

Dionysus as Jesus: The Incongruity of a Love Feast in Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.2*

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A relationship between Achilles Tatius and Christianity has been imagined from at least as early as the tenth century when the *Suda* claimed that he had converted to Christianity and been ordained as a bishop.¹ Modern scholarship has found this highly improbable; nevertheless, attempts to explore connections between his late second-century C.E. novel, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and early Christianity continue.² In recent decades, within a context of renewed interest in the ancient novel, scholars of early Christianity have found a wealth of material in the novels to illuminate the generic development and meaning of Christian narratives in the New Testament and beyond.³ Less attention, however, has been given to the ways

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¹ See Heinrich Dörrie, "Die griechischen Romane und Christentum," *Phil* 93 (1938) 273–76, esp. 275–76.

² Evidence for the late 2nd-cent. date depends largely on the Robinson-Cologne Papyrus, which preserves parts of book 3 of the novel. For a discussion of this papyrus, see Marcelle Laplace, "A propos du P. Robinson-Coloniensis d'Achille Tatius, Leucippé et Clitophon," *ZPE* 98 (1993) 43–56. Little is known about Achilles Tatius's life. He is traditionally thought to be Alexandrian. For a collection of *testimonia*, see Ebbe Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon* (2 vols.; *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 1 and 15; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1955–1962) 1:163–69.

³ A classic study of this type is Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). See also Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel: An Introduction* (trans. Christine Jackson-Holzberg; New York: Routledge, 1995) 22–26. Specific

in which the novels respond to and incorporate themes from Christianity.⁴ Achilles Tatius's etiological myth of wine and its associated harvest festival in *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2 represent a particularly striking point of contact between Christianity and the Greek novel. In the first section below, I systematically review the narrative and ritual parallels between *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2 and the Christian Eucharist and conclude that they are too striking to be accidental or to have gone unnoticed by an ancient reader with knowledge of Christianity. Although these similarities have been pointed out, their meaning and consequences have received comparatively little attention from scholars either of the novel or of early Christianity.⁵ Thus, in the subsequent sections of this study I contextualize these parallels within second-century Christian and non-Christian literary and religious culture. My contention is that an exploration of the relationship between *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2 and the Christian Eucharist will provide valuable insight both into the larger project of Achilles Tatius and into the relationship between early Christianity and its contemporary context, particularly the Second Sophistic.

Scholars who have noted the parallels between the novel's etiological myth of wine and the Christian Eucharist are divided as to its meaning and significance. In a footnote to his translation of *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2, John J. Winkler writes that "if the resemblance of Dionysos's words . . . and gesture . . . to the Christian eucharistic rite is not accidental, it must surely be interpreted as parody."⁶ Glen Bowersock, however, although he regards the Gospels as the source for Achilles Tatius's wine myth, contests Winkler's assessment, asserting that "parody is an element so hard to find [in *Leucippe and Clitophon*] that it would be rash to invoke it here."⁷ In view of this disagreement, more attention to the question of parody in *Leucippe*

comparisons between Achilles Tatius and the New Testament are less frequent; see, however, Charles W. Hedrick, "Conceiving the Narrative: Colors in Achilles Tatius and the Gospel of Mark," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 177–97.

⁴ There are some noteworthy exceptions. Glen W. Bowersock suggests that the Gospel stories themselves provided a central impetus for the birth of the new genre of the novel (*Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* [Sather Classical Lectures 58; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994] 119–43). See, however, the criticisms of Christine M. Thomas, "Stories without Texts and without Authors: The Problem of Fluidity in the Ancient Novelistic Texts and Early Christian Literature," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 273–91, esp. 277. Ilaria Ramelli finds parodies of the Gospel of Mark in Petronius's Latin novel, the *Satyricon* ("The Ancient Novels and the New Testament: Possible Contacts," *Ancient Narrative* 5 [2007] 41–68). See also Margaret Edsall, "Religious Narratives and Religious Themes in the Novels of Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus," *Ancient Narrative* 1 (2000–2001) 114–33, esp. 128, 130–31.

⁵ But see Morton Smith, "On the Wine God in Palestine (Gen. 18, Jn. 2, and Achilles Tatius)," in *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume* (ed. Saul Lieberman; New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) 815–29; Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 124–29.

⁶ In *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (ed. Bryan P. Reardon; 1989; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 192 n. 25.

⁷ Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 126.

and *Clitophon* is needed. Thus, I also survey various elements in the novel and argue that, contrary to Bowersock's assertion, parody is indeed a prominent feature of the novel and that a frequent target of Achilles Tatius's parody is the unrealistic sexual morality of his literary predecessors. Literary theorists suggest that an "ideal reader" of parody is one who recognizes the discrepancy between the context of the targeted source and its new setting and enjoys the hidden irony of the satiric treatment. The effect of this parody, therefore, depends largely on its audience's knowledge of and attitude toward its Christian source. Consequently, I argue that in the late second century, eucharistic practices and their institution narratives were known to non-Christians and thus could have been available to Achilles Tatius and his audience. Following that, I demonstrate that Achilles Tatius's conflation of Christianity and Dionysiac mythology is consistent with other polemical religious discourse of the second century. Several Christian writers and their critics were well aware of the similarities between Christianity and Dionysiac religion and variously attempted to repudiate or exploit them. Dionysiac associations were particularly problematic for Christians in view of their implied eroticism. In the final section, I offer suggestions regarding the effect of the parody within the context of the novel. The ironic incongruity between the setting of Jesus's words in the Eucharist and their reuse in *Leucippe and Clitophon* centers on ideals of sexuality. Whereas many Christians labored to establish sexual chastity as central to their identity often over against Dionysiac and other cults, Achilles Tatius's narrative highlights what every Greek was supposed to have known: religious celebrations of wine are inherently erotic. Thus, by casting Dionysus as Jesus, Achilles Tatius draws attention to the incongruity between religious celebrations of wine, on the one hand, and claims of sexual renunciation, on the other.

■ Achilles Tatius's Harvest Festival and the Eucharist

The harvest festival in honor of Dionysus in *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2 comes at a pivotal point in Clitophon's first-person narrative.⁸ Since Leucippe's arrival in Tyre, Clitophon has been filled with an unshakable desire for her. In spite of having been promised in marriage to his half-sister Calligone, under the tutelage of Clinias he begins to woo her. The festival provides a fortuitous opportunity for Clitophon to realize his erotic intentions. Prone to digression as he is, Clitophon recounts the Tyrian myth of the origin of wine associated with the festival. Dionysus, he relates, is regarded by the Tyrians as their own deity in their singing of the myth of Cadmus (τὸν γὰρ Διόνυσον Τύριοι νομίζουσιν ἑαυτῶν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸν Κάδμου μῦθον ᾄδουσι;

⁸ A 4th-cent. papyrus (P.Oxy. 1250) has the wine myth (2.2.1–2.3.1) between sections 2.8 and 2.9. For a discussion of the textual problems, see Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius*, 1: xv, xxxix–xlii; 2: 38; Marcelle Laplace, "Achilleus Tatios, Leucippé et Clitophon: P.Oxyrhynchos 1250," *ZPE* 53 (1983) 53–59. Winkler's translation follows the order of P.Oxy. 1250; see *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (ed. Reardon), 189–93.

