transmission history of a text concerns whether or not the longer version of the Acts of Thecla indicates that an oral tradition inspired the cult of Thecla or is a story fabricated to legitimize the cult's continued activities.

Paola Moretti's "The Two Ephesian Matrons" examines contrasting accounts of virtuous women, one found in Petronius's *Satyricon* (110.6–113.2) and the other in the apocryphal Acts of John (Acts John 63–86). Although Moretti centers his comparison on these two narratives, he doubts that the author of the Acts of John drew from the *Satyricon* directly. Instead, he suggests that the earlier *Satyricon* (ca. first century CE) is representative of a trope from the second century BCE "Milesian Tradition" (from Aristeides of Miletus) of the "immoral matron" (38). Although similarities are identified throughout the essay, Moretti explicitly states that he aims to show an *aria di famiglia* (family resemblance) between the two texts (38). The unnamed woman who appears in the *Satyricon* excerpt is a common portrayal in other Ephesian matron tales, such as those found in Aesop and Phaedrus. In fact, Moretti asserts that it is this Milesian tradition of the immoral matron that underlies both Petronius and Acts of John.

The Ephesian widowed matron in Petronius has several commonalities with Drusiana in the Acts of John: the locale of Ephesus; the reputation for virtue both have; their longing for death; a test of their virtue, which in both cases takes place inside a tomb; and a return to life (38–41). He argues that the shared details suggest that the Acts of John is responding to or correcting the idea found in the Ephesian Matron tradition. In Petronius's account, the matron ultimately loses her

virtuous reputation because she succumbs to the very passions that Eumolpus accuses women of falling victim to: “no woman was so chaste that she could not be led away into utter madness by a passion for a stranger” (*Sat.* 110). In the Acts of John, the response to the challenge of Drusiana’s virtue and virginity is presented in an opposite manner. In contrast to the Ephesian matron, who willingly gives in to a soldier’s sexual advances, Drusiana refuses Callimachus’s attempts to commit adultery with her. This central difference, Moretti argues, shows that the Acts of John reverses the outcome typically found in Greek novelistic literature.

There are other contrasts between the accounts. The matron in Petronius has recently become a widow and desires the young soldier, eventually assisting him in evading court-martial; Drusiana, while not a widow (she is married to Andronicus), ends up in a tomb because of her own self-loathing for having caused a young man’s sexual desire. This difference supports Moretti’s argument that the Acts of John was not responding to Petronius’s Ephesian matron in particular but rather to the tradition that utilized these common themes. Moretti makes a solid claim that Christian texts such as the Acts of John incorporated Greek *topoi* into their narratives but transformed them to teach their own moral ideology (44).

Vincent Giraudet’s “Virginity at Stake” considers how virgins are presented in Greek novels. The focus is on Nonnus’s *Dionysiaca* (fifth century CE) and the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. In the *Dionysiaca*, the accounts of Morrheus and Chalcomede (books 33–35) and of Nicaia (15.169–174) and Aura (48.241–248, the latter two treated in tandem), represent two portrayals of the virgin motif found in Greek novels and some apocryphal Acts narratives. Giraudet contends that the two presentations found in Nonnus’s work represent separate understandings of the virgin motif that were circulating at the time.

The first virginal paradigm compares the events between Morrheus (a warrior suitor) and his love interest Chalcomede (a chaste Bacchant) to the characters of Drusiana and Callimachus in the Acts of John (63–86). Giraudet finds numerous interesting parallels between the characters’ actions and the author’s construction of the imagery they represent. He successfully shows how the figures exhibit typical traits found in Greek romances: for example, the female character’s desire to remain chaste amid unwanted sexual advances signifies the paradigm of the virgin who is pursued by an unfit suitor. Giraudet proposes that this portrayal in Nonnus may be an “echo” of the Acts of John and a form of Christian teaching on encratism (self-restraint). Giraudet also acknowledges that some of the details differ between the texts. For example, the protective snake for Drusiana sits on her would be attacker, while several serpents appear from and around Chalcomede to rebuff Morrheus (*Dion.* 35.204–222).

