Sex and Sanctity in the *Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*: A Christian Bedtrick and its

Biblical Bedrock

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Abstract: In the *Apocryphal Acts of Andrew* a familiar double plot of sex and mistaken identity features Maximilla, a recently converted wife, tricking her pagan husband, Aegeates, into bedding her masked maid in order to retain the purity of her own bed. In resorting to this stratagem of sexual deception, the heroine of this tale behaves in a manner that contemporary Christians would (and did) find scandalous and unacceptable. This article investigates how this unique, sanctified bedtrick mobilizes different traditions (both Greco-Roman and biblical), subverts the predominant model of the Christian wife, and constructs an entirely peculiar, alternative ideal. The Christian bedtrick evokes mythical and novelistic patterns but presents its instigator as paradoxically chaste—the opposite of her depraved analogues in myth and novel. The text also evokes biblical bedtricks, but only to challenge the emphasis on survival through procreation at all cost that underpins most of the bedtricks in Genesis. The article argues, finally, that the bridal switch between Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29 provides the closest biblical parallel for Maximilla's strategy. The striking apocryphal bedtrick also bears intriguing similarities to two texts which clearly hark back to the bridal switch of Genesis 29: an ancient Jewish "novel" (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12.154–236) and an exegetical vignette from rabbinic midrash (Lamentations Rabbah Proem 24) that employ "holy" bedtricks in the interests of individual or collective salvation.

INTRODUCTION

Deceptively simple, the motif of the bedtrick is embedded in countless tales of mistaken identities and misplaced trust. As defined in Wendy Doniger's expansive analysis, titled *Bedtrick. Tales of Sex and Masquerade*, this theme brings together sex and deception in a variety of stories, both ancient and modern, where a lover is unaware of the true identity of their sexual partner.[1] To find an unwanted, or at least unexpected, companion in the intimacy of one's bed is potentially both comical and sinister. Inherently theatrical, bedtricks are primarily stories about human deceit, fallibility, and gullibility.

As reconstructed in modern editions, the *Acts of Andrew* (henceforth *AA*) invariably contains the bedtrick that serves as a prelude to Andrew's martyrdom in Patras.[2] Scholarly consensus has settled on a date—the last half of the second century—for the original composition of the *AA*,[3] but not on a provenance: Asia Minor, Syria, and Alexandria have all been considered, but no consensus has been reached.[4] Nor is it clear whether the "original" *AA* started with a text now known as the *Acts of Andrew and Matthias*.[5] Gregory of Tours, at the end of the sixth century, provides a brief summary of a single episode from the *Acts of Andrew and Matthias* at the beginning of his epitome of the *AA* (*Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli*; henceforth *Epitome*). The most substantial component of Gregory's precis is devoted to what must have also formed the bulk of the "original" *AA*: Andrew's travels and miracles—not surviving in full in any other source. There is no doubt, however, that the "original" *AA* ended with the apostle's martyrdom. Recounted in the *Passio,* a

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composite text for which modern editors have drawn on a plurality of recensions, Andrew's last days on earth have been preserved in a variety of languages—an indication that this part of the narrative started to circulate independently at an early date, probably in the fourth century, in order to satisfy the growing literary appetite for martyrological accounts.[6]

Among a plethora of textual traditions for the *Passio*, the bedtrick, as summarized below, appears only in one recension, comprising two nearly identical manuscripts: Hierosolymitanus Sabbaiticus 103 (twelfth century) from the monastery of St. Sabas outside Jerusalem and Sinaiticus Gr. 526 (tenth century) from the monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai.[7] In scholarly parlance this recension is designated by the collective HS. Gregory's *Epitome* and several later accounts present different scenarios at this point in the narrative. In Gregory's summary, the Christian wife's adherence to Andrew's encratite ideology leads directly to the rejection of her husband's sexual overtures, inciting the latter's anger and ushering Andrew's arrest and crucifixion.[8] Two ninth-century texts claim that for some time Maximilla pretended to be sick in order to avoid intercourse with her husband.[9] The bedtrick's absence from all but one recension (the HS) has been ascribed to expunging hands that excised the scandalous episode in order to cater to contemporary moral demands.[10] As it will be argued below, Maximilla's bedtrick was bound to meet with fierce opposition, since it challenged the model of the ideal Christian wife.

Modern editions of the *Passio* print an eclectic text combining the fuller narration of the HS recension (including the bedtrick) with the speeches found in a different manuscript (Vaticanus Gr. 808, tenth or eleventh century). The latter transmits a fragment that is thought by its most recent editor to be the closest to a second-century "original."[11] This fragment is mutilated at the sections where the bedtrick would have

occurred: it picks up the story in the middle of a speech which Andrew delivers while already in prison. Andrew's long, quasi-philosophical discourses as reported in this manuscript were invariably curtailed or eliminated in other recensions of the *Passio*, including in the HS. The fact that these long speeches are now printed alongside the bedtrick has led to an assumption of narrative homogeneity that is belied by the variety of textual witnesses.[12] It is important, therefore, to acknowledge a) that the *AA* is "an open text,"[13] and b) that we need to be mindful of the specific textual witnesses and the different text that each transmits.

This article focuses on the text transmitted in the HS recension—a uniquely full account of the events that led to Andrew's martyrdom, including the sole occurrence of a Christian bedtrick. It is an episode that defies conventions. Patterns of "conversion cum sexual renunciation" are familiar from practically all the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles—a genre notorious for advancing a platform of sexual renunciation within the marital framework.[14] Only in the *AA*, however, does conversion to Christianity entail not only the breakup of a marriage, as it does in other Acts, but also the redeployment of novelistic and biblical bedtricks. Scholars have been aware of affinities between the *AA* and novelistic patterns.[15] The bedtrick's role, however, in the construction of a new, controversial Christian ideal has not been fully investigated, nor have the intricate relations between the *AA*'s bedtrick and patterns of "classical" (that is, Greco-Roman) and Jewish bedtricks.

We begin with a summary of the *AA*'s bedtrick, paying close attention to its language, followed by an overview of implicit and explicit criticism of the behavior of the *AA*'s acetic wife, the former via ecclesiastic representations of the ideal wife, the latter via strident criticism of the heroine herself. This study then turns to an analysis of the manner in which the *AA*'s bedtrick subverts the modules delineated by

a rich gallery of Greco-Roman bedtricks; concluding with the suggestion that the intertwining of surrogate sex and salvation gains authority by harnessing biblical bedtricks. Further noted are the intriguing, and hitherto unnoticed, echoes of an ancient Jewish "novel" and a vignette of rabbinic midrash, both employing sanctified bedtricks to advance a radically different agenda.[16]

WEAVING AN APOCRYPHAL BEDTRICK

The *Passio*, a prominent (and the closural) part of the elusive text that modern scholars have reconstructed as the *AA*,[17] includes a peculiar tale of sexual surrogacy. Its female protagonist and the engineer of the bedtrick is Maximilla, a recent convert to Andrew's radical Christian ethics of sexual renunciation. Maximilla is the offspring of a wealthy family and the wife of Aegeates,[18] the proconsul of Patras—the location destined to become the scene of Andrew's martyrdom. Aegeates's unabated passion for his wife of many years is demonstrated when she falls fatally ill.[19] The distraught husband threatens to commit suicide by sword should his beloved expire. Andrew's timely arrival at her bedside saves Maximilla who "falls in love" with her savior and converts.[20]

Subsequent to Maximilla's healing, Aegeates's long absence on duty allows Andrew to convert not only his wife but also his brother Stratocles. The latter's conversion becomes an elevated, philosophical affair. During secret meetings in Maximilla's bedroom, now turned into a proto-church,[21] the apostle both "inseminates"[22] this new convert with the truth of Jesus and becomes the midwife that allows him to "give birth"[23] to his Christian inner self.[24] When Aegeates unexpectedly returns and is about to catch the Christian "family" in Maximilla's bedroom, Andrew prays for salvation, and the proconsul is afflicted with an uncontrollable bowel

movement. While he is relieving himself on a chamber pot, Andrew and his disciples exit, rendered invisible by the apostle and passing right in front of the defecating Aegeates (*Passio* 13)—a hilarious scene reminiscent of theatrical mimes.[25]

Having averted the threat of being caught with multiple "strangers" in an intimate setting, Maximilla now ponders how she is to proceed, determined to maintain her chastity at the expense of her marriage. While Aegeates is sleeping, she sends her faithful slave Iphidama to fetch Andrew, who prays that the Lord may protect her

> from this disgusting pollution (τοῦ μιαροῦ τούτου μιάσματος). [. . .] If she has such a firm faith in You, may she obtain her own proper kinship through separation from masquerading friends but actual enemies (τῶν προσποιητῶν καὶ ὄντως ἐχθρῶν).[26]

Andrew's prayer endorses marital separation but does not specify the means to achieve the desirable goal of wifely purity. Maximilla must devise her own strategy. Perhaps drawing inspiration from those "masquerading friends" who are in fact enemies (προσποιητῶν . . . ἐχθρῶν), Maximilla devises a ruse involving false appearances and switched identities. This pivotal moment of taking the initiative to devise a plan that neither the Lord nor Andrew has provided is marked in the text by a dramatic shift from the past to the present tense and the use of a verb that implies an intellectual investment: ἡ οὖν Μαξιμίλλα σκέπτεταί τι τοιοῦτον (*Passio* 17.1: "Maximilla then plans the following").[27]

Maximilla chooses Euclia, the most shapely and wanton among her female slaves, and asks her to do something Euclia herself apparently desires: to put on "the devil's fineries" (τὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου εὐτρεπίσματα) and sleep with Aegeates in her mistress's stead.[28] By way of coaching, Maximilla instructs Euclia to repeat her own conduct, specifically returning to her own bedroom after each intercourse. The bedtrick

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functions serenely for no less than eight months, a period that allows Maximilla to spend precious time with Andrew. Having been masterfully prepared, the conceit could have carried on *ad infinitum*, had it not been for Euclia's greed and/or pregnancy.[29] The plot begins to unravel when, after eight months, Euclia starts to pose demands, including her manumission. Maximilla instantly consents. These seemingly inexplicable privileges breed resentment among other household slaves, especially when Euclia assumes the airs of her mistress. One night, when Aegeates is drunk, Euclia sneaks a few slaves into the master's bedroom to witness the bedtrick, which is now enacted as if on a stage and in public, with the audience knowing what the man in the bed has remained oblivious to. The slaves listen to their master addressing Euclia as: "Maximilla, my queen, why do you come so late?" (*Passio* 18: Ἡ κυρία μου Μαξιμίλλα, τί βραδέως;),[30] words granted to ignite merriment had they been delivered in a staged performance.