2.2.1).⁹ In the harvest festival, they commemorate the god's gift of wine to the Tyrians. Dionysus once visited a certain herdsman who hosted him generously but, because vines did not yet exist, their "drink was the same as that of the oxen" (ποτὸν δὲ ἦν παρ' αὐτοῖς οἶον καὶ ὁ βοῦς ἔπινεν; 2.2.3).¹⁰ In response to his hospitality, Dionysus pledged the herdsman "a cup of friendship and the drink was wine" (αὐτῷ προτείνει κύλικα φιλοτησίαν· τὸ δὲ ποτὸν οἶνος ἦν; 2.2.4). The herdsman in his joyful response mistook the new beverage for "sweet blood" (αἶμα γλυκύ; 2.2.4) and praised its ability to kindle the "fire of pleasure" (ἡδονῆς πῦρ; 2.2.5). The following words and actions of Dionysus are particularly striking for their resemblances to the Eucharist:

And Dionysus said, "This is water of harvest, this is blood of a grape." The god led the herdsman to the vine and, after taking from the clusters and at the same time crushing [them] and showing the vine, he said, "This is the water; that is the spring." In this way, therefore, wine came to be among humans, so goes the story of the Tyrians. They continue to observe that day as a feast to that god. (2.2.5–2.3.1)

[καὶ ὁ Διόνυσος ἔφη· "Τοῦτό ἐστιν ὀρώρας ὕδωρ, τοῦτό ἐστιν αἶμα βότρυος." ἄγει πρὸς τὴν ἀμπελον ὁ θεὸς τὸν βουκόλον, καὶ τῶν βοτρυῶν λαβὼν ἅμα καὶ θλίβων καὶ δεικνὺς τὴν ἀμπελον, "Τοῦτο μὲν ἐστιν," ἔφη, "τὸ ὕδωρ· τοῦτο δὲ ἡ πηγὴ." ὁ μὲν οὖν οἶνος οὕτως ἐς ἀνθρώπους παρήλθεν, ὡς ὁ Τυρίων λόγος. Ἐορτὴν δὲ ἄγουσιν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνῳ θεῷ.]

Similarities with the institution narrative in the Gospel of Mark are underlined in the following passage:¹¹

And while they were eating, after taking bread and blessing [it], he broke [it] and gave [it] to them and said, "Take [it], this is my body." And, after taking a cup and giving thanks, he gave [it] to them and they all drank from it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many." (Mark 14:22–24a)

[καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν¹² αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν· "λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου."¹³ καὶ λαβὼν

⁹ Fergus Millar notes that in the Hellenistic period Phoenician cities had adopted the Greek myth of Cadmus for themselves ("The Phoenician Cities: A Case-Study of Hellenisation," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 29 [1983] 55–71).

¹⁰ The Greek text of *Leucippe and Clitophon* follows vol. 1 of Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius*. Translations of all texts are mine throughout unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ The New Testament texts for the institution narratives are Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:15–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25. In the mid-2nd cent., Justin Martyr quotes from Jesus's eucharistic words (*I Apol.* 66). For a discussion of the literary traditions, see below.

¹² Cf. Matt 26:26: λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ δούς; Luke 22:19: λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν; and 1 Cor 11:23–24: ἔλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν.

¹³ Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24 have the additional phrase τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν [διδόμενον]· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: “τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης¹⁴ τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν.”]

The novel shares at least four elements with the New Testament narratives.

1) As in Mark and Matthew, Achilles Tatius has Dionysus repeat the phrase τοῦτό ἐστιν. Dionysus’s words, “this is blood of a grape” (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν αἶμα βότρυος), are nearly identical with Jesus’s words, “this is my blood of the covenant” (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης).

2) As in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and 1 Corinthians, in Achilles Tatius’s myth too, the wine is associated with blood.¹⁵ First, the herdsman identifies the wine as “sweet blood” (αἶμα γλυκύ; 2.2.4) and the god later modifies this declaration to “blood of a grape” (αἶμα βότρυος; 2.2.5).

3) Dionysus’s actions (λαβῶν ἅμα καὶ θλίβων καὶ δεικνύς; 2.2.6) resemble those of Jesus at the Last Supper (λαβῶν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν; Mark 14:22).

4) Both divine benefactions are understood as part of a formal relationship—“a cup of friendship” (κύλικα φιλοτησίαν) in *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2.4 and a sign of the covenant (“my blood of the covenant” [τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης; Matt and Mark]; “this cup is the new covenant” [τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινὴ διαθήκη; Luke and 1 Cor]) in the eucharistic narratives—and both result subsequently in ritual commemorations.¹⁶

These shared elements are too strong to be accidental and certainly could not have gone unnoticed by a reader with knowledge of Christianity.¹⁷ Before considering the import of these observations within the novel’s immediate context, it will be helpful to address several issues of relevance to its wider interpretation.

■ *Leucippe and Clitophon* as Parody

Achilles Tatius’s novel is filled with many absurdities that make it difficult to take seriously. Indeed, as Graham Anderson’s important study has shown, a central shortcoming in twentieth-century evaluations of ancient novels is the failure to

¹⁴ Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor 11:25 have τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι μου in place of τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης.

¹⁵ Luke and 1 Cor, however, fall short of the explicit identification made in Matt and Mark.

¹⁶ The term φιλοτησία was used to signify various relationships. For example, as Gloria Ferrari notes, it could refer to the relationship between a father and son-in-law at a marriage ceremony or to a sympotic ritual in which one man offers a toast to another (*Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002] 201–3).

¹⁷ Although the possibility of a common source underlying both the novel and the New Testament narratives cannot be ruled out, it seems unlikely; see Bowersock’s assessment: “The most plausible source for [Achilles Tatius’s] invention is the Gospel story. It makes far more sense to postulate a direct influence upon the Greek novelist than to suppose that the writer innocently preserved an otherwise unknown tradition of great antiquity that was the source that inspired Jesus himself” (*Fiction as History*, 128).

recognize their humor.¹⁸ Anderson maintains that “Achilles Tattius clearly sees himself as a Plato *eroticus*, and much of the first two books as an anti-*Phaedrus*,” in which “for the great syncrisis between ‘Lysias’ and Socrates he substitutes a travesty, comparing the advantages of boys and women as lovers.”¹⁹ He regards Achilles Tattius as a “virtuoso saboteur,” who “flaunts all kinds of sexuality while maintaining the appearance of utmost respectability.”²⁰ The chastity ordeal in book 8 where Melite passes by an absurd technicality provides a clear example of Achilles Tattius’s contempt for the ideals of the romantic genre. The hypothesis of R. M. Rattenbury seems correct, namely, that the function of the chastity ordeals was to ridicule the novelistic conventions because “Achilles Tattius felt that the moral standard set by his predecessors was too strict to be possible.”²¹