The second virginal paradigm is from the two separate accounts of Nicaia and Aura. Here the paradigm is reversed from Chalcomede and Morrheus: the two women desire to maintain their virginity but are expected to renounce their chastity (55).

For Giraudet, these two presentations of the virgin motif in Nonnus’s work are significant because of their contrasting messages. Chalcomede’s story reflects Christian teaching, akin to the Acts of John, on chastity and encratism, while Nicaia and Aura agree more with patterns found in Greek romance. Despite Nonnus having two disparate presentations of the virgin motif, in its overall tendency the *Dionysiaca* leans in favor of the Greek romance model of the virgin.

The presence of two virginity motifs in Nonnus's *Dionysiaca* exemplifies the interaction between ideas, showing how multiple concepts can be featured in a single text. The author—despite personal predispositions—incorporates diverse or seemingly contradictory material. From a compositional standpoint, it raises the question of what the author may have thought about remaining chaste. The question of the text's intended audience may seem perplexing: is it written for a Christian audience or otherwise? Giraudet does mention that it is paradoxical that Nonnus includes both chastity and the importance of love and marriage in *Dionysiaca* but I think that this could also reflect the author's use of the available models to express his own creative style without a conviction in either moral direction.

Janet Spittler's "Wild Kingdom" examines the animal episodes in the apocryphal Acts and their compositional relationship to Greek literature. Her comparative approach seeks to answer three central questions: (1) how are animals used to develop characters and plot? (2) what is their significance in light of what is known from natural history? and (3) which literary techniques were used to develop them in the narrative? (65). Spittler selects three texts from the apocryphal Acts collection (Acts of John, Acts of Thomas, and Acts of Peter) and compares their presentation of animal scenes to Greek authors who also depict them in similar ways in order to establish how Christian authors intended their audiences to understand the creature. The Acts of John 60–61 is compared with Aristophanes's *Clouds*, the Acts of Thomas 69, 74 to the *Physiologus* (a third-century Christian natural history text), and the Acts of Peter 12 to the *Odyssey* 17 and selections from Plato's *Republic*. Spittler's approach highlights scenes with an animal appearing in each of the Acts: bed bugs (John), a preaching horse (Thomas), and a talking dog (Peter), and contrasts it with information about the creature's characteristics known from Greek natural history texts. The inclusion of the animal scenes in the Acts are meant for more than entertainment purposes: the audience was also expected to interpret them based on what was commonly known.

One example in the Acts of John recalls how the Apostle and his compatriots attempt to rest in an abandoned lodge. While resting, John is troubled by bed bugs and orders them to leave him and his friends alone. The bed bugs cooperate and wait outside the bed, leading John to praise them for their obedience to a human's voice, while chastising human disobedience to God's voice (Acts of John 61). Spittler explains how the bed bugs are not just a random selection by the author but instead are known from previous famous tales such as those found in Aristophanes's *Clouds*. The bed bugs in *Clouds* explains their literal and metaphorical use as a symbol of worry or distraction (69). For example, the word for bed bugs (*koreis*) may be a pun for young maidens (*korai*) who are also understood to be distractions for men, especially in later Christian texts.

While understanding the background of the creature helps with interpreting why the author included the scene, Spittler may stretch some connections too far. For example, the *paraklausthyron* ("lover's lament") motif in the Acts of John does not seem like an idea the author emphasizes. The main point in that section is the bed bugs' adherence to John's voice in comparison to humanity's obedience to God's. Still, the background of how bed bugs are used in texts such as *Clouds* and what they symbolize is beneficial for understanding why the author of the Acts of John may have included them in a section teaching obedience. Overall, the essay provides insight into why authors included fantastic or nonsensical (at least to modern readers) animal scenes in their narratives.