Predictably, Euclia remains silent. The other slaves leave the bedroom without a sound. A little later, however, they reveal the ruse to Aegeates. Instead of directing his anger at the instigator of the bedtrick, Aegeates has the slaves crucified. Euclia's tongue is cut out, and she is thrown outside without food, falling prey to ravenous dogs (*Passio* 22). We are told that this display of cruelty was due to his desire to protect Maximilla's reputation. When his attempts to be reconciled with his wife fail, including an offer to forgive her if she has been unfaithful,[31] Aegeates has Andrew thrown into prison, where Maximilla continues to visit him. At a later time, Aegeates suddenly remembers Andrew and gives his wife an ultimatum: either she resumes sexual relations with him or she will witness the execution of her "lover" Andrew.[32] At Andrew's insistence she rejects the ultimatum. The text reaches its "happy ending"

with the apostle being martyred and Maximilla separating from Aegeates, who throws himself to his death from a great height.

Much in this narrative is entirely conventional within the genre of the Apocryphal Acts, including the focus on the "women's quarters" and the unrelenting concern for chastity.[33] What sets Maximilla apart from such narratives is her deliberate deception of her husband through a sexual charade, a unique form in the apocryphal annals of preserving the faith. How does her behavior deviate from and subvert the ideals of a Christian wife?

MAXIMILLA'S MARITAL DEFIANCE AND THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN WIFE

How far was an orthodox Christian wife allowed to go in arranging marital sexual matters to fit with her religious beliefs, if, for instance, she wanted to remain chaste in the face of her husband's continued, stubborn pursuit of sexual pleasure? Would deception be acceptable in such a scenario? Augustine's *On Lying* includes a denunciation specifically directed at those who are willing to compromise their integrity of mind with lies and deception in order to protect their purity of body: it is better to let the ravisher (*stuprator*) violate the body than inflict pollution on the mind.[34]

Two stories illustrate just how outrageous Maximilla's behavior would have seemed to early (orthodox) Christians and how unique a path this text has traced for its heroine. The Coptic *Life of Evagrius* reports the following event, unattested in any other source.[35] Fleeing from Egypt and an unwanted ordination, Evagrius

> went to Palestine and happened upon a tribune's wife who was possessed by an
> unclean demonic spirit. She would enjoy nothing from all of creation, for the
> demon taught her this practice as though this were the way the angels lived.

Furthermore, she had not gone to her husband's bed for many years. When Apa

Evagrius the man of God encountered her, he returned the woman's heart to

God . . . For she used to repeat some things said by philosophers outside of the

faith without understanding what she was saying, saying things that would have

been wonderful if another person had said them. Evagrius gained her salvation

in the Lord and brought about her reconciliation with her husband in peace.[36]

Like Maximilla, the unnamed woman that Evagrius meets in Palestine is married

to an eminent government official. Like her, she is the recipient of quasi-

philosophical instruction. This instruction (presumably on sexual *enkrateia*) is not *per

se* abominable: it would have been perfectly acceptable coming from the lips of

others—unattached ascetics. Reading almost like a denunciation of Maximilla's

behavior, this story casts its heroine as dim-witted in her parroting of "philosophers"

and possessed by demons in her obstinate endeavor to pursue chastity within

marriage. Stopping short of attributing a bedtrick to the tribune's wife, it is clear how

the author of this enticingly brief vignette would have qualified such an act of

deception. Sexual chastity within marriage and without the husband's consent does

not appear to be a viable route to sanctity for the Christian wife. The resolution

applied to this family feud by Evagrius suggests opposition to Maximilla's

unsanctioned strategies of preserving bodily purity.

Already in the first half of the second century, even before the *AA* was apparently

produced, Justin Martyr (hailing from Palestine and martyred in Rome) delineates the

marital challenges faced by a Christian woman married to a pagan, philandering

husband. As reported in a later quotation by yet another Palestinian, Eusebius of

Caesarea (*Church History* 4.17.2–13),[37] the story that Justin unfolded (2 *Apology* 2)

matches, somewhat uncannily, the events recorded in the *Passio*. Justin tells of an

unnamed woman living with a sexually intemperate man (γυνή τις συνεβίου ἀνδρὶ ἀκολασταίνοντι) in an unspecified location. A recent convert to Christianity, she decides to abandon her previous, equally intemperate lifestyle (ἀκολασταίνουσα καὶ αὐτὴ πρότερον). Repeated admonishments to her husband to join her in following Christ fall on dead ears. Following rumors of particularly licentious behavior during his absence in Alexandria, the wife hands him a bill of divorce. This infuriates him enough to have her denounced to the authorities as a Christian. The wife, apparently having connections in high places, successfully petitions the emperor for postponement of her trial. Unable to harm his powerful wife, the spurned husband vents his anger on her Christian teacher, Ptolemaeus, who is already in prison for spreading the word of Jesus.[38] Ptolemaeus and two other confessors are executed. Nothing more is heard of the Christian matron.

Justin Martyr's account begins with a heretofore well-matched married couple sharing the same lifestyle. The *AA*, too, intimates a harmonious marriage before Maximilla's conversion.[39] No mention of children is made in either text. In both stories the wife's conversion to Christianity leads to a growing rift between the couple. Conciliation is no longer an option. The two wives's high social status and connections prevent their husbands from punishing them directly.[40] Husbandly wrath is instead directed at the wives's Christian teachers, who are both martyred, while the wives themselves are able to tread a fine line between confessing their Christianity and evading martyrdom.

The similarities between the two accounts foreground the crucial difference in how the two wives negotiate their marital problems. Justin's matron expends effort and time to convert her husband, to no avail. On the advice of her (Christian) "people" who still hope for the husband's change of heart, she stays with him for a long time,

"doing violence to herself" (βιαζομένη ἑαυτήν). It is only when his sexual immorality escalates, while in Alexandria, that she finally takes the initiative and divorces him. Her behavior echoes the Pauline model of Christian conduct. The apostle had advised Christians not to divorce their pagan spouses, who can be "sanctified" through their more enlightened partners (1 Cor 7.13–15), but to maintain the union as far as possible.[41]

Maximilla, unlike Justin's protagonist, is singularly disinterested in converting her husband. Consumed by "love" for Andrew, Aegeates becomes an obstacle rather than a spouse to be sanctified. This is why the narrative portrays Aegeates as "the snake"[42] or "the devil in person."[43] From the moment of his return to Patras, when he rushes into Maximilla's bedroom wishing to kiss her and she shrinks saying, "after prayer a woman's mouth should never touch a man's" (*Passio* 14), Aegeates is the outsider, forever to be excluded from salvation.[44] Yet, despite the narrative's claim that Aegeates is the devil, he has no supernatural powers, unlike Simon Magus, the other major apostolic antagonist (in the *Acts of Peter*). Rather, Aegeates is decidedly (and sometimes ridiculously) human. Read "against the grain," from Aegeates's point of view, Maximilla's passionate husband is not only un-devilish but rather possessed of a set of laudable qualities including faithful service to the emperor, love for his wife, forgiveness, and the socially sanctioned desire to protect his household from the incursions of an infiltrator threatening general upheaval.[45]

It is perhaps no surprise that more sympathy for Aegeates than for Maximilla is expressed in the reading of the "Manichaean" *AA* given by Evodius of Uzalis, Augustine's protégé. This rare late antique testimony derives from an anti-Manichaean treatise, written between 420 and 430. The North African bishop cites two different incidents from a version of the *Passio* which does not exactly

correspond to any of our surviving recensions, but which partly coincides with the HS text and crucially includes the bedtrick. Addressing the Manichees's rejection of the Old Testament, Evodius accuses these arch-heretics of accepting the preposterous behavior described in one of their favorite texts:

Pay attention to what is written in the Acts of Leucius, which he wrote under the pseudonym of the apostles. Consider what sort of information you accept on Maximilla, the wife of Aegeates, who, when she did not want to give his conjugal rights to him, even though the Apostle has said: *the husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and like wise the wife to her husband*, she gave her maid-servant named Euclia to her husband. She adorned her, as is written there, with hostile enticements and make-up, and during the night she substituted her as deputy for herself so that he, unknowingly, would sleep with her as if with his wife. There it is written too that when this same Maximilla and Iphidama together went to hear the apostle Andrew, some beautiful boy, whom Leucius wished to be understood as God or at least as an angel, commended them to the apostle Andrew. He then hastened to the palace of Aegeates and, having entered their sleeping room, he feigned a female voice as of Maximilla complaining about the pains of the female sex, and of Iphidama responding to these complaints. When Aegeates heard this conversation, he left in the conviction they were in fact present. What do you say to these stories, I ask you? Why did Maximilla not hesitate to use a most disgraceful enticement of her servant to bind souls to the flesh? And when you believe this boy has lied in such a disgraceful manner, who would believe you when you talk, when, if you lie, you say you imitate the Lord.[46]