The first scholar explicitly to characterize *Leucippe and Clitophon* as parody is Donald Durham. Developing Rattenbury’s analysis, he argues that Achilles Tattius found “the idealism of his predecessors insipid and ridicule[d] it by parody.”²² Durham regards Heliodorus’s *Aethiopica* as the primary target of *Leucippe and Clitophon*’s parody, but this relative chronology of the two novels has now been disproved. Nevertheless, the identification of parodic elements in *Leucippe and Clitophon* persists. Kathryn Chew argues, in contrast to Durham, that *Leucippe and Clitophon* has elements of “a thematic rather than a philological parody,” aimed at the novelistic conventions generally rather than at a particular author.²³ In her view, the treatment of the classical myth of Zeus and Europa in the novel’s opening *ekphrasis* well illustrates Achilles Tattius’s larger literary aims. The anonymous narrator describes in vivid detail a painting of the abduction of Europa that ends thus: “[Eros] turned to Zeus and smiled, as though mocking him; for on his account [Zeus] had become a bull” (μετέστραπτο δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν Δία καὶ ὑπεμειδία, ὡς περ αὐτοῦ καταγελῶν, ὅτι δι’ αὐτὸν γέγονε βοῦς; 1.1.13). Chew comments that “depicting the king of the gods as a prime example of love’s fool is programmatic for Achilles Tattius’ parodic treatment of his novelistic and Classical tradition.”²⁴

¹⁸ Graham Anderson, *Eros Sophistes: Ancient Novelists at Play* (American Classical Studies 9; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982) 1–11; on humor in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, see 23–32. Pervo addresses a similar failure in scholarship to recognize humor in Acts (*Profit with Delight*, 58–66).

¹⁹ Anderson, *Eros Sophistes*, 25; see *Leuc. Clit.* 2.35–38.

²⁰ Anderson, *Eros Sophistes*, 32. Simon Goldhill similarly sees Achilles Tattius’s humor as intended to engage in a reappraisal of traditional values of sexuality (*Foucault’s Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995] 66–111).

²¹ R. M. Rattenbury, “Chastity and Chastity Ordeals in the Ancient Greek Romances,” *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Literary and Historical Section* 1 (1926) 59–71, at 71.

²² Donald Blythe Durham, “Parody in Achilles Tattius,” *CP* 33 (1938) 1–19, at 3.

²³ Kathryn Chew, “Achilles Tattius and Parody,” *CJ* 96 (2000) 57–70, at 65.

²⁴ Chew, “Achilles Tattius and Parody,” 61. Massimo Fusillo, in his analysis of the Greek novels’ relationship to the Homeric epics, prefers to classify *Leucippe and Clitophon* as “ironical pastiche” rather than parody (“Textual Patterns and Narrative Situations in the Greek Novel,” *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 1 [1988] 17–32, at 28–29).

One of the most distinctive features of the novelistic genre is the emphasis on mutuality in erotic desire, with a degree of reciprocity unprecedented in Greek literature.²⁵ The symmetrical nature of the relationship between hero and heroine is often highlighted by the former's passivity (at times bordering on cowardice) and at the same time by the latter's active and self-reliant role.²⁶ The novelistic plots present countless threats to the lovers' fidelity that in the end are overcome so that they may be united in marriage. To regard *Leucippe and Clitophon*, however, as Michel Foucault does, "as a kind of odyssey of double virginity [*une sorte d'odyssée de la double virginité*]," overlooks important literary features, not least Achilles Tatius's use of humor and irony.²⁷ Repeatedly throughout the novel, Clitophon's chastity is shown to be a sham. The clearest instance of this is when, after long resisting Melite's demands for sex while he thought Leucippe was dead, he finally gives in after learning that she is in fact alive (5.26–27). Chew rightly sees this as "a wild parody of reciprocal romantic love."²⁸ This, however, is not the only failure in his chastity. In his debate with his companion, Menelaus, regarding the preferability of women versus men as lovers, he feigns naïveté: "I am inexperienced in women insofar as I have [only] had association with those who sell themselves for Aphrodite" (ἐγὼ μὲν πρωτόπειρος ὢν εἰς γυναῖκας, ὅσον ὀμιλῆσαι ταῖς εἰς Ἀφροδίτην πωλουμέναις; 2.37.5). The incongruity of Clitophon's claim to sexual inexperience both with his acquaintance with prostitutes and with his detailed descriptions of sex does not go unnoticed by Menelaus, who comments: "But you seem to me not inexperienced but rather to have become a veteran in Aphrodite" (Ἀλλὰ σύ μοι δοκεῖς," ἔφη, "μὴ πρωτόπειρος ἀλλὰ γέρων εἰς Ἀφροδίτην τυγχάνειν; 2.38.1). Later, Clitophon assures Leucippe of his virginity in a letter, writing, "You will learn that I have imitated your virginity" (μαθήσῃ τὴν σὴν με παρθενίαν μεμιμημένον), adding the caveat, "if indeed any virginity exists among men" (εἴ τις καὶ ἐν ἀνδράσι παρθενία; 5.20.5). He later repeats this caveat when recounting his misadventures to Leucippe's father and adds (because he has by now had sex with Melite) that his virginity (παρθενία) is "with respect to Leucippe" (πρὸς Λευκίππην; 8.5.7). For her part, Melite is able to pass the test of her chastity only on the technicality that it applied to the period of her husband's absence abroad (8.11).

²⁵ See Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self* (trans. Robert Hurley; vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*; New York: Pantheon, 1986) 228–32; and David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994) 14–59; Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity*, 85–88.

²⁶ Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*, 15–30.

²⁷ Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 230. For criticism of Foucault on this point, see Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity*, 93–102; Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*, 48–55. As Konstan demonstrates, the fidelity that is at stake for the heroes and heroines of the novels is not chastity per se—protagonists are often compelled by circumstances to enter into unwanted relationships—but rather a constancy of feeling (*Sexual Symmetry*, 52).

²⁸ Chew, "Achilles Tatius and Parody," 60.

Leucippe's chastity is also treated ironically. Not long after meeting Clitophon she is eager to make love to him in secret (2.19). She nevertheless maintains her virginity not, as other novelistic heroines, due to her own fortitude but rather because her mother, reacting to a dream of her daughter being violently attacked, storms into her room to find her with Clitophon (2.23).²⁹ She defends herself to her mother, insisting that her chastity is intact and that she can prove it "if there is some test of virginity" (εἰ παρθενίας ἔστι τις δοκιμασία; 2.28.3), an assertion that anticipates book 8. It is ironic that there, when she is finally given the test she requested in book 2, she has in fact demonstrated her fortitude, having overcome countless threats and attacks to her virginity, whereas in book 2 she is prepared to give it up straightaway with Clitophon.³⁰ These observations support Chew's contention that Achilles Tatius's "use of chastity tests is a self-conscious allusion to his parody of romance morality."³¹

Thus, parody is a central literary feature of *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Its most immediate target is the generic conventions of the romantic novel, although its satire covers a wider range, including classical mythology and philosophical dialogue. The novel's parodies are often aimed at a deflation of the sexual ideals embodied by its literary predecessors.