Nina Braginskaya offers the lone essay in the section “The Jewish Novel,” entitled “*Joseph and Aseneth* in Greek Literary History: The Case of the ‘First Novel’,” which—in contrast to the other essays—argues against the influence of the Greek novel on the subject narrative. While other essays in the collection compare their texts to the contents and themes found in Greek novels, Braginskaya seeks to demonstrate how the text of *Joseph and Aseneth* did not rely on Greek novels but on preexistent material in Jewish tradition (81). She is primarily in dialogue with Christoph Burchard’s commentary on *Joseph and Aseneth* in Charlesworth’s *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, which argues that the book makes considerable use of Greek novels such as Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*, Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, and *An Ephesian Tale* (83).

Braginskaya’s comparisons indicate how the parallels are *not* indicative of shared content from Greek novels, but that the direction of influence is largely perceived. She compares *Joseph and Aseneth* first to Apuleius and then to Chariton, examining their general parallels. For example, she highlights twelve different typologies or motifs found in both *Joseph and Aseneth* and *Metamorphoses* and proceeds to explain how the parallels are not undisputed; the content found in *Joseph and Aseneth* could reflect details from Jewish literature such as *Judith* or *Ruth* (86–95).

One of the comparative examples deals with the transformation motif found in both *Metamorphoses* and *Joseph and Aseneth*. Braginskaya discusses the similarities and differences between the characters Lucius and Aseneth and their respective initiations into a new religion (90). She points out similarities in the stories (e.g., the topic of conversion, the characters who experience a significant change of clothing); however, Braginskaya also shows the different characters’ attitudes toward their garments. Lucius shows pride in his vestments while Aseneth throws hers out of the window. Thus, *Joseph and Aseneth* does not have to be influenced by a Greek novel like Apuleius’s, because transformation imagery already existed in Jewish literature. In support, Braginskaya lists instances of Jewish transformations such as Jesus’s transfiguration and Enoch’s transformation into Metatron (90). The result is clear: *Joseph and Aseneth* resembles both Jewish narrative and Greek romances, but Braginskaya “finds no signs of the presence of the Greek novels” (103). Instead, *Joseph and Aseneth* is reminiscent of “the Greek Old Testament and folklore” (103).

While the problem of when to date *Joseph and Aseneth* remains, the examples of similar imagery and motifs found in Jewish literary tradition is compelling and gives genuine reasons to pause before admitting that the text is dependent on romantic stylings. The essay is also beneficial for considering how one evaluates parallels between Jewish literature and Greek novels in terms of their interaction. Compositionally, as Braginskaya mentions, it is possible that imagery and motifs in Jewish literature provided material for later Greek novels. This would raise questions of origins and influence as well as what types of literature authors had access to during the compositional process.

The section “Ancient Novel and Early Christian Fictions” begins with Judith Perkins’s “Jesus Was No Sophist.” Her essay examines the role and understanding of education in the early Christian fiction. Perkins’s interest is in how education is portrayed in the literature and how that portrayal reflects the real-world environment of the so-called Second Sophistic period. She argues that Christian fictive literature was counteracting the social divide between the educated elite and

undereducated that existed during the period. Perkins explains how, during the Second Sophistic, rhetorical education increasingly became an indicator of elite social status and a requirement for political power (109).

Perkins denotes this dichotomy between the educated elite and the undereducated through literary examples of how education, or the lack thereof, was viewed. She uses Lucian's *Somnium* as a vivid example of how the elite viewed themselves and those without rhetorical education (110–11). Lucian's dream of the two female figures, Craft and Paideia, juxtaposes the depiction of the different lifestyles and expectations. Craft represents the uneducated and the lowly life without fame or influence, while Paideia offers a life of prestige, eloquence, and riches.

Perkins contrasts Lucian's text with Patristic authors such as Origen, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr, who all exemplify how education was viewed by Christians in the same period. The interesting point here is that the Patristic authors valued education as well, even constantly referring to their revered leaders as teachers (*paidagogos* and *didaskalos*) and philosophers (114–15). However, Perkins asks why, despite calling their leaders teachers, would Christian authors also emphasize how uneducated they were (115). Her hypothesis is that the Christian authors of apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are responding to the societal condition that looked down on those without rhetorical training, with the Infancy Gospel of Thomas serving as an example. For Perkins, Jesus represents the role of the undereducated person or the "under-stratum" in society, while his teachers are the educated elite.