It is obvious that Evodius had read, most likely in a Latin translation,[47] a text which included the bedtrick precisely as found in the HS recension. This recension as it has come down to us, however, nowhere features the divine, beautiful boy that enriches the plot with an aural trick to complement and further sanctify the silent, sexual trick Maximilla herself devised. Evodius's now lost source cast Aegeates as twice deceived, both by the voiceless body of Euclia and the disembodied voices simulated by a divine or angelic being. In the HS recension the divine, aural deception has been expunged, but a sole, mysterious reference to a beautiful boy remains: in *Passio* 32 we find a handsome young boy or, probably, slave (παιδαρίσκον εὔμορφον), who secretly opens the prison gate for Maximilla and Iphidama to visit Andrew.[48] The inverse of the other beautiful young slave, Euclia (17: παιδίσκην πάνυ εὔμορφον), this boy, who is never mentioned again, stands as a cipher, pointing to how the text can readily be subverted by later hands, who allocate different significations to its characters.[49]

Evodius's strident criticism of the *AA*'s "Manichaean" bedtrick surely represents the shock many mainstream Christians would have felt at the thought of a wife turning her husband into an unwitting adulterer.[50] In the Greek-speaking world, two fourth-century ecclesiastics associate the *AA* with heresy but with no explicit reference to any part of its plot.[51] Whether the bedtrick vignette was included in the versions they had in mind cannot be known, but there is no doubt regarding the clear dissonance between the mainstream views on marriage held by most late antique Christians and the marital defiance articulated by Maximilla in the HS recension.

This dissonance can also be illustrated by a later text, a hagiography which includes a rare lexical allusion to the *Passio* (specifically to the HS recension), but whose attitude towards married couples is the opposite of Maximilla's defiance. First,

a few words about the hitherto unnoticed allusion. The HS recension presents a unique version of Andrew's arrest, unattested in all other textual witnesses. In this text, upon Andrew's arrest a slave wraps around the apostle's neck "the towel that the blessed one used to wear over his shoulder" (*Passio* 26: ᾧ ἐχρῆτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου ὁ μακάριος σαβάνιον).[52] This strange detail is probably related to the fact that at earlier moments in the story (no longer preserved in the HS manuscripts) Andrew would have warded off demons that afflicted people in the baths: this happens on three different occasions in Gregory's *Epitome* (5, 23, and 27), in the last of which Andrew himself is said to have frequented the baths.[53] The word translated as "towel," σαβάνιον, is not attested anywhere else in ancient literature, but appears nine times in late antique papyri.[54]

This unique version of Andrew's arrest and its somewhat surprising reference to the towel probably influenced a later Syrian text, the *Life of Symeon the Stylite the Younger*, written in a monastic context at the end of the sixth / beginning of the seventh century. Here, Symeon announces to his "brothers" that he had a vision, according to which a man wearing a towel over his shoulder (110: σάβανον ἐπιφερόμενον ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου αὐτοῦ) would come and seek his help on account of a demon that had fallen upon him while he was in the baths.[55] The following day the man indeed appears bearing the "sign" of the towel on his shoulder (τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σαβάνου ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου αὐτοῦ). Symeon expels the demon, and the man is free from then on to enjoy the baths without being harmed.

The monastic author responsible for compiling the ascetic *Life* had apparently read the *AA* in a recension identical or very close to the HS. Yet this monastic text neither presents any equivalent of Maximilla and her bedtrick nor pursues the stridently anti-marital agenda of the *AA*. Twice in the *Life* Symeon convinces unmarried women to

remain virgins,[56] yet his involvement in the life of married couples always aims at reconciliation, including the restoration of marital sexual relations. Thus, Symeon reconciles a childless woman to her husband, who had banished her, and announces that they will soon have a child (118). He "un-binds" a Constantinopolitan silentiary who had recently married and upon whom the devil had inflicted impotence (151). He heals the engorged genitals of a man whom a demon had tricked by imitating the voice of his wife (167). And he expels a demon from another married man who had been afflicted with visions of the embraces of multiple women (229: ἰδὼν ὡς γυναῖκας συμπλακείσας αὐτῷ).[57] Symeon's actions recall the Coptic *Life of Evagrius* (above), both texts highlighting their protagonist's intervention to save marriages blighted by deceitful demons.

None of the Christian authors examined would approve of deceiving one's spouse in sexual matters. Evodius, the only ancient source to mention the bedtrick, expresses vociferous opposition to Maximilla's stratagem. How, then, is this act of deception legitimized and sanctified? And on what literary history does the strategy of justification rely?

AN UN-CLASSICAL BEDTRICK

In the cosmic drama the *Passio* stages around the conjugal bed of Aegeates and Maximilla, the representation of the passionate husband is tinged with hues from both the buffoonish cuckolds of theatrical mime (who are tricked by their lusty wives) and the menacing suitors pursuing the bold and noble heroines of the Greek novels.[58] Like a novelistic heroine, Maximilla has to fend off her "false" husband / suitor in order to achieve union with her true (inner) husband, as Andrew himself puts it (*Passio* 16, cited above). Yet an almost literal echo of Achilles Tatius's novel in the *Passio* aligns

Maximilla not with the novelistic heroine, Leucippe, but with her antagonist, the seductress Melite who is married to another man and yet stubbornly pursues sex with Clitophon. Visiting him in prison, Melite kisses Clitophon's hands and places them on her eyes and heart—a prelude to the imminent copulation. When Maximilla visits the imprisoned Andrew, she kisses his hands and places them on her eyes solely.[59]

The very association, even through a single gesture, of Maximilla with the over-erotic Melite hints at a transgressive eroticism, which is nowhere more obvious than in the engineering of a bedtrick. In the surviving corpus of Greek novels there is, in fact, only one bedtrick, planned but not consummated, and even then it is not associated with the "positive" protagonists but rather with a character who is already tainted by depravity. In Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* (Syria, fourth century), the novel's noble protagonists express misgivings when advised to resort to deception vis-à-vis persistent suitors.[60] Demainete, who is in love with her stepson, Cnemon, has no such qualms. The Phaedra-like stepmother, already rejected by Cnemon, recruits her slave Thisbe, who pretends to arrange for Demainete to replace Cnemon's girlfriend, the flute-girl Arsinoe, in his bed on a night when he has been out drinking heavily.[61] Thisbe instead informs Demainete's husband, who catches her in the darkened room, ready to receive his own son in bed.[62]

Heliodorus's use of the bedtrick is indicative of the motifs associated with female-engineered bedtricks in Greek myth and literature. Such stories usually involve a free (and likely elite) woman who conceives an irresistible, transgressive desire,[63] often for a close relative, and relies on the help of female slaves, sometimes even impersonating a slave herself, in order to satisfy that desire. Parthenius's *Erôtika Pathêmata* (a Hellenistic collection of short narratives on ill-starred affairs) reports two bedtricks.[64] In the first one (16), a Trojan noblewoman falls in love with a Greek

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who came to Troy on an embassy to ask for the return of Helen. She convinces his

hosts to place her in his bed, telling him she is one of the king's concubines. In the

immediately following story (17), the deranged personality of Corinth's tyrant,

Periander, is attributed to the bedtrick by which his own mother deceived him into

committing prolonged incest. She had told him a married woman was longing for

him, and convinced him to receive this woman in his bed in complete darkness and

without exchanging a word. When Periander falls in love with the mystery woman, he

commands a slave to hide a lamp inside his chamber.[65] Seeing that he has been

sleeping with his own mother, he tries to kill her and turns into an unhinged tyrant.

The Greek myth of Myrrha and Cinyras, best known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

(Roman epic, first century), couples the themes of incest and reliance on slave

assistants. Myrrha is infatuated with her own father and has her nurse place her in his

bed when he is drunk, telling him she is a young neighbor in love with him (*Met.*

10.298–502).[66] In a Greek source, the nurse uses clothing to disguise Myrrha

(Antoninus Liberalis 34.3), while in another Greek version the girl disguises herself

specifically as a slave (Scholia in Theocritum 1.109a: στολιζομένη καὶ

συναναμιγνυμένη ὡς θεράπαινα).[67]

Maximilla's bedtrick reverses the patterns associated with these "Greek" bedtricks.

The Christian heroine does not desire to place herself, illegitimately, into a beloved's

bed but rather to stay away from the bed with which she is legitimately affiliated. She

does not impersonate a slave. Instead, she makes her slave impersonate herself. Were

these deliberate subversions of "classical" bedtricks designed solely to provide

entertaining and titillating moments for the *Passio*'s readers?[68] Maximilla's planned

and consummated bedtrick can hardly draw authority or legitimacy from its

association with the bedtricks of Greek myths and novels. Nestling the narrative

within a historical continuum harking back to the Bible enables the apocryphal bedtrick to acquire the authority of tradition and the weight of association.