Literary theorists provide insights into the nature of parody that are useful for understanding *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Simon Dentith gives a broad definition: "Parody includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice."³² Applied to literature, parody is one of many possible ways in which one text can be formally related to another; that is, it is a mode of intertextuality. Margaret Rose suggests that a central feature of parody is a text's ability to disrupt the reader's expectations. She defines parody as "the critical refunctioning of performed literary material with comic effect," produced primarily by the surprising incongruity between the parodied text and its new context.³³ The novel's transformation of the Europa myth in its opening *ekphrasis* illustrates this point: what might have been understood as a story of Zeus's sexual conquest over Europa is recast in *Leucippe and Clitophon* as a demonstration of Eros's ultimate power to undermine and subvert even the strongest subjects.³⁴ By

²⁹ Chew contrasts Leucippe's willingness to have sex with Clitophon with the attitude of Callirhoe, the heroine of Chariton's 1st-cent. C.E. novel, who "cannot bring herself to speak of desire for Chaereas before the wedding is publically announced" ("Achilles Tatius and Parody," 63).

³⁰ See here Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginité*, 115–18.

³¹ Chew, "Achilles Tatius and Parody," 64. Furthermore, she adds that Leucippe's three *Scheintode* (apparent deaths) (3.15; 5.7; 7.3), which are clearly intended to be comic, can all in some way "be understood as violence representing displaced sexuality" (65).

³² Simon Dentith, *Parody* (New York: Routledge, 2000) 9. Arriving at a precise definition of parody is difficult and would require analysis beyond the scope of the present study. But for a helpful summary of theoretical discussions on the topic, see Dentith, *Parody*, 9–21.

³³ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody/Meta-Fiction: An Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) 22–23, 35.

³⁴ Chew, "Achilles Tatius and Parody," 61–62. See also the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.

thus inverting the reader's expectations, the parodic refunctioning of the traditional myth invites the reader to reexamine the nature and power of erotic attraction.

Rose also provides a useful analysis of a reader's response to parody, suggesting that parody has four possible outcomes.³⁵ 1) A reader may not recognize the parody due to a failure to perceive the presence of the quotation or allusion. 2) A reader may recognize the parodied text but, because of sympathy for it, fail to recognize its ironic treatment. In this case, the reader him- or herself can be seen as a victim and target of the parody. 3) A reader may recognize the parodic treatment and perceive him- or herself to be the target. 4) The "ideal reader" "recognizes the parodistic effect from the discrepancy between [the two contexts] and also enjoys the recognition of the hidden irony and satire against the parodied text and [is] sympathetic to it."³⁶

Rose's discussion of parody coheres well with other contemporary literature of the Second Sophistic.³⁷ Lucian, for example, makes the aims of his parody explicit in the preface to *A True Story*:

Everything in my story is a more or less comical parody³⁸ of one or another of the poets, historians and philosophers of old, who have written much that smacks of miracles and fables. I would cite them by name were it not that you yourself will recognize them from your reading. (Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 1.2 [trans. Harmon, LCL])

This programmatic statement is a challenge, as it were, to the ideal reader to identify the frequent literary allusions throughout his fantastic tale. As Aristoula Georgiadou and David Larmour point out, parody "is, of course, most effective when it does not announce itself directly."³⁹ Lucian masterfully plays on his audience's knowledge of literature by manipulating his sources with surprising and ridiculous twists.⁴⁰

Lucian is particularly relevant for this study because (like Celsus, who is discussed below) he read Christian texts and was acquainted with Christian practices, both of which he subjects to his satiric wit.⁴¹ Hans Dieter Betz has noted

³⁵ The question of the ancient novels' readership is notoriously difficult. On the scholarly issues involved, see Susan S. Stephens, "Who Read Ancient Novels?," and Ewen Bowie, "The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (ed. James Tatum; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 407–18 and 435–59 respectively.

³⁶ Rose, *Parody/Meta-Fiction*, 27.

³⁷ For a discussion of the Greek novels' relationship to the Second Sophistic more broadly, see Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1993) 156–70.

³⁸ Οὐκ ἀκωμωδῆτως ἤνικται; lit., "is a riddling allusion not without ridicule."

³⁹ Aristoula Georgiadou and David H. J. Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel True Histories: Interpretation and Commentary* (Mnemosyne Supplements 179; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 22–23.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of Lucian's larger satiric treatment of religion, philosophy, and literature, see Christopher P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986) 46–58; Marcel Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1937).

⁴¹ Lucian had knowledge of both the Old and New Testaments. Hans Dieter Betz writes, "Die Schriften des Lucian von Samosata verraten eine merkwürdige Bekanntschaft mit den Schriften

several parallels, for example, between Lucian's description of the paradisaical city in *A True Story* and the heavenly city described in the Book of Revelation.⁴² Later in the same work, Lucian describes water that becomes wine, in a scene that some scholars have suggested shares similarities with Christian mysteries (*Ver. hist.* 2.47).⁴³ In another work, Lucian's satiric fiction ridicules Christians by depicting them as followers of a new mystery cult (κοινή τελετή; *Peregr.* 11) who are so gullible as to be deceived and manipulated by Peregrinus, a false philosopher who is in fact a criminal.⁴⁴ Lucian's parodies of Christians and biblical texts of course do not establish the existence of a Christian parody in *Leucippe and Clitophon*; rather, they simply demonstrate that a contemporary reader might have been expected to recognize and appreciate an allusive transformation of a Christian source within a fictional narrative.⁴⁵

In sum, contrary to Bowersock, parody is a central feature of Achilles Tatius's novel that is directed at diverse sources often by means of subtle allusions that could easily go undetected. For Achilles Tatius, the idealistic sexual morality of the genre of Greek romance is a frequent target of parody, and, as I argue below, a similar focal point can be observed in his transformation of the eucharistic narratives. Moreover, a parody that subtly imitates the Christian rite within a fictional narrative—either derived from literary sources or as part of a larger social critique—is in keeping with other parodic writings of the Second Sophistic.

■ The Eucharist in the Second Century

An interpretation of Achilles Tatius's transformation of the eucharistic words of Jesus as parody assumes some knowledge of and agonistic attitude toward the source both by the author and the implied ideal reader. It is therefore necessary to give a historical account both of the possibility that the Eucharist and its narratives

des Alten und Neuen Bundes. Daraus fällt ein besonderes Licht auf die Geschichte des biblischen Kanons" (*Lucian von Samosata und das Neue Testament. Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen* [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961] 12, citing P. Rießler, "Lucian von Samosata und die Heilige Schrift," *TQ* 140 [1933] 64–72, at 64).

⁴² Betz, *Lucian von Samosata*, 92–93. See, e.g., *Ver. hist.* 2.11 and Rev 22:11–21. Also, in another scene, the protagonist and his crew survive in the belly of a whale in a manner reminiscent of the biblical story of Jonah (*Ver. hist.* 1.42–2.1); see Georgiadou and Larmour, *Science Fiction Novel*, 22.

⁴³ See Betz, *Lucian von Samosata*, 176; Georgiadou and Larmour, *Science Fiction Novel*, 22. A direct literary connection, however, is difficult to establish. Lucian's parody of Dionysus's wine miracles in *Ver. hist.* 1.7 offers an interesting point of comparison with *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2. On the relationship between Jesus's wine miracle in John 2:1–11 and Dionysiac mythology, see below.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of *Peregrinus* and a similar work of Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*, see R. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) 181–210.