Perkins's presentation is helpful in situating the texts in the historical and social milieu of the Second Sophistic era. The combination of the educational social environment and the response of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas to the division between the educated elite and the undereducated or disenfranchised, offers a *raison d'être* for the composition of literature such as the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Although it is persuasive to understand Jesus's character as a trope for the social misfit who challenges the viewpoint and power of the social elite, it is also feasible to see his mastery of subjects beyond his teachers' ability as a typical motif found in earlier texts that present the central character as a type of prodigy, but having no misgivings about rhetorical education. Philo's presentation of Moses in *De vita Mosis* (e.g., 1.20–21), for example, mentions how he did not need an instructor and surpassed his teachers. Still, given the second-century background that Perkins highlights, it is interesting to see how Christian authors may have reacted to and critiqued the historical reality.

Oliver Ehlen's "Reading the *Protoevangelium Jacobi* as an Ancient Novel" compares two selections from the *Protoevangelium Jacobi* with strategies of narration found in Greek novels such as Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* (1.14.6–9). Ehlen discusses parallels between *Protoevangelium Jacobi* and other Greek novels (e.g., Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus) by describing common motif scenes such as marital reconciliation and chastity tests for virgins (133–34). His methodological approach examines the parallels by focusing on the point of view of the narrator in their respective accounts (135).

Ehlen, noting the work of Thomas Hägg on narrative techniques in Greek novels, looks to identify the "narrator stance" in *Protoevangelium Jacobi* in comparison to Chariton. By narrator stance, Ehlen means the position or direction from which the narrative is delivered. Ehlen also explains

the importance of “voice” (referred to as “focalization”) and whether it is from one of the characters (internal) or from the narrator (external). In both cases, narrator position and voice, the significance of the technique is meant to elicit a certain response from the reader or listener.

One example from *Protoevangelium Jacobi* focuses on the death of Zacharias in the Jerusalem Temple after his murder at the hands of King Herod’s servants. The position of the narrator is extradiegetic (outside) and the voice is internal (seen through a character’s eyes). The story is told by an external narrator but provides the description of what is seen from one of the character’s vantage point—in this case a courageous priest—allowing the reader to share the place of the observant character. Ehlen explains that the author is borrowing this literary technique so that “the meaning and the message of the whole story is received by the reader or hearer in a deeply emotional manner” (138).

The parallels that Ehlen makes between these Greek novels are certainly plausible in terms of seeing similar techniques at play in the texts and explaining why authors present their narration in certain ways. The switching or, as Ehlen refers to it, “alternation” of narration in a text is significant for understanding authors’ aims: what they want to emphasize or what they desire the reader or audience to feel in their works. Ancient writers wanted to persuade and appeal to their reader’s emotions and this examination provides a fine example of how a novelistic author might have approached the task. The only challenge appears to be the reliance on modern terms and narrative techniques to describe what the authors are doing in their respective texts as well as the notion that ancient authors would have conceived of their work in similar ways. One question, certainly outside the purview of the essay, is whether ancient authors would have been concerned with the position of the narrator or the internal or external voice of the character.

Rosa Andújar’s “Charicleia the Martyr” considers the influential relationship between Heliodorus’s *Aethiopica* and the Acts of Paul and Thecla, specifically the similarities between the two female protagonists and their visual representation. Andújar compares two main scenes from *Aethiopica* (8, 10) with one from the Acts of Thecla (22) in order to illustrate their shared contents and imagery. Her premise is that Heliodorus’s work departs from the typical presentation of Greek heroines in novels due to borrowing from Christian hagiography. Andújar compares the visualizations of Thecla and of Charicleia in their respective narratives.

Andújar describes how Heliodorus’s *Aethiopica* (third century CE) portrays Charicleia (the love interest of Theagenes) in typical imagery reflective of heroines in Greek novels (145). Her beauty is compared to that of the gods (e.g., Artemis and Isis) and is on erotic display for crowds and particularly male onlookers. Andújar’s point is that the sexualized nature of the heroine’s beauty makes an appearance in *Aethiopica* but the visualization of Charicleia in books 8 and 10 is distinct from the common trope (146).