THE BIBLICAL BEDROCK OF AN APOCRYPHAL BEDTRICK

The book of Genesis provides a rich palate of bedtricks, each with its own setting and strategy.[69] Aside from Laban's placing the "wrong" daughter in Jacob's marital bed, a ruse realized only at dawn (Gen 29, on which see below), Genesis includes two tragicomic stories of consummated sexual deception, both engineered by females.[70] In the first one, Lot's daughters, thinking that they and their father are the only survivors of universal destruction, ply him with wine so that they can take turns sleeping with him, in a cave, in order to conceive (Gen 19.33–35). In the second, Judah's unfortunate daughter-in-law, Tamar, having been denied his third son in marriage after the first two died leaving her childless, disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces him at a roadside (Gen 38). Unlike the female protagonists of Greek narratives, what all three women (Lot's daughters and Tamar) desire is not a man, but progeny. Tamar even demands pledges from her unwitting "client" to serve as evidence of paternity. Later exegesis, both rabbinic and Christian, rewarded the women for their unrelenting pursuit of procreation.[71] A late antique midrash sanctifies Tamar's bedtrick to the extent of adding the "angel in charge of desire" sent by God to convince Judah to have intercourse with his disguised daughter-in-law (Genesis Rabbah 85.18).[72]

Maximilla does not have children nor evinces desire to have any. Such a stance strikingly diverges from the daughter-wife-mother cycle to which women were expected to submit. Yet, even after twelve years of marriage (perhaps a significant number) Aegeates is represented as still hopeful of having children—an additional

proof of marital bliss.[73] In fact, Euclia represents Aegeates's only viable, albeit

deluded, path to fatherhood. Her demands for money, privileges, and manumission

indicate not only greed but likely pregnancy as well.[74] Biblical echoes appear

unmistakable. In placing a bonded sex partner in the master's bed, Maximilla's action

is made to imitate the strategies applied by the barren biblical matriarchs, Sarah and

Rachel, who initiated sex between their husbands and slave maids. Like Hagar—

Sarah's slave who started to despise her mistress and put on airs when she knew she

was pregnant (Gen 16.4)—Euclia could be setting the stage for her unborn child to

become the sole heir of her master.[75] Like Hagar, her plan will not come to fruition.

On the eighth month of the affair (considered in ancient medicine a particularly

inauspicious month for pregnancy)[76] Euclia is tortured and killed. Her utterly

humiliating end, to be eaten by dogs, recalls yet another biblical trickster: Jezebel,

who is also depicted as eaten by dogs (2 Kgs 9.30–37).[77]

The biblical model of reproductive surrogacy is not what legitimizes Maximilla's

stratagem in the *Passio*.[78] Maximilla's act is conceived to extinguish and not to

enhance the household's survival through childbirth.[79] In the Vatican manuscript (5 =

Passio 37), Andrew's speech to Maximilla insists that her embracing sexual

abstention is instrumental in atoning for the fall and the "original sin" of sexual

intercourse. Andrew's double portrayal of himself as the new Adam, and Maximilla

as the new Eve, both borders on heresy (*Christ* is the new Adam; 1 Cor 15.22) and

fails to explain the tortuous road that the *Passio*'s protagonists traverse either to

salvation or perdition. The HS recension curtails this part of the speech and eliminates

a later reference to the "works of Cain" (*Passio* 40).[80] Rather than promote a heroic

dyad (Andrew and Maximilla as a new Adam and Eve), this version consistently deals

in triangles: Maximilla and Euclia are alternate partners to Aegeates; Euclia and

Iphidama are the, respectively, "bad" and "good" slaves of Maximilla; Andrew is the third party in Maximilla and Aegeates's marriage; two brothers, Aegeates and Stratocles, are driven apart by the apostle.[81] By limiting the focus on Adam and Eve, the HS engages in a more subtle manner with the Hebrew Bible and in particular with the Genesis bedtrick which sets in motion successive series of revolving triangles.

In the network of narratives that the book of Genesis unfolds around the matriarch Rachel, the most dramatic moment takes place in her absence. As Genesis 29 gathers pace, from the kiss of recognition that the newcomer Jacob offers his newly discovered relative Rachel, through the contract of hospitality-labor between Jacob and his uncle, Laban, Rachel's father, to the communal wedding banquet, the first climax is reached without any mention of the intended bride's thoughts or actions:

> Evening came.
>
> He took Leah his daughter and brought her to him and he came unto her.
>
> Laban gave Zilpha, his maidservant, to Leah his daughter as a maidservant.
>
> And morning came.
>
> And behold it is Leah.[82]

Even though the bedtrick engineered by Laban in Genesis 29 would also be defended by Augustine with reference to the increased progeny in which it resulted,[83] procreation was not on Laban's mind when he sent Leah instead of Rachel to Jacob's bed. This bedtrick was not designed as a procreative act. Laban aimed at maintaining local customs and retaining a valuable source of free labor, namely Jacob. What this bedtrick produces is narrative delay, prolonging Jacob's desire for the woman he had long craved. This is the closest parallel to what Maximilla's bedtrick achieves. The planting of Euclia in Aegeates's bed is a strategy of deferral: it introduces delay as well as excitement in the narrative and maintains the stability of Maximilla's

household by keeping her husband in the dark, both literally and metaphorically, night after night.

Genesis's Rachel, blighted with infertility, is obsessed with having children.[84] Leah conceives and gives birth to one child after another. Each time she hopes that the production of a son will turn Jacob's affections towards her. Each time, she is disappointed. Jacob remains attached to barren Rachel, just as Aegeates remains attached to Maximilla in spite of the couple's childlessness. Rachel will only bear a son on the twelfth year, after both she and Leah have sent their slave maids, Bilhah and Zilpah respectively, to Jacob's bed for the production of yet more sons.[85] The original triangle of Jacob-Leah-Rachel thus gives rise to a further two triangles (Jacob-Rachel-Bilhah; Jacob-Leah-Zilpah).

In Hellenistic times, the switch of brides in Genesis 29 likely provided inspiration for yet another bedtrick engineered by a father, who tricks his own sibling. The so-called "Tobiad romance," a historical novel summarized by Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* (12.154–236), relates stories concerning a wealthy Jewish family that traded and collected taxes between Judah and Samaria in the third century <sc>B.C.E.<sc>[86] The heroes of this romance are Joseph and Hyrcanus, a father-son duo distinguished by their wit and resourcefulness. Hyrcanus, who makes his fortune by aligning himself with the Ptolemaic king in Egypt and whose older half-brothers plot to have him murdered, specifically recalls the biblical Joseph, Rachel's son.[87] His parents's marriage harks back to the bridal switch between Rachel and Leah. This is Josephus's account in full:

> On one occasion when Joseph made the journey to Alexandria, he was accompanied by his brother Solymius, who had brought his daughter along with him. She had come of age, and he hoped to arrange a marriage for her to one of

the leading Jews of the city. While Joseph was dining with the king, a beautiful

dancing girl entered the banquet hall, and Joseph was immediately smitten.

Since Jews are forbidden by law to have relations with foreign women, Joseph

told his brother of his predicament and entreated him to help him, not only by

concealing his sin (συγκρύψαντα τὸ ἁμάρτημα) but also by arranging for an

opportunity for him to satisfy his desire. His brother readily agreed to help him,

but he dressed his own daughter in beautiful clothes and brought her by night to

sleep with him. Joseph, for his part, was too drunk to recognize her and slept

with his brother's daughter. After this had happened a number of times, he fell

even more madly in love with her. He told his brother that he was endangering

his life by falling in love with a dancing girl, whom the king might not be

willing to give up to him. His brother then urged him to be anxious no longer,

but rather to take joy in this woman whom he loved without fear and to take her

as his wife. He told Joseph the truth: he had chosen to bring his own daughter

into disgrace rather than allow him to come to shame (ὡς ἕλοιτο μᾶλλον τὴν

ἰδίαν ὑβρίσαι θυγατέρα ἢ περιιδεῖν ἐκεῖνον ἐν αἰσχύνῃ γενόμενον). Joseph then

praised him for his devotion, and agreed to marry his daughter, by whom he

fathered Hyrcanus.[88]

While the name of the duped protagonist and the subsequent adventures of his son

Hyrcanus clearly recall the biblical Joseph, this bedtrick also evokes the predominant

pattern of female-engineered bedtricks in Greek myth and literature. Solymius's

daughter is a free- and high-born woman who gets disguised as a slave and is placed

in the bed of a close relative. Yet what motivates the switch is neither a transgressive

sexual desire on her part nor, as in the other bedtricks of Genesis, a yearning for

offspring.[89] The illicit sexual passion typical of the "Greek" bedtricks is here

attributed to the duped Joseph, who desires a woman outside his faith and is thus in danger of committing an "error" or "sin" (12.187: τὸ ἁμάρτημα).

Josephus's language here looks forward to the Christian vocabulary regarding moral transgression and the violation of God's law. Would Joseph's "lapse" with the foreign dancing girl only contravene stipulations against exogamy or does it represent a threat to his soul? Scholars have argued that at stake in this Jewish "romance" is the ethnic purity of the Jewish nation, not the moral integrity of its heroes.[90] Yet Solymius's stratagem is presented as admirable precisely because it implies moral superiority. As he himself says, Solymius was willing to subject his own daughter to disgraceful treatment (ὑβρίσαι) in order not to see his brother come into shame (ἐν αἰσχύνῃ γενόμενον). The unnamed daughter's sacrifice at the altar of brotherly affection is presented as amounting to a noble act of *self*-sacrifice. This morally uplifting bedtrick is a precursor of Maximilla's stratagem: the Christian wife also sacrifices an extension of herself, her slave, seeking to preserve a new law of "endogamy" which demands that she wed her true, inner husband and scorn her visible husband as an outsider and an enemy.