⁴⁵ Goldhill likewise regards Achilles Tatius's treatment of literary and intellectual traditions as similar to that of Lucian, "a serio-comic sophist who engages his audience in a playful reappraisal of the contemporary value of its celebrated cultural past" (*Foucault's Virginity*, 93 n. 85, citing Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 7).

could have been known to a non-Christian in the late second century and of how they may have been viewed.

Within Christian literature, Jesus's words in the institution narratives are broadly attested. Joachim Jeremias argues that their "antiquity approaches that of the earliest kerygma."⁴⁶ He suggests that these words circulated widely, primarily through liturgy, even prior to their first literary attestations.⁴⁷ Indeed, the oldest literary traditions—Markan and Pauline/Lukan—"are independent of each other and do not go back to the same Greek source."⁴⁸ Even the Gospel of John, though it lacks an institution narrative, preserves a paraphrase of Jesus's words.⁴⁹ Thus, it is important to recognize that from the earliest period, although there was a high degree of diversity both in eucharistic practice and in the form of its narratives, the broad attestation of the eucharistic words of Jesus nevertheless points to their importance across a wide spectrum of the earliest Christian communities.⁵⁰ In the mid-second century, evidence for the prominence of the eucharistic narratives is found in Justin Martyr, who cites them in a form that appears to be a conflation of Matthew and Luke. He mentions the words of institution in the context of his description of the eucharistic meal and cites the Gospels as his source.⁵¹ Although

⁴⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (trans. Norman Perrin; London: SCM Press, 1966) 100.

⁴⁷ Andrew Brian McGowan, however, disputes that the earliest function of the institution narrative was liturgical ("Is There a Liturgical Text in This Gospel?: The Institution Narratives and Their Early Interpretive Communities," *JBL* 118 [1999] 73–87). He argues rather that their earliest use was primarily catechetical; prior to the 3rd cent., there is no clear evidence for the use of these narratives in liturgy (85).

⁴⁸ Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 186; see also Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27A; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009) 959–63.

⁴⁹ John 6:51c: "the bread that I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς); cf. 1 Cor 11:24b: "this is my body, which is for you" (τοῦτο μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). See Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 106–8.

⁵⁰ On the diversity in early eucharistic practices, see Andrew Brian McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 143–98. There is also a complex historical relationship between the Eucharist and the love feast (ἀγάπη); on this, see Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 115–22. He suggests that by the time of Paul, the Agape meal and the Eucharist were already separated, in part to keep guests out of the ceremony (133). See also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008) 428–29. He proposes that Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 11:17–22 in fact led to this separation.

⁵¹ Justin, *1 Apol.* 66.3: "For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, passed down what was commanded them thus: 'Jesus, after taking bread and giving thanks, said, 'do this in remembrance of me; 'this is my body'; 'and likewise, after taking the cup and giving thanks, he said, 'this is my blood'" (Οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν Ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ κατεῖται Εὐαγγέλια, οὕτως παρέδωκαν ἐντετάλθαι αὐτοῖς: "τὸν Ἰησοῦν λαβόντα ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσαντα εἶπεῖν" "Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἀνάμνησίν μου" "τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμά μου" "καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὁμοίως λαβόντα καὶ εὐχαριστήσαντα εἶπεῖν" "τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ αἷμά μου"). See here McGowan, "'Liturgical Text?'" 80–83. On Justin's use of the New Testament Gospels, see Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990) 360–402.

not all second-century descriptions of eucharistic practice include the words of institution (e.g., *Did.* 9–10), it is nevertheless certain that they continued to be widely known and used by Christians throughout the second century.

The extent of knowledge of Jesus's eucharistic words outside of Christian circles in the late second century is less certain. Jeremias notes that from very early on there was an "effort to protect the eucharistic words from profanation and misconstruction" and they were thus kept from the general public.⁵² He points out that the use of secret or esoteric words existed not only in the Hellenistic world but also in sects of Judaism; some of the teachings of Jesus were in fact treated in this way.⁵³ In the second century, only the baptized were admitted to the celebration of the Eucharist, and, therefore, if the words were recited there, only converts would have heard them (*Did.* 9.5; Justin, *I Apol.* 66.1). Nevertheless, increasingly outsiders were gaining knowledge of Christian ritual practice. Pliny the Younger, for example, learned of a sacred Christian meal by word of mouth, extracting information from former converts in Bithynia and reporting it to Emperor Trajan in 112 C.E. (*Ep.* 10.96). The eucharistic ritual in particular was the subject of rumors and suspicions of various sorts of outlandish sexual and sacrificial practices.⁵⁴ A different sort of acquaintance with Christianity is found in Galen. Although there is no evidence that he had specific knowledge of the Eucharist, he was familiar with Christian practices and ways of life and was particularly impressed by their ability to refrain from cohabitation and exhibit self-discipline in matters of food and drink.⁵⁵ In addition to such anecdotal reports, by the second half of the second century, critics were reading Christian literature for themselves. The most notable examples are Lucian, whose parodic treatment of biblical texts is discussed above, and Celsus, who subjects the Christian Gospels to detailed analysis and criticism (see below).

In sum, the eucharistic words of Jesus had a prominent place in the earliest Christian communities, and this continued throughout the second century. Specific knowledge of Christian practice and literature was increasingly becoming available to outsiders so that by the end of the century Achilles Tatius and his audience may certainly have known the eucharistic words of Jesus, either by word of mouth or from reading the Gospels.

⁵² Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 132. He suggests that this is the reason why John only paraphrases the words (125).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126–29.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Albert Henrichs, "Pagan Ritual and Alleged Crimes of the Early Christians," in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann; 2 vols; Münster: Aschendorff, 1970) 1:18–35; Stephen Benko, "Pagan Criticism of Christianity during the First Two Centuries A.D.," *ANRW* 23.2.1055–118, esp. 1083–89; and Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 140–59.

⁵⁵ These observations are in Galen's summary of Plato's *Republic*, a work preserved only in Arabic quotations; for a translation, see Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949) 15. On Galen's view of Christianity, see Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984) 68–93.

■ Jesus and Dionysus in Second-Century Religious Discourse

In his conflation of Dionysiac and Christian myth and ritual, Achilles Tatius was employing a well-established polemical trope. Indeed, Dionysus and Jesus provided an especially apt point of comparison between Christianity and polytheism.⁵⁶ Both deities had divine and human parentage, a claim that was consequently suspected by some as a cover-up for illegitimacy. Both were viewed as newcomers, foreign invaders; both were subjected to violent and bloody deaths (Jesus by crucifixion, Dionysus—in the Orphic myth—by the Titans). The followers of both were accused of consuming raw flesh. Both were known for their close association with women devotees. Particularly important for the present discussion, both were in some sense bestowers of wine, and consequently wine was an important element in their ritual worship. Finally, a common feature between Christianity and the Dionysiac religion of the Roman period was that they advanced largely in localized private associations.⁵⁷

Comparisons between Dionysus and Jesus are already implicit within the New Testament itself. In the miracle at Cana in John 2:1–11, for example, Jesus transforms water into wine, a feat typically associated with Dionysus.⁵⁸ Indeed,