Andújar examines several similarities between Thecla and Charicleia. Both characters are beautiful (*kallos*); condemned to death by a fiery stake; and are surrounded by a fire that does not consume them, called a marriage bed or bridal chamber (*thalamos*). These parallels are evidence of Heliodorus incorporating ideas from the Acts of Thecla, mainly because of how the fire forms a *thalamos* frame around both women during their trials. Andújar explains that the meaning of the protective fire for Charicleia is meant to protect her from harm, showcase her purity, and prove

her innocence before her accusers (147). The visual emphasis on the bridal chamber frame and chastity is the major diversion from heroines of Greek novel. Instead of sexualizing Charicleia, her virginity is highlighted, just as it is in Thecla's episode. This connection in Heliodorus to the imagery in the Acts of Thecla suggests dependence because the specific imagery is not known elsewhere with such explicit terminology (147).

One difficulty with the parallel between Charicleia and Thecla is the notion of Heliodorus borrowing from the Acts of Thecla. The issue is the relative close proximity of the dates between the two texts. The comparison between Charicleia and Thecla is reliant upon a later rewritten version of the fiery stake scene in the Acts of Thecla (referred to as *The Life and Miracles of Thecla*), as Andújar makes clear (147). She explains that the fire, in the form of a *thalamos*, only occurs in a rewritten version from around 470 CE, which could be later than Heliodorus's text. However, if Heliodorus's work is indeed later than the Acts of Thecla then the direction of influence is much clearer.

Andújar's essay provides another example of how Christian literature affected surrounding Greek texts instead of vice versa. It also demonstrates how authors could seamlessly incorporate scenes, terminology, and imagery from other accounts to convey new stories as well as what types of sources they read.

Martina Hirschberger's "Marriages Spoiled" provides a deconstruction of novelistic discourse in Early Christian narratives. Her premise is that Christian novels, in this case apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, not only incorporate Greek novelistic themes and content but also subvert them with the intent to criticize contemporary social mores of Greek and Roman society. Her focus is particularly on the social values of aristocratic married couples (153). Hirschberger discusses how Greek novels typically reflect the social values and expectations of elite societies and notes that values such as noble status, beauty, and legitimate marriage are depicted through central characters. These ideals are reversed in the Acts accounts through various encounters between elite couples and apostolic figures, in which the values shown in Greek novels are diminished and replaced by Christian ideals of faith and piety (153).

Hirschberger does not compare the Apocryphal Acts to any specific Greek novel; instead, she offers a comparison of general themes found across Greek novelistic literature (e.g., love-sickness and chastity trials). She examines five different Apocryphal Acts: The Acts of John, Acts of Paul, Acts of Peter, Acts of Andrew, and Acts of Thomas, comparing the presentation of their characters and adventures to the common themes found in Greek novels. Each of the accounts involves a married couple (or multiple couples) who encounter one of the Apostles and thereafter have their marital and social lives affected positively or negatively. She first summarizes the major details in the narrative that parallel what is found in Greek novels and then explains how they divert from common social expectation. For example, in the Acts accounts beauty is rebuffed (Thecla leaves her handsome fiancé for the "ugly" Paul), and elite social status is outclassed by the powerful teaching and miracles of the apostles (155). Hirschberger's point is that the ideals found in Greek novels are rendered mute in the Apocryphal Acts as the socially powerful characters are humbled by the apostles. Whereas in Greek novels the married couple strives for love and a happy ending together, the apocryphal Acts—except for the Acts of John—show the husband losing his wife to the more persuasive apostle's teaching.

Hirschberger provides numerous parallels between the apocryphal Acts and Greek novels and shows how they portray social values. It is interesting to see how the ideals found in Greek novels are reversed to support Christian viewpoints. It does raise the question as to how these texts were intended to function. Greek novels may also serve as a form of entertainment, so it would seem that these apocryphal Acts might be doing the same, given that the scenarios appear highly paradoxical. Hirschberger's findings certainly help with the question of authorial intent. Her comparisons make it evident that the authors attempted to critique Greek and Roman society by offering a reversal of social norms, intentionally composing morally and socially outrageous accounts for the sake of satirical entertainment.