In late antiquity, rabbinic texts continue to probe the mechanics of the biblical bridal switch and increasingly attribute Rachel's complicity in the trick to a sense of loyalty to her sibling—reminiscent of Solymius's devotion to Joseph. Rabbinic speculations regarding the absence of sounds from the biblical bridal chamber reinstated Rachel as the active agent responsible for Jacob's apparent "deafness." In the Babylonian Talmud's version of Genesis 29 (b. B. Bat 123a), Jacob proposes marriage directly to Rachel, contrary to local protocol.[91] Rachel warns him of paternal guile, specifically the intended switch of brides. Jacob assures her of his own deceptive talent and equips her with tokens (*simanin*) intending to ascertain the

identity of the body in the bed.[92] As Leah is being led into the bridal chamber Rachel experiences a change of heart. She passes the tokens to Leah so as not to shame her sister and the wedding night goes ahead peacefully. In Genesis Rabbah, a running commentary on the biblical text whose compilation is generally thought to have been completed in the fifth century <sc>C.E.<sc>,[93] Rachel is said to have contributed to the successful consummation of the bedtrick only to the extent that she kept silent about it (Gen. Rab. 73.4).

Remarkably, in another rabbinic midrash, hailing from late antique Palestine, Rachel provides her own version of the story in an autobiographical account that is unprecedented in rabbinic annals.[94] In her rendering, Rachel not only has a strikingly active role in the successful consummation of the bedtrick, but also considers this sexual masquerade a legitimate path to sanctity and to (national) salvation.

The text which incorporates this vignette, Lamentations Rabbah (henceforth Lam. Rab.), is a complex compilation, a pastiche of widely differing rabbinic views as to why (biblical) Israel was condemned to death and destruction. In its present form, likely dating to the fifth century <sc>C.E.<sc>,[95] it consists of two distinct parts, an inner-midrashic "introductory" homiletic containing 34 proems or "prefaces" (*petichtot*), and five "chapters" corresponding to the divisions of the biblical text.[96] By far the longest and the most complex section is Proem 24, a dramatic tour-de-force marshaling an array of biblical protagonists (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and even the personified Torah and the Alphabet), each patriarch pleading his case in an effort to kindle divine mercy on the dispossessed people of Israel.[97] As each confrontation with God fails dismally to goad him to pity Israel, biblical Rachel leaps in front of God and shares with him her version of what really happened on the fateful night that

was originally destined to be *her* wedding night. What sways God at the end of the Proem is a bedroom scene based on the biblical bedtrick of Genesis 29:

> At that moment Rachel leapt in front of the One Above and said: "Lord of the Universe, it is known to you that Jacob your servant loved me very much and toiled for me for seven years in my father's house and that when these seven years were complete my father planned to substitute my sister for me as a wife. I knew his plan and therefore was cast into a dilemma. I informed my husband [of my father's plot] and gave him a sign to distinguish between me and my sister. But later I had a change of heart. I suppressed my desire [for Jacob] and conceived pity for my sister's shame.
>
> In the evening, when my sister was substituted for myself, I disclosed to my sister the signs I had given to my husband so that he would believe her to be me. I even crawled under their bed. When he talked to her she maintained her silence while I answered him lest he recognized her voice. I did her kindness. Nor was I envious of her or exposed her shame. And if I, a mere mortal, dust and ashes, overcame my envy and did not shame my sister, why should You, the merciful King, be jealous of idolatry that has no substance and exile my children to be put to death by the sword and to become a prey to their enemies?" And immediately the mercy of the Lord was stirred and He said: "For you, Rachel, I will restore Israel to her place." For it was said (Jer. 31.15): *A voice is heard in Rā'mah ... Rachel is weeping for her children.*[98]

In this extraordinary exegetical vignette Rachel becomes a spokeswoman for all Israel not through personal proof of fertility, the stamp of the ideal wife/mother, but through a bedtrick that provides evidence of sibling affection.[99] This rabbinic Rachel not only colludes with her sister against the dominant males of the clan, but also lends

the ultimate stamp of legitimacy to surrogate sex through her vocal presence under the bed—a striking manner in which to condone the bedtrick that would condemn her to a prolonged virginity she clearly never desired.

Rachel forges her own, unmediated, erotic relationship with the divine—a relationship that does not depend on her commitment to giving birth.[100] Like Maximilla, Rachel engages the world and the divine through an erotic ordeal and demonstrates that duplicity is, paradoxically, the right moral approach.[101] Maximilla's recasting of the crafty and remarkably active heroines of the Greek novels—a result of the religious re-signification of novelistic plots in the apostolic Apocrypha—has already been discussed.[102] Rabbinic Rachel, boldly proclaiming her sexual desire for Jacob—a desire she had to suppress in order to protect her sister—emerges as an unexpected Jewish response to both the paradigm of the novelistic heroine and the Christian appropriation of the novel. As if it were a romantic Greek novel,[103] the midrash imagines a young couple, equally crafty, equally in love, planning to trick the world in order to be together against all odds.[104] Postponement is, however, firmly ingrained in novelistic plots. Jacob and Rachel will have to wait. Her sister's shame and (in the later retelling of the story) national salvation will have to come first. Yet, unlike Maximilla, Rachel does not renounce sexuality for all eternity: she wistfully looks forward to the time when her boldly stated desire will finally be consummated and Jacob will be her husband also.

CONCLUSIONS

Apostolic apocrypha employ strategies reminiscent of midrash in order to enrich and expand upon the narrative world of the Gospels and to forge links between the biblical past and historical present.[105] Such texts are always subject to revision,

whether by expansion, subversion, or elimination of offending passages. The *AA* that

Evodius read included two tricks designed to deceive Aegeates; only one of these has

survived to this day, and that in only one of the many recensions of the *AA*. The

suggestion that a divine or angelic being could be responsible for feigning a

conversation about the pains of the female sex (*De fide c. Manich.* 38, cited above)

was apparently unacceptable even to the community that preserved Maximilla's

bedtrick in what is now the HS recension.[106]

As transmitted in this unique recension, the *AA*'s bedtrick patently subverts both

the model of the ideal Christian wife and the taint of sexual depravity that attaches to

mythical and novelistic female bedtricks. While it evokes the biblical model of

reproductive surrogacy, it also undermines the ideology of procreation that drives

most of the sanctioned sexual masquerades in the book of Genesis. The bridal switch

in Genesis 29 provides the closest parallel for Maximilla's strategy of deferral. In

Hellenistic times, as seen in the "Tobiad romance," this bedtrick is reworked into an

act of self-sacrifice and moral righteousness. In late antique midrash, biblical

amplification and novelistic *mythopoiesis* attribute to Rachel not only complicity but

committed agency in the execution of the bedtrick. While rabbinic midrash assumes

hues reminiscent of the Greek novel and its bold, eloquent heroines, the HS text uses

the same narrative blocks to transmit an entirely different message, one of complete

sexual abstention, even within marriage and without the husband's approval.[107] Both

rabbinic Rachel and apocryphal Maximilla, however, produce a language that affirms

the victory of feminine cunning in a battle with cosmic implications.

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[1] Wendy Doniger, *Bedtrick. Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[2] Translations in this article will be from Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals*, SBL: Texts and Translations 33, Christian Apocrypha Series 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). Quotations of the original text will be from the most complete edition and study: Jean-Marc Prieur, *Acta Andreae* CCA 5 and 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989).

[3] See, e.g., Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, I.413–14; MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 59, dates it to no later than 200 <sc>C.E.<sc> on the basis of the influence it exerted on the *Acts of Thomas*. For Valentinian traces in the "primitive" text that help to date it to second half of the second century, see the overview of Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "The *Acts of Andrew*. A New Perspective on the Primitive Text," *Cuadernos de Filologia Clásica. Estudios griegos e indoeuropeos* 20 (2010): 245–59, at 256–57.

[4] Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, I.407–14 supports Alexandria, but also considers Syria likely on account of the *AA*'s proximity to Tatian's encratite theology and the fact that the

Acts of Thomas seems to rely on the *AA*. MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 59, tentatively suggests Alexandria but admits other places are also likely. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M.R. James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 235, suggests Syria or Egypt. Attila Jakab, "Les Actes d'André et le christianisme alexandrin," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, ed. Jan Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 127–39, rejects Alexandria and tentatively puts forward Syria-Palestine; Jan Bremmer, "Man, Magic, and Martyrdom in the *Acts of Andrew*," in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, 15–34, argues for Bithynia.

[5] The most important advocate for its inclusion is MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*; the point is argued extensively in his Introduction. This opinion, however, is not shared widely; *contra* see Prieur, *Acta Andreae*; Anthony Hilhorst and Pieter Lalleman, "The Acts of Andrew and Matthias: Is it Part of the Original Acts of Andrew?," in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, 1–14.

[6] See Roig Lanzillotta, "The *Acts of Andrew*," 250. This fluidity and the independent textual life of the apostle's martyrdom are by no means exceptional in the genre of the Apocryphal Acts; see Jan Bremmer, "The Apocryphal Acts (of the Apostles): Authors, Place, Time and Readership," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, ed. Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 149–70.

[7] For the movement of manuscripts from Jerusalem (esp. the monastery of St. Sabas) to the Sinai, starting in the eighth century, as a result of traveling, book-carrying monks, see Claudia Rapp, "From the Holy City to the Holy Mountain: The Movement of Monks and Manuscripts to the Sinai," in *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Journeys, Destinations, Experiences across Times and Cultures: Proceedings of the Conference*

held in Jerusalem, 5th to 7th December 2017, eds. Falko Daim et al.; Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident 19 (Heidelberg: Propylaeum, 2020), 59–73.

[8] Gregory, *Epitome* 35: *Magna enim indignatione succensus erat contra apostolum, eo quod Maximilla, uxor eius, post acceptum salutis verbum non ei coniugebatur* (edited in Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 649).