⁵⁶ Modern scholars have further developed these ancient comparisons. Albert Henrichs asserts that the cult of Dionysus is particularly “suitable” for comparison with Judeo-Christian religion (“Changing Dionysiac Identities,” in *Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World* [ed. Ben F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders; vol. 3 of *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982] 137–60, at 137). Regarding a later time period (the reign of Diocletian), Glen W. Bowersock writes, “The soteriological aspects of Dionysus—the release he brought from pain and the triumph he ensured over enemies—made [Dionysus] an ideal pagan antagonist to Christ” (“Dionysus as an Epic Hero,” in *Studies in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus* [ed. Neil Hopkinson; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Philological Society, 1994] 156–66, at 160). See also Konstantinos Spanoudakis, “Icarius Jesus Christ? Dionysiac Passion and Biblical Narrative in Nonnus’ Icarus Episode,” *Wiener Studien* 120 (2007) 35–92. In the past, some scholars sought to find the origin of the Christian sacraments in Greek mysteries. On the Eucharist, see Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (trans. John E. Steely; PTMS 15; Pittsburg: Pickwick, 1978) 76–78; trans. of *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (3rd ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1927); and Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mysteries* (trans. Brian Battershaw; New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1971) 103–9; trans. of *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung* (Zurich: Rhein Verlag, 1957). For criticism, see Arthur Darby Nock, “Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments,” in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (ed. Zeph Stewart; 2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 2:791–820; repr. from *Mnemosyne* 5 (1952) 177–213; and Bruce M. Metzger, “Considerations of Methodology in the Study of Mystery Religions and Early Christianity,” *HTR* 48 (1955) 1–20, esp. 7.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Henrichs, “Changing Dionysiac Identities,” 141. He further notes that “organized worshippers of Dionysus elevated social wine drinking to a ritualized form of religious group experience, thus making it a hallmark of their Dionysiac identity.” For similar observations, see Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 41–44.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the various myths of Dionysus’s miraculous production of wine, see Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (trans. Robert B. Palmer; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1965) 96–102. Regarding Jesus’s wine miracle, Rudolf Bultmann asserts, “There can be no doubt that the story has been taken over from heathen legend and ascribed to Jesus” (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. George R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971] 118). For a critique of Bultmann, see Heinz Noetzel, *Christus und Dionysos. Bemerkungen zum*

John's Jesus—perhaps, over against Dionysus—emphatically declares himself to be the “true vine.”⁵⁹ The Acts of the Apostles also shares several elements with Dionysiac mythology, such as miraculous prison breaks complete with earthquakes and doors that open spontaneously (Acts 12 and 16), the use of the term θεομάχος (fighting against god) to characterize human opposition to a divinely sanctioned cult (Acts 5:39), and the phrase “to kick against the goads” (πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν), which was attributed by Euripides to Dionysus (*Bacch.* 794–95) but in Acts is spoken by Christ (26:14).⁶⁰ These examples suggest that it was Christian authors, not their critics, who first began to develop comparisons between Dionysus and Jesus. While an exploration of these and other New Testament texts lies beyond the scope of the present study, it seems they were aimed in part at demonstrating the superiority of Christianity to Dionysiac cult.

In the second century, Justin acknowledges the similarities between Jesus and the sons of Zeus in Greek mythology (including Dionysus) and claims that these myths were inspired by demons (*I Apol.* 21.1–23.3). And Celsus develops the comparison between Jesus and Dionysus in his critique of Christianity in two ways that are important for the present study.⁶¹ First, he compares the New Testament account of Jesus's trial by Pilate with Pentheus's trial of Dionysus in Euripides's

religionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund von Johannes 2, 1–11 (AzTh 1; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1960) esp. 57–58. Raymond E. Brown argues for a Jewish background of the miracle (*The Gospel According to John (i–xii): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [AB 29; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966] 101–2). Morton Smith, however, argues that such a distinction between a Jewish and Hellenistic background is unwarranted. He notes that outside of Palestine observers of Judaism could describe Jews as worshipping Dionysus; and even in Palestine, Dionysiac cult motifs had been at home in Judaism from before the Maccabean revolt (“On the Wine God in Palestine,” 821–29); see similarly Martin Hengel, “The Interpretation of the Wine Miracle at Cana: John 2:1–11,” in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of G. B. Caird* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 83–112, esp. 108–12.

⁵⁹ John 15:1: “I am the true vine” (ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή).

⁶⁰ These elements are all present in Euripides's *Bacchae*, one of the most popular texts of Dionysiac mythology in the 1st and 2nd cents. C.E. Wilhelm Nestle, who first identified these similarities, posits that Luke crafted his narrative with *Reminiszenzen* from similar scenes in Euripides's drama (“Anklänge an Euripides in der Apostelgeschichte,” *Phil* 59 [1900] 46–57). Alternative explanations have been offered, however; see Alfred Vögeli, “Lukas und Euripides,” *TZ* 9 (1953) 415–38; Richard Seaford, “Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquakes in the *Bacchae* and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *What Is a God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* (ed. Alan B. Lloyd; London: Duckworth, 1997) 139–51; and John B. Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles* (BZNTW 131; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004) esp. 22–27, 132–35.

⁶¹ For a discussion of Celsus's view of Christianity, see Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 94–125. The earliest evidence for a non-Christian observer who interpreted Christianity in light of Dionysiac religion may be found in Pliny's letter to Trajan mentioned above (*Ep.* 10.96). Robert M. Grant has argued that Pliny's description of Christian practices was shaped by his knowledge of Livy's account of the Bacchanalia affair at Rome, in which in 186 B.C.E. the Roman Senate prohibited this cult in Italy on suspicion of political conspiracy (“Pliny and the Christians,” *HTR* 41 [1948] 273–74). For criticism of Grant, see A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) 692; and Grant's response in his *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 29–30, 203–5.

Bacchae in order to demonstrate the implausibility of the Christian narrative. In his judgment it is impossible that a god in human form who is ridiculed and suffers injustice from men would allow them to go unpunished. He cites Dionysus's prescient words to Pentheus ("the god himself will set me free whenever I wish it" [λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω]) and notes that in the end it is Pentheus, not the god, who is torn to shreds (Origen, *Cels.* 2.34–35; *Bacchae* 498). Jesus's persecutors, by contrast, receive no punishment for their actions. In addition thus to criticizing Christian narrative, Celsus also suggests that similarities existed between Christian teaching and those of the Bacchic mysteries, primarily in that they targeted "uneducated" persons (ἰδιῶται) who were particularly susceptible to the use of "phantoms and terrors" (τὰ φάσματα καὶ τὰ δαίματα) by religious authorities (Origen, *Cels.* 4.10).⁶²

This latter accusation—that Christian ritual resembled mystery rites—was an especially strong concern for second-century apologists. Justin, for example, in his discussion of the Eucharist is aware of the similarities between the use of bread and the cup in Christianity and the mysteries of Mithra; he regards the latter as an imitation of the Christian Eucharist given by demons (*I Apol.* 66).⁶³ Wine was apparently recognized by some Christians as having too close of an association with polytheistic ritual meals. Thus, in the Eucharist, certain ascetic communities—particularly in Syria and Asia—used water in its place. As Andrew McGowan argues, for some of these Christians the use of water functioned as an alternative to polytheistic sacrificial meals.⁶⁴

The association with mystery cults was particularly offensive to certain second-century Christians because of its implications with regard to sexuality. Indeed, the close relationship between men and women in Christian communities was a persistent source of suspicion that Christians were engaging in cultic sexual practices.⁶⁵ In the eyes of the critic, therefore, Dionysiac religion shared a key feature with Christianity: the prominence of women and feminine eroticism.⁶⁶ In view of this, many second-century Christians sought to establish their identity as a sexually chaste community over against these suspicions; as Justin insists, "Licentious intercourse is not a mystery rite for us" (οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν μυστήριον ἢ ἀνέδην μίξις; *I Apol.* 29.2). In order to illustrate this, he reports a most severe

⁶² Wilken suggests that Celsus "opposed the 'sectarian' tendencies at work in the Christian movement because he saw in Christianity a 'privatizing' of religion, the transferral of religious values from the public sphere to a private association" (*Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 125).