Warren Smith's "We-Passages in Acts as Mission Narrative" begins the New Testament Hagiography section, and offers a detailed assessment of four well-known occurrences in Acts of the Apostles, where the narration curiously shifts from third to first person plural.

Focusing primarily on Acts 16:10–17, Smith aims to demonstrate the significance and function of the change in narration by comparing Acts with a variety of literary works that have parallel contents and make similar shifts in narration. Before delving into his proposed solutions for why these shifts occur, Smith first situates the problem by summarizing some of the ways that the change in narration is understood from ancient (e.g., Irenaeus) and modern perspectives (173–74). He postulates that the switch to "we" is significant in Acts because of its place in the narrative, which is just before crossing over to Macedonia. Smith connects numerous parallels in the passage with other significant literary "crossing moments" such as the respective invasions of Darius, Xerxes, and Alexander (177). The importance of the crossing event leads to a shift from third-person narration to "we immediately tried to crossover to Macedonia," which Smith explains as the author's literary device to draw the reader into the narrative mission. This notion of including the audience in the story (by switching to second-person plural in some cases) at junctures where the mission is expanded and meant to include a wider community is supported by literary parallels in New Testament texts such as the Gospel of John and 3 John (181). Smith also includes further examples of ancient texts (e.g., Epistle of Diognetus, Philostratus, and Boethius) that use the same literary device to invite the reader into the narrative, while noting that there is no other example quite like the "we" shift in Acts.

Smith convincingly marshals diverse examples to explain the significance of the four "we" passages in Acts. His proposal certainly offers a solid explanation for an otherwise literary oddity found in Acts and texts such as the Shepherd of Hermas (183). The parallels between the narratives of Paul, Alexander the Great, and others are valuable because they indicate how authors might have understood the compositional practice of drawing their audiences into participatory roles in their narratives. Although it is not part of the subject matter here, the prevalence of the shift from singular to an inclusive plural in such a wide range of texts also raises the question as to whether the practice has any corollaries in the extant compositional exercises.

Petr Kitzler's essay "*Viri mirantur facilius quam imitantur*" (Men who admire more than imitate) focuses on the third or fourth century CE narrative of the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Passion of Perpetua and Felicia) and its reception by later church authors and tradition. He compares the Latin version of *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* to Tertullian's *De anima* (Concerning the Soul),

other martyr acts accounts from North Africa, and various homilies from Augustine to establish how the various authors utilized Perpetua's martyrdom tale as a means of promoting their own social or theological agenda.

Kitzler moves chronologically through each set of textual comparisons, beginning with Tertullian, and explains how they uniquely adapt parts of the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* narrative based on their social setting and authorial intention. For example, Tertullian uses Perpetua's vision of the afterlife (in the form of a garden) to reinforce his theological doctrine of the soul's destination after death (191). In *De anima* 55, he describes Perpetua's vision through a method of eisegesis, adding details that are not in *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* to strengthen his point, such as her seeing paradise being restricted to martyrs, although her vision only mentions seeing "many thousands in white".

In addition to Tertullian, Kitzler also gives two other examples: (1) *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* serves as a paradigm for other martyrdom accounts such as *Vita Cypriani* (Life of Cyprian) and (2) Augustine modifies some narrative details in his sermons in order to make them more socially palatable for his contemporary audience. Kitzler's section on Augustine is the longest and most detailed, demonstrating how these homilies reinterpret Perpetua's activities. Augustine deems some of her actions as a female character (such as her paternal rejection and absence of her husband) as socially inappropriate or controversial. Those actions are then retold or elaborated on in a manner that is more acceptable for women in his contemporary context (197).

Kitzler's presentation skillfully shows how the reception history of a narrative can help in understanding a later author's use of and attitude towards a text. Despite *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* being regarded as authoritative in some circles, these authors apparently felt free to take liberties when referring to or explaining certain passages. This provides further insight not only into citation practices but also into how authors viewed the veracity of martyrdom accounts.