[9] These are a *Vita* of Andrew (*PG* 120.216–60 = *BHG* 102) written by Epiphanius, a monk in the monastery of Callistratus in Constantinople, and a panegyric of Andrew, usually referred to as *Laudatio* (= *BHG* 100) written by Nicetas the Paphlagonian and largely relying on the same source(s). The latter text was edited by Maximilian Bonnet, *Acta Andreae cum laudatione contexta et Martyrium Andreae Graece: Passio Andreae Latine* (Supplementum codicis apocryphi 2. Paris: G. Klincksieck, 1895); Reprint of *Analecta Bollandiana* 13 (1894): 309–78.

[10] See Tamás Adamik, "Eroticism in the *Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli* of Gregory of Tours" in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, 35–46, at 45–46, who makes this argument in relation to Gregory's *Epitome*.

[11] See the edition, translation, and commentary by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae Apocrypha. A New Perspective on the Nature, Intention and Significance of the Primitive Text* (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 2007).

[12] Typical of the confusion are, e.g., Laura Nasrallah, "'She Became What the Words Signified': The Greek Acts of Andrew's Construction of the Reader-Disciple," in *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, ed. François Bovon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 233–58 and Jennifer Eyl, "Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles," in *The Oxford Handbook of New Testament, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Benjamin Dunning (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 387–404.

[13] See, e.g., David Konstan, "Acts of Love: A Narrative Pattern in the Apocryphal Acts," *JECS* 6 (1998): 15–36, at 33.

[14] See, e.g., M. Hirschberger, "Marriages Spoiled: The Deconstruction of Novel Discourse in Early Christian Novel Narratives," in *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*, eds. Marília Futre Pinheiro, Judith Perkins, and Richard Pervo, Ancient Narrative Supplementum 16 (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 153–67.

[15] See J. K. Elliott, "The Apocryphal Acts and the Ancient Novel: Literary Parallels to Early Non-Canonical Christian Writings," *The Expository Times* (2018): 495–503; cf. Christine M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and below.

[16] Elizabeth A. Clark. *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 67; Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[17] For a useful summary of the text see Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction*, trans. Brian McNiel (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 113–40.

[18] For Maximilla's superior social status and wealth see *Passio* 24: "her pedigree far outstripped his" and 36: her parents gave her to him "without regard to wealth, heredity, or reputation" (translations from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 355 and 371 respectively; Greek text in Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 471 and 485 respectively).

[19] Gregory's *Epitome* 30; Epiphanius's *Life of Andrew* 244D-245B; *Laudatio* 33 and 38. Although this episode does not survive in the Greek accounts of the *Passio*, which

start at a later point in the story, it is alluded to in the scene of Andrew's arrest (26), where Aegeates recognizes the Apostle as the one who had healed his wife.

[20] See Antigone Samellas, "Conversion as an Erotic Experience in the East of Late Antiquity," *Passions in Context* 3 (2012): 1–42, for the eroticism of accessing religious truth, including in the *AA*.

[21] On the bedroom as a locus of "spiritual fertility," Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 134. On how the *Passio* subverts the marital ethics of classical literature, especially in relation to the intimacy of the bedroom, Andrew Jacobs, "'Her own Proper Kinship': Marriage, Class and Women in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles," in *A Feminist Companion to the New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 18–46.

[22] Stratocles speaks of this insemination at a later point, when Andrew is in prison: "I received the seeds of the words of salvation while you were my sower" (Τὰ μὲν σπέρματα τῶν σωτηρίων λόγων δέδεγμαι, σοῦ ὄντος μοι τοῦ σπορέως) (*Passio* 44 [Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 497; translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 383.]).

[23] E.g. (Andrew speaking to Stratocles): "Bring to birth the child you are carrying and do not give yourself over to labor pains alone. I am no novice in midwifery or divination." (Ἀποκύησον δὲ τέκνον ὃ ἔχεις, καὶ μὴ μόνον ὠδῖσιν σεαυτὸν παραδίδου. Οὔκ εἰμι ἀμύητος μαιευτικῆς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μαντικῆς) (*Passio* 7 [Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 451; translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 335.]).

[24] On the Platonic echoes, see Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Cf. Caroline Schroeder, "The Erotic Asceticism of the Passion of Andrew: The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew, the Greek Novel and Platonic Philosophy," in Levine, *A*

Feminist Companion, 47–59; Anna Rebecca Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation. Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 167; Alicia Myers, *Blessed Among Women? Mothers and Motherhood in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 138–40.

[25] The *Passio* thus turns Aegeates into the comical "cuckold" of an adultery mime; for further echoes of this poorly attested genre, see Saundra Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom: The Adultery Type-Scene and the *Acts of Andrew*," in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, eds. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, Biblical Interpretation Series 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 267–311.

[26] *Passio* 16. Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463. Translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 347.

[27] Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463. MacDonald's translation (*Acts of Andrew*, 347) has been altered to reflect the present tense. It should be noted that the narrative chooses to use a more neutral verb (σκέπτομαι) instead of, e.g., μηχανῶμαι, "to scheme, to plot."

[28] MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 347 translates *Passio* 17.8–9 (Ὡς γὰρ ἔθος ἐστὶ γυναικὶ εὐτρεπίζεσθαι τὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου εὐτρεπίσματα [Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463]) as "Just as a woman customarily adorns herself to look like her rival," but this is not warranted by the masculine τοῦ ἐναντίου, which clearly refers to the devil. The translation by Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 462 ("Ainsi qu'il est d'usage pour une femme de revêtir les apprêts de l'ennemi") is more accurate.

[29] No pregnancy is mentioned as such in the text, but see below for indications that Euclia might be pregnant.

[30] Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 465. Translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 349.

[31] This would be in return for her turning a blind eye to his "foolishness"—suggesting previous infidelities. For the sexual symmetry between novelistic couples, see David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[32] For Andrew as Maximilla's "lover," see, e.g., Aegeates's words at *Passio* 36: "I will torment you indirectly, through the one you love more than me." (δι' ἐκείνου δὲ ὃν μάλιστα ἐμοῦ στέργεις πλέον ἀνιάσω σε). (Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 487. Translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 371.).

[33] See Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy. Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts*, Studies in Women and Religion 23 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987). Konstan, "Acts of Love" makes the important point that the Apostles of the Apocryphal Acts only destroy those bonds of affection that involve sex.

[34] *De mendacio* 10 (CSEL 41.427): *Pudicitia quippe corporis, quia multum honorabili persona videtur occurrere, et pro se flagitare mendacium, ut si stuprator irruat qui possit mendacio devitari, sine dubitatione mentiendum sit: facile responderi potest, nullam esse pudicitiam corporis, nisi ab integritate animi pendeat.*

[35] At this point the Coptic *Life* diverges significantly from its Greek equivalent in *Lausiac History* 38. Both works are attributed to the same author, Palladius (end of fourth century).

[36] *Life of Evagrius* 27. Translation from Tim Vivian, *Four Desert Fathers. Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt, and Macarius of Alexandria. Coptic Texts Relating to*

the Lausiac History of Palladius (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 87–88.

[37] The relevant chapter from Justin Martyr is almost entirely missing in the single manuscript which transmits his writings (*Parisinus Gr.* 450); see Runar Thorsteinsson, "The Literary Genre and Purpose of Justin's 'Second Apology': A Critical Review with Insights from Ancient Epistolography," *HTR* 105 (2012): 91–114, at 93. The Greek text cited here is from Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 38.

[38] On the possible identity of this Ptolemaeus, either as the author of a letter to Flora or as a Valentinian, see Angela Standhartinger, "Ptolemaeus und Justin zur Autorität der Schrift," in *Ein neues Geschlecht? Entwicklung des frühchristlichen Selbstbewusstseins*, ed. Markus Lang (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2013), 122–49, at 122–23 (without a decision).

[39] See above, for Aegeates threatening to commit suicide by his wife's bedside.

[40] On Maxmilla's status and wealth, cf. n. 18, esp. *Passio* 24, where it is explicitly stated that Aegeates "did not dare commit any impropriety against the blessed woman, for her pedigree far outstripped his" (Οὐ γὰρ ἐτόλμα τι τῶν μὴ προσηκόντων πρὸς τὴν μακαρῖτιν διαπράξασθαι, πολλῷ αὐτοῦ διασημοτάτην τοῦ γένους ἕνεκεν ὑπάρχουσαν). (Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 471. Translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 371.).

[41] See further Robert Grant, "A Woman of Rome: The Matron in Justin, 2 *Apology* 2.1–9," *CH* 54 (1985): 461–72, at 465–66.

[42] See, e.g., *Passio* 16: "Aegeates, the insolent and hostile snake" (τὸν Αἰγεάτην ὑβριστὴν καὶ ἀντίδικον ὄφιν). (Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463. Translation from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 345.).

[43] See Monika Pesthy, "Aegeates, the Devil in Person," in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, 47–55.

[44] Translation of *Passio* 14 from MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 343. See Michael Penn, "Ritual Kissing, Heresy and the Emergence of Early Christian Orthodoxy," *JEH* 54 (2003): 625–40, at 638–40, for Jewish and early Christian texts, including the *Passio*, using ritual kissing to create a kissable in-group (Maximilla kisses Andrew's hands; see below, n. 59) and an un-kissable out-group (in this case, the devilish Aegeates).

[45] Cf. Pesthy, "Aegeates," 54–55.