⁶³ Clement of Alexandria similarly inveighs against the debauchery and absurdity of mystery cults; on Bacchic mysteries, see *Protr.* 2.12.1–2; 2.17.2–18.2.

⁶⁴ McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 143–98.

⁶⁵ See Brown, *Body and Society*, 140–59. This anxiety seems to underlie Clement's concern to distinguish the true Christian love feast (ἀγάπη) from those of the Carpocratians, a heretical sect whose love feasts were apparently occasions for fornication and the commonality of wives (*Strom.* 4.2.10). See also Origen, *Cels.* 6.40.

⁶⁶ On women and sexuality in Bacchic religion, see Otto, *Dionysus*, 142.

example: one young man in Alexandria, in his zeal to remain chaste, sought permission to have himself castrated (*I Apol.* 29). Justin seeks to demonstrate that the Christian commitment to chastity was not limited to this one extreme example but was in fact a widespread virtue: “Men and women now in their sixties and seventies who have been disciples of Christ from childhood have preserved their purity [ἄφθοροι διαμένουσι]; and I am proud that I could point to such people in every nation” (*I Apol.* 15).⁶⁷

Christian ideals of chastity can also be seen in narrative texts. The apocryphal Acts are particularly relevant here because they serve as Christian counterparts to the Greek novels.⁶⁸ In their treatment of sexuality and chastity, they borrow and transform novelistic themes in a variety of ways.⁶⁹ As with the novels, heroines in the apocryphal Acts overcome repeated threats in maintaining their chastity. There is, however, a fundamental difference. Whereas in the novels the hero and heroine remain chaste for the sake of their mutual romantic commitment culminating in marriage, chastity in the apocryphal Acts entails a repudiation of the traditional civic and familial institutions that marriage represents. The story of Thecla illustrates this point.⁷⁰ When she hears the preaching of Paul, she becomes infatuated with him (*Acts Paul* 7), not unlike when a novelistic heroine first encounters her lover in a public gathering. Thecla’s encounter with Paul, however, results in her devotion to chastity much to the dismay of her betrothed, Thamyris. For Paul and Thecla, like the heroes and heroines of the novels, their commitment to chastity leads to a series of misadventures; in their case, they suffer persecution at the instigation of Thamyris and the civic authorities who perceive the socially subversive nature of Paul’s message. As Kate Cooper suggests in her contrast of the apocryphal Acts with the ancient novel, “we move from celebration of sexuality in the service of social community to a denigration of sexuality in the service of a challenge to the establishment.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Trans. Cyril C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (LCC 1; New York: Touchstone, 1996). See also Athenagoras, *A Plea for Christians* 33. On the importance of chastity in 2nd-cent. Christianity, see Brown, *Body and Society*, 83–139.

⁶⁸ The generic similarities between the apocryphal Acts and ancient novels are well known; see, e.g., Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 115–35.

⁶⁹ On which, see Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Women and Religion 23; Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1987) 31–66; Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995) 25–30; and Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) 45–67.

⁷⁰ On Thecla, see Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*, 49–57; Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 50–51; and Melissa Aubin, “Reversing Romance? The Acts of Thecla and the Ancient Novel,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 257–72. For a reading that compares the treatment of virginity in *Leucippe and Clitophon* and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* from a postcolonial perspective, see Virginia Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance,” *Arethusa* 38 (2005) 49–88, esp. 54–68.

⁷¹ Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 55.

In sum, in the late second century, comparisons between Christian and Dionysiac myth and ritual were known to both Christians and non-Christians. On the one hand, critics like Celsus could ridicule Christian narratives by demonstrating their inferiority to the myths of Dionysus. On the other hand, Christianity could be slurred for its apparent similarities to Bacchic (and other) mysteries. Christians' insistence on chastity developed in part from their desire to separate themselves from the sexuality associated with such cults.

■ *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.2 as Parody of the Christian Eucharist

The foregoing sections have established the strong likelihood that Achilles Tatius's Dionysiac ritual imitates the Christian Eucharist and subjects it to critical parody. In addition to the striking linguistic and conceptual parallels between his novel and the New Testament narratives, it is clear that the eucharistic words of Jesus had a prominent place in Christian communities and that their texts and practices were becoming increasingly known to non-Christians. A reader who had such knowledge and shared a critical attitude toward Christianity would certainly have picked up on and enjoyed this transformation. I now offer some further observations regarding *Leucippe and Clitophon* that suggest that, in keeping with his larger use of parody, Achilles Tatius has created an incongruity that centers on questions of sexual morality.

Achilles Tatius offers several hints that his etiological myth is unlike any other literary version of the story. He has Clitophon introduce it by stating, "they tell a story, the origin of the feast, when wine as yet did not exist anywhere among human beings" (τῆς ἐορτῆς διηγούονται πατέρα μῦθον, οἶνον οὐκ εἶναι ποτε παρ' ἀνθρώποις ὅπου μήπω παρ' αὐτοῖς; 2.2.2). He then disrupts the readers' expectations by differentiating the Tyrian wine from several types of well-known wines from Greek literature: "not the dark and sweet-smelling, nor that of the vine of Biblia, nor the Thracian of Maron, nor the Chian from Laconia, nor that of the island of Icarus" (οὐ τὸν μέλανα τὸν ἀνθοσμίαν, οὐ τὸν τῆς Βιβλίας ἀμπέλου, οὐ τὸν Μάρωνος τὸν Θράκιον, οὐ Χῖον ἐκ Λακαίνης, οὐ τὸν Ἰκάρου τὸν νησιώτην; 2.2.2).⁷² These famous Greek wines, Clitophon insists, in fact "were all colonized from the Tyrian wines" (τούτους μὲν ἅπαντας ἀποίκους εἶναι Τυρίων οἴνων; 2.2.2). In addition, Achilles Tatius through Clitophon differentiates his myth from the most famous Greek myth of the origin of wine, noting that the Tyrian story about the herdsman is "like what Athenians say about Icarus" (οἶον Ἀθηναῖοι τὸν Ἰκάριον λέγουσι; 2.2.3). In this latter account, Dionysus is hosted by Icarus,