Timo Glasner's "Telling What's Beyond the Known" explores literary techniques and functions of the epistolary novel, along with a final section on three of the Pauline Epistles. Glasner's study centers on how and why some character details in epistolary novels differ from details presented in the character's biographical texts. He compares the lives of three ancient authors: Aeschines (Aeschylus), Euripides, and Paul the Apostle. Glasner's goal is to show which methods epistolary authors used to create their narratives. Additionally, he explains how the epistolary novels relate to their biographical counterparts, or, as he puts it, "To illustrate the specific way of creating a story in epistolary novels by using other stories" (204–5).

Glasner compares the five letters of Euripides to biographical details about his life found in accounts from authors such as Aristotle and Satyrus (206). Similarly, the novel of Aeschines is compared to biographical remains from authors such as Apollonius and Philocrates and indicates a merging of two disparate traditions about the figure (205). In both cases, Glasner shows how the epistolary novels of Aeschines and Euripides employ literary devices that can create details in the character's lives while also potentially serving as an apologetic in certain cases (208).

Glasner's longest section deals with three Pauline epistles: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. Here, the epistles are also understood in terms of epistolary novels and are contrasted with various New

Testament texts such as 1 Corinthians and Acts of the Apostles in order to demonstrate literary techniques. The comparison is meant to show how the author of these epistles creatively conjures episodes and details for the reader that are not otherwise attested to in the Pauline literary tradition. For example, concerning 1 Timothy, Glasner discusses how the author uses similar wording (e.g., Macedonia, Ephesus, and Timothy) to create a sense of familiarity when reading the epistle, despite the accounts in Acts 19–20 and 1 Corinthians 16 not actually agreeing on details of Paul’s activities (209). Glasner suggests that the authors of the Pauline epistolary novels sometimes create texts to introduce new elements to his biography (such as him being a leader able to send delegates and not just letters to communities), to explain how communities are to be led in his absence, or to fill in gaps of knowledge (such as the circumstances leading up to his death).

Glasner also explains how the letters are received from the audience’s vantage point (211). He suggests that “substantial narrative work is demanded from the readers, since they must reconstruct the successive episodes between the successive letters” (a process he calls “lighting”). This certainly prompts the question of who the intended audience is. Depending on the readers, a reconstruction requiring access to and familiarity with other text traditions of the character might be relatively complex.

#### Final Remarks

This collection of essays offers many benefits for those seeking a thorough examination of multiple connections among Jewish, Christian, and ancient Greek novelistic literature. The majority of authors have expertise in classical literature (and others in Patristics and related Jewish and Christian texts) which is valuable for identifying parallels between texts, including some outside of the novel genre, and assessing their significance. Each of the authors introduces and situates their texts, historically and socially, so that the reader—whether acquainted with the texts or not—is able to easily follow the detailed arguments. The abstract section was very helpful for quickly summarizing the author’s aims and approaches too. Only in a few instances did I have trouble locating the source of an ancient text being referred to; however, this was mainly due to my unfamiliarity with the text’s citation than the author’s effort. What I find most enlightening is how connections between the texts signify shared compositional and rhetorical practices, and how the influences were not always in one direction. Sometimes it was the Greek novel influencing the Jewish or Christian text, while at other times vice versa. The fact that many of the comparisons were done between roughly contemporary texts helps to show how widespread were certain themes, images, and ideologies.

While the comparative examples (rhetorical, social, religious, etc.) between Greek, Jewish, and Christian novelistic texts are clear and concise, it would have been interesting to have a wider range of examples from Jewish novels (Joseph and Aseneth is the only one). The same issue of limited textual range occurs in the “Apocryphal Acts” section; two out of the five essays deal with the Acts of Paul and Thecla and another two involve the Acts of John.

The variety of texts and many insightful examples help to identify, from the authors’ and readers’ perspective, compositional norms and how they functioned. The collection certainly achieves its

goal of bridging the gaps between the fields of classics, Jewish studies, and early Christian studies, while uncovering the many intersections among their fictional texts.