[46] *De fide c. Manich.* 38. Translation from Aäron Vanspauwen, "The Anti-Manichaean Treatise *De fide contra Manichaeos*, Attributed to Evodius of Uzalis: Critical Edition and Translation," *Sacris Erudiri* 57 (2018): 7–115, at 87–89.

[47] Evodius's Latin renders Aegeates as *Egetes* and Iphidama as *Ifidama*—the former is a rather strong indication that he did not have access to the Greek text. Whether the translation read by Evodius would have been the same that Gregory of Tours would excerpt more than a century later cannot be known. On the relatively easy availability of Greek-into-Latin translations in both east and west in the fourth and early fifth centuries, see Claudia Rapp, "Hagiography and Monastic Literature between Greek East and Latin West in Late Antiquity," in *Cristianità d'Occidente e Cristianità d'Oriente (secoli VI–XI)*, Settimane di studio della Fondazione Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo (Spoleto: Presso la Sede della Fondazione, 2004), 1221–80.

[48] Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 482, and MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 366–67 both place the quotation from Evodius after *Passio* 32, suggesting that the HS recension expunged the episode of Aegeates's aural deception, which would have appeared at this point in an earlier version.

[49] For the text of *Passio* 17: Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463. Ronald Charles, *The Silencing of Slaves in Early Jewish and Christian Texts* (London: Routledge, 2019), 202, attributes the focus on this boy's beauty to the author's interest in the attractiveness of slaves.

[50] Whether this version of the *AA* was specifically Manichaean, as Evodius seems to suggest, or hailed from other (non-orthodox) circles remains unclear. The Coptic Manichaean Psalter (end of the third century) contains characters and events apparently derived from the *AA*: Maximilla is mentioned as having suffered great torture (143.13–14) and Iphidama as having been imprisoned (192.26–28). These events are unattested in the *AA* as has survived.

[51] Eusebius of Caesarea consigns the *AA* to a list of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles that he summarily dismisses as "fictions of heretics" (*Church History* 3.25.7: αἱρετικῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀναπλάσματα [text from SC 31.134]). Epiphanius of Salamis mentions the *AA* in connection with heretics like the Encratites who despise marriage and consider it the work of the devil (*Panarion* 47.1.5) and Apotactics who hold similar views (61.1.5). He also links the *AA*, alone among all the Apocryphal Acts, with a group that he names the "first Origenists" (63.2.1), who, he claims, reject marriage while engaging incessantly in sex or rather in coitus interruptus (63.1.4), and who are located in Palestine. For an overview of sources mentioning the *AA*, see

Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, DOS 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 186–91.

[52] Translation from MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew*, 357. Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 475. The phrase ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου only survives in the Jerusalem manuscript.

[53] For the motif of demon-infested baths in this and other texts, see Bremmer, "Man, Magic, and Martyrdom," 26, with further bibliography. For the same motif in a Jewish text, see Palestinian Talmud Terumot 8.4.

[54] Its first attestation is from the third century (Stud. Pal. 22.75), three are from the fourth century, and the rest are from the fifth/sixth centuries. Its cognate σάβανον is also not attested before the early third century, appearing for the first time in Clem. Alex. *Pedagogus* 2.3.38.1.3.

[55] The text is cited from the edition by Paul van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le jeune (521-592)*, SH 32 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962).

[56] *Vita Symeonis Stylitae iunioris* 83: καὶ μνηστῆρας ἔχουσαι ("even ones who had fiancés"). See also 243 for another group of virgins deciding to "remain pure for the Lord" (ἔμειναν ἀγναὶ τῷ Κυρίῳ).

[57] This demon also incites or imitates (or incites by imitating) the man having sex with his own wife (*Vita Symeonis Stylitae iunioris* 229: οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ παρεζήλου αὐτὸν τὸ δαιμόνιον κοιμηθῆναι μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ).

[58] For the influence from mime, see Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom." For the husbands in the Apocryphal Acts taking on traits of the novelistic suitors, see Hirschberger, "Marriages Spoiled."

[59] See Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 5.27.1: "She kissed my hands and placed them on her eyes and her heart." (τὰς χεῖρας κατεφίλει καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ

τῇ καρδίᾳ προσέφερε) (Text from S. Gaselee, *Achilles Tatius. Leucippe and Clitophon* Loeb Classical Library 45 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969], 300) and *Passio* 37: "Putting his hands on her eyes and then bringing them to her mouth, she kissed them" (καὶ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἰδίας ὄψεις θεῖσα καὶ τῷ στόματι προφέρουσα κατεφίλει). (Text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 487. Translation from MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew*, 373). The allusion was first discussed by Rosa Söder, *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die Romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969 [Stuttgart, 1932]), 145, who refers to the relevant passage in Vat. gr. 808.

[60] See Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 4.13.4 and 7.21.5: in both cases only rhetorical dissimulation is at stake. See further Koen De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters. Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 258–77.

[61] For the Phaedra – Hippolytus pattern in the Greek novels, see Anna Lefteratou, *Mythological Narratives. The Bold and Faithful Heroines of the Greek Novel*, MythosEikonPoiesis 8 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 108–75. For the intensification of the incest theme in the late antique West, see Danuta Shanzer, "Incest and Late Antiquity: Décadence?," in *Décadence: "Decline and Fall" or "Other Antiquity"?*, eds. Marco Formisano and Therese Fuhrer (Heidelberg: Winter, 2014), 149–67.

[62] Cnemon was, in fact, abroad. For the motif of the bedtrick in Heliodorus, see Saundra Schwartz, "The Κρίσις Inside: Heliodoros' Variations on the Bedtrick," in *Narrating Desire. Eros, Sex, and Gender in the Ancient Novel*, eds. Marília Futre Pinheiro, Marilyn Skinner, and Froma Zeitlin, Trends in Classics Supplements 14 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 161–80.

[63] In a paranormal variation of the bedtrick, Philinnion, the young wife of Craterus (one of Alexander's generals), dies soon after her wedding; she appears as a revenant in her parents's house, where she has sex for many nights with a young guest, Machates, who is unaware of the fact his partner is dead. Both sources which report this story highlight the woman's strong sexual desire: see Phlegon of Tralles, *On marvels* 1.7: καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῆς ἐδήλωσεν ὅση εἴη (text from Alessandro Giannini, *Paradoxographorum Graecorum reliquiae* [Milan: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1965], 172); Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Republic* 2.116: διὰ τὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔρωτα (text from Wilhelm W. Kroll, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, vol. 2 [Leipzig: Teubner, 1901], 116).

[64] For text, translation, and commentary, see Jane Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea. The Poetical Fragments and the Ἐρωτικὰ Παθήματα* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[65] The motif of the lamp is also present in many versions of Myrrha's story (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.298–502; Antoninus Liberalis 34.3; [Plutarch], *Parallela minora* 311a–b) and is reminiscent of the Greek proverb that "all women are the same when the lamp is blown out" (attested, e.g., in Plutarch, *Conjugalia praecepta* 144f: πᾶσα γυνὴ τοῦ λύχνου ἀρθέντος ἡ αὐτή ἐστι; text from Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's moralia*, vol. 2 [Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1928], 334).

[66] Doniger, *Bedtrick*, 391, discusses this myth as recounted in Ovid.

[67] The Greek text is from Karl Wendel, *Scholia in Theocritum vetera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914), 66.

[68] See, e.g., Charles, *The Silencing of Slaves*, 200: "Euclia is constructed as an anti-heroine who brings flavor to the story."

[69] The three so-called "wife-sister" episodes could also be termed bedtricks, as they feature a patriarch (Abraham or Isaac) deluding a royal benefactor into believing that he is bedding a legally available woman, their own wife (Gen 12.11–20; 20.1–18; 26.7–11). They will not be examined here, as they do not focus on the consummated act and the mechanics of sexual deception.

[70] On the tragicomic web of bedtricks in Genesis, see Zvi Jagendorf, "'In the morning, behold, it was Leah': Genesis and the reversal of sexual knowledge," *Prooftexts* 4 (1984): 187–92.

[71] For rabbinic exegesis, see Charlotte Fonrobert, "The Handmaid, the Trickster and the Birth of a Messiah: A Critical Appraisal of the Feminist Valorization of Midrash Aggada," in *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash*, ed. Carol Bakhos, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 246–73. For a Christian defense of the Genesis bedtricks on the basis of their valorization of procreation, see Augustine's anti-Manichaean treatise, *Answer to Faustus* 22.

[72] See Fonrobert, "The Handmaid," at 263–64.

[73] For the twelve years of marriage, see *Passio* 23. For Aegeates's continued hope of having children with Maximilla, see *Passio* 36 (the ultimatum). Childless marriages were considered easier to unravel: a famed inscription of the late Republic (*Laudatio Turiae*) dwells on the wife's insistence on divorcing her husband so that he can remarry and procreate. See, e.g., Marcel Durry, *Laudatio Turiae. Éloge Funèbre d'une Matrone Romaine (Laudatio Turiae)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1950); Josiah Osgood, *Turia. A Roman Woman's Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). In the martyrological sequel of Achilles Tatius's novel (Eutolmius, *Passion of Galaktion and Episteme*), Leucippe and Cleitophon are now married but find

themselves unable to conceive, which is of course blamed on the wife. Leucippe receives regular beatings and insults from her husband on account of her sterility, until a saint intervenes and grants the couple a much-desired son, the future martyr Galaction.

[74] Euclia's portrayal as greedy can also be read "against the grain": Maximilla did, in fact, offer to become Euclia's "benefactor in every way" (*Passio* 17: εὐεργέτιν . . . πάντων; text from Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 463); for such a reading of Euclia, see Christy Cobb, "Hidden Truth in the Body of Euclia: Page duBois' *Torture and Truth* and *Acts of Andrew*," *Biblical Interpretation* 25 (2017): 19–38.