⁷² The literary references include Aristophanes, *Plut.* 807 (the dark wine); Hesiod, *Op.* 587 and Theocritus, *Id.* 14.15 (the Biblical vine); Homer, *Od.* 9.196–97 (the wine of Maron); and Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 1.69 (citing Aristophanes on Chian wine from Laconia). For a discussion of the literary sources and textual problems, see Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius*, 2:38–41. Edmund P. Cueva argues that the mythological wines mentioned here are programmatic for all of book 2 (*The Myths of Fiction: Studies in the Canonical Greek Novels* [Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2004] 66–74).

who, upon receiving wine from the god, joyously distributes it to his fellows. As a result of their drunkenness, they kill him and subsequently his daughter, Erigone, hangs herself from grief.⁷³ Achilles Tatius's version of the myth differs significantly in its points of emphasis. Whereas the traditional myth emphasizes the power of wine to induce madness and violence, his narrative highlights its sexual potency. Indeed, the connection between Dionysus, wine, and sex was a well-established trope in Greek literature.⁷⁴

The subsequent events in book 2 of *Leucippe and Clitophon* demonstrate that the immediate effects of wine are erotic rather than tragic. In Achilles Tatius's myth, when the herdsman first tastes the wine, he observes that "leaping down into the belly it kindles the fire of pleasure from below" (εἰς τὴν γαστέρα δὲ καταθορόν ἀναπνεῖ κάτωθεν ἡδονῆς πῦρ; 2.2.5). Similarly, Clitophon reports that the wine produces a heightened effect on the gaze between him and Leucippe: "As the drink advanced, now I was also looking at her without shame" (τοῦ δὲ πότου προτιόντος ἤδη καὶ ἀναισχύντως ἐς αὐτὴν ἐώρων; 2.3.3). Likewise, "now also she herself dared to look at me more intensely" (ἤδη δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ περιεργότερον εἰς ἐμὲ βλέπειν ἐθρασύνετο; 2.3.3).⁷⁵ Achilles Tatius has Clitophon make the relationship between wine and erotic love explicit:

Eros and Dionysus, two violent gods, constraining a soul, they drive it mad into shamelessness: the one enflames it with his customary fire, the other brings wine as fuel. For wine is a nourishment of Eros. (2.3.3)

[Ἴῆρος δὲ καὶ Διόνυσος, δύο βίαιοι θεοί, ψυχὴν κατασχόντες ἐκμαίνουσιν εἰς ἀναισχυντίαν, ὁ μὲν καίῳ αὐτὴν τῷ συνήθει πυρί, ὁ δὲ τὸν οἶνον ὑπέκκαυμα φέρων· οἶνος γὰρ ἔρωτος τροφή.]⁷⁶

⁷³ The best-known version of the Icarus myth was Eratosthenes's lost poem *Erigone*. Nonnus's 5th-cent. C.E. epic poem employs it as his source (*Dion.* 47.1–264); on this, see Friedrich Solmsen, "Eratosthenes' Erigone: A Reconstruction," *TAPA* 78 (1947) 252–75; and Spanoudakis, "Icarus Jesus Christ?" See also Ps.-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.14.7.

⁷⁴ For example, in Euripides's *Bacchae*, the messenger exhorts Pentheus to receive Dionysus into the city because "if wine no longer exists, there remains no Aphrodite or any other pleasure among humans" (οἶνου δὲ μηκέτ' ὄντος οὐκ ἔστιν Κύπρις / οὐδ' ἄλλο τερπνὸν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔτι; 773–74). A similar connection is made by Bacchylides in a description of the activity at symposia as a time "when sweet necessity enflames the [tender] heart of youths as the wine cups are sent around and the hope of Aphrodite sets the mind to fluttering, mingling with the gifts of Dionysus" (εὐτε νέων ἀ[παλὸν] γλυκεῖ' ἀνάγκη / σεσομενᾶν κυλίκων θάλπησι θυμόν, / Κύπριδος τ' ἐλπὶς <δι>αἰθύσση φρένας, / ἄμμιεγνυμένα Διονυσίοισι δῶροις; fr. 20B 6–9 Snell and Maehler).

⁷⁵ See also *Leuc. Clit.* 1.9.5 where the lovers' gaze is described as a "new kind of embracing of bodies" (καινὴ γὰρ ἔστι σωματῶν συμπλοκή).

⁷⁶ The description of wine as the fuel of Eros echoes 1.5.6, where Clitophon, after hearing a song about Apollo and Daphne, comments that "an erotic story is a fuel of desire. Even someone who trains himself in self-restraint is provoked into imitation by the example" (ὑπέκκαυμα γὰρ ἐπιθυμίας λόγος ἐρωτικός, κᾶν εἰς σωφροσύνην τις ἑαυτὸν νουθετῇ, τῷ παραδείγματι πρὸς τὴν μίμησιν ἐρεθίζεται). Here it seems Achilles Tatius refers self-reflexively to the intended effect of his own writing; see Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity*, 67–73.

In *Leuc. Clit.* 2.9, the enjoyment of wine is linked to the experience of kissing: the lovers exchange their cups of wine and imagine themselves offering a “missive kiss” (ἀποστολιμαῖον τοῦτο φίλημα; 2.9.2). The ultimate result is a chain of events that leads inexorably to their failed and disastrous attempt at a sexual rendezvous, the single lapse in Leucippe’s commitment to chastity (2.2.23). Thus, the novel leaves the clear impression that the religious celebration of wine necessarily entails erotic effects.

Achilles Tatius’s harvest festival, therefore, stands in sharp contrast to the Christian celebration of wine in the Eucharist. Whereas many Christians labored to distinguish their practices from polytheistic cult and to establish sexual chastity as fundamental to their own identity, Achilles Tatius reminds his readers that for Greeks religious celebrations of wine were inherently erotic. Thus, the effect of the parody depends on the recognition of the incongruity between Christian professions of sexual renunciation, on the one hand, and the erotic effects of wine, on the other.

■ Conclusion

I have suggested that the narrative and ritual resemblances between the myth of wine in *Leuc. Clit.* 2.2 and the Eucharist are too striking and detailed to be accidental and would not have gone unnoticed by a reader with knowledge of Christianity. There is significant evidence that by the late second century, many non-Christians had acquired specific knowledge of eucharistic practices and their associated narrative texts. Furthermore, comparisons of Christianity and Dionysiac religion had become a common feature in the religious discourse of Christians and their critics. Thus, the conflation of the words and actions of Dionysus with those of Jesus in Achilles Tatius’s wine myth would have been readily recognizable as a parody of the Christian Eucharist. Achilles Tatius’s transformation of the Christian source is in keeping with parody elsewhere in his novel and indeed with his larger literary project, which aims at a reappraisal of the ideals of sexual morality in the literary genre of the Greek romance. Whereas many Christians were concerned with creating and maintaining a reputation for sexual chastity, the narrative of *Leucippe and Clitophon* emphasizes that for Greeks religious celebrations of wine are inherently erotic. An ideal reader of the parody would recognize the incongruity between the eucharistic source and its transformation into an erotic Dionysiac setting and would enjoy the satiric treatment. Consequently, the use of parody in *Leucippe and Clitophon*’s wine myth illuminates both Achilles Tatius’s literary aims and the relationship between early Christianity and the Greek literary culture of the Second Sophistic.