[75] For the connection with Hagar, see Jennifer Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 67–68; briefly, Charles, *The Silencing of Slaves*, 214, n. 29.

[76] See Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom," 303–4; Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation,* 190–91.

[77] For this connection, see Charles, *The Silencing of Slaves*, 216, n. 35; Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation,* 194.

[78] For this model, see Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, "Reproductive Capital and Slave Surrogacy: Thinking about/with/beyond Hagar," in *Bodies, Borders, Believers: Ancient Texts and Present Conversations*, eds. Anne Hege Grung, Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, and Anna Rebecca Solevåg (Eugene, OR: Lutterworth, 2016), 396–406.

[79] The penultimate paragraph of the *Passio* (64) demonstrates her success: Aegeates died childless, and "Stratocles, Aegeates' brother according to the flesh, did not want so much as to touch the property Aegeates left" (translation from MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew*, 439; Greek text in Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 547).

[80] Modern scholars working on the *AA* have tended to treat the eclectic text printed in the modern editions of Prieur and MacDonald as if it were a uniform, coherent narrative, and have thus discussed the references to Adam, Eve, and Cain as if they all belonged in the same text as the bedtrick; see, e.g. Kenneth Wagener, "'Repentant Eve, Perfected Adam': Conversion in the *Acts of Andrew*," in *SBL Seminar Papers 30*, ed. Eugene Lovering Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 348–56. Cf. Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation,* 180–85, for Adam and Eve, and 186–89, for Andrew's gendering of Maximilla as male (*Passio* 41 = Vatican 7), another section which is eliminated in the HS text and yet treated as if belonging in the same text as the bedtrick.

[81] Cf. János Bolyki, "Triangles and What is Beyond Them. Literary, Historical, and Theological Systems of Coordinates in the Acts of Andrew," in Bremmer, *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, 70–80, esp. 71–73, drawing attention to biblical triangles. This study, however, focuses on the Aegeates-Maximilla-Andrew triangle and does not discuss Maximilla's bedtrick, because it relies on Vat. gr. 808.

[82] Gen 29.23–24. The text is rendered as literally as possible, highlighting the fact that only pronouns designate the actors of Gen 29.23.

[83] See Augustine, *Answer to Faustus* 22.5, where Faustus the Manichee argues that the story is morally unacceptable and compares Jacob's four "wives" (including the two slaves: *quattuor uxorum maritus*; Latin text in CSEL 25.594) to prostitutes fighting over the same client.

[84] Cf. Judith Baskin, *Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 119–40; in general, Janice P. De-Whyte, *Wom(b)an: A Cultural-Narrative Reading of the Hebrew Bible Barrenness Narratives*, Biblical Interpretation Series 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

[85] In the Hebrew Bible Rachel's prolonged torture is reckoned by the number of children born to other women in the household (Gen 29–30): seven to Leah and four to the two slave-maids till Rachel is able to "round" the number to twelve. This is indeed the conclusion already reached in the Greek pseudepigraphic *Testament of Benjamin* (first century <sc>B.C.E.<sc>). Twelve years is also the duration of Maximilla's marriage.

[86] For historical and archaeological evidence regarding the Tobiad family, see Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 30 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 102–4; Lester L. Grabbe, "Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period," in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period*, ed. Grabbe; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 317 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 129–55, at 136–39.

[87] See further Susan Niditch, "Father-Son Folktale Patterns and Tyrant Typologies in Josephus' *Ant.* 12:160–222," *JJS* 32 (1981): 47–55. Cf. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 105–6.

[88] *Jewish Antiquities* 12.186–89. Translation from Lawrence M. Wills, *Ancient Jewish Novels. An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 205–6. Greek text from the edition by Benedikt Niese, *Flavii Iosephi opera*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), 104.

[89] Joseph already has seven children from another wife when he beds his niece. The "purity" of Hyrcanus's bloodline is nowhere highlighted, though the narrative may implicitly suggest that Hyrcanus is a super-trickster, as both his grandfathers are grand masters in trickery.

[90] See, e.g., John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 75. Cf. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 105–6.

[91] Several strands are either anonymous or attributed to various sages, ranging from Yonathan, Eleazar, and Rav.

[92] Jacob's choice of words is curious at this point. אחיו אני ברמאות (b. B. Bat 123a) can be literally translated as "I am his brother in crookery."

[93] See Alexander Samely et al., *Profiling Jewish literature in Antiquity: An Inventory, from Second Temple Texts to the Talmuds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 409–26.

[94] The text was edited in toto by Salomon Buber, *Midrasch Echa Rabbati: Sammlung agadischer Auslegungen der Klagelieder. Herausgegeben nach einer Handschrift aus der Bibliothek zu Rom cod. J. I.4, und einer Handschrift des British Museum cod. 27089. Kritisch bearbeitet, kommentiert und mit einer Einleitung versehen* (Vilna: Rom, 1899) (Heb). On the merits and shortcomings of Buber's methods, see Amir Maor, *Shlomo Buber. Study of his Publishing Method of Midrashic Literature*, MA, Bar Ilan University 2008 (Heb).

[95] For this date, see Paul D. Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam. The Transmission of a Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Period," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion*, eds. Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni; Studies in Jewish Culture and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 74–106, at 92.

[96] On the genre of the proem, see Joseph Heinemann, "The Proem in the Aggadic Midrashim. A Form-Critical Study," *Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature* 22

(1971): 100–122, who regards the proemia as sermons preceding the actual reading of Scripture, *contra* Peter Schafer, "Die Petiha-ein Prooemium?," *Kairos* 12 (1970): 216–18. See also Arnold Goldberg, "Petiha und Hariza: zur Korrektur eines Missverständnisses" and "Versuch iber die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Peticha," both reprinted in Goldberg, *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung* II, Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 297–302 and 303–46 respectively.

[97] For correspondences between this Proem and Greco-Roman or Christian genres as well as Palestinian visual culture, see Fotini Hadjittofi and Hagith Sivan, "Staging Rachel: Rabbinic Midrash, Theatrical Mime, and Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity," *HTR* 113 (2020): 299–333. To these correspondences can now be added the Jewish pseudepigraphon written in second-century Palestine and titled *Paraleipomena Ieremiou* (or *4 Baruch*); for the text, translation, and commentary, see Jens Henzer, *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremiou)*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 22 (Atlanta: SBL, 2005). This text, probably written by a Greek-speaking Jew and later given a Christian retouching, deals with the Babylonian exile, just as Lam. Rab. Pr 24. One of its most imaginative vignettes presents Jeremiah, also one of the characters of Lam. Rab. Pr 24, handing the keys of the Temple to the Sun and asking him to guard them "until the day when the Lord will ask you for them." (4.3). In Lam. Rab. Pr 24.20–22 Moses curses the Sun for shining while the enemy entered the Temple, to which the Sun replies that he was lashed with fire in order to do so.

[98] Lam. Rab. Proem 24.23–24.

[99] Rachel's account reads almost like a progymnasmatic ethopoeia on the theme of "What words Rachel would speak to convince God to take pity on Israel." For

rabbinics and Greek rhetoric, see David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 22 (1949): 239–64; Laura Lieber, "Telling a Liturgical Tale: Storytelling in Early Jewish Liturgical Poetry," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 66 (2014): 209–32, at 225.

[100] Contrast the biblical female tricksters as analyzed by Fonrobert, "The Handmaid," esp. 269–73.

[101] An apt comparandum from the Greek novels would be Heliodorus's *Aethiopica*, where the main intradiegetic narrator, Calasiris, is characterized both by sanctity and outrageous mendacity; see John Winkler, "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*," *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1982): 93–158.

[102] See, among others, Kate Cooper, The *Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), esp. 45–67; Judith Perkins, "The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles and the Early Christian Martyrdom," *Arethusa* 18 (1985): 211–30, at 214–15, with important qualifiers in Enrico Norelli, "Les avatars de Fortune dans les Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres: Une comparaison avec les *Métamorphoses* d'Apulée," in *La Fortune. Thèmes, répresentations, discours*, eds. Yasmina Foehr-Janssens and Emmanuelle Métry (Genève: Droze, 2003), 31–58.

[103] See David Stern, "The Captive Woman: Hellenization, Greco-Roman Erotic Narrative, and Rabbinic Literature," *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 91–127, esp. 98–111, on the late ancient rabbinic engagement with the world through the lens of Greco-Roman erotic narrative, with mention of Parthenius's *Erôtika Pathêmata*.

[104] See Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*.

[105] See, for general overview, David Metzger and Steven B. Katz, "The 'Place' of Rhetoric in Aggadic Midrash," *College English* 72 (2010 [Special Issue: Composing Jewish Rhetorics]): 638–53, at 639.

[106] By contrast, sexually tinged deception by an angelic being seems wholly sanctioned in a vignette from the Babylonian Talmud (Avodah Zarah 18a): when rabbi Meir was persecuted by the Romans, "Elijah came, appeared to them as a prostitute and embraced rabbi Meir. The Romans who were chasing him said: Heaven forbid, if this were rabbi Meir, he would not act in that manner." Translation from the Sefaria online library: https://www.sefaria.org/Avodah_Zarah.18a.16?lang=bi On this episode and its connections with the characteristic narrative patterns of late Hellenism, including the novel, see Daniel Boyarin, "Patron Saint of the Incongruous: Rabbi Meʾir, the Talmud, and Menippean Satire," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 523–51.

[107] See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Cf. Elizabeth Clark, "Antifamilial Tendencies in Ancient Christianity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 356–80.