

[DISCUSSION]

Ancient Greek ‘romances’: context and considerations

You may use any one (or more) of the five complete Greek novels to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is the ancient novel a product of the Second Sophistic?
2. Who were the main readers/audience of the ancient novel?
3. How does the representation of geographical space create meaning in the ancient Greek novel?
4. What is the connection (if any) between the ancient novels and the historical social life at the time of the novels’ composition?
5. Aside from the five complete Greek novels, did any other ancient Greek novels survive (e.g. fragments or summaries)?
6. Does the attention we pay to the ‘ideal novels’ prevents us from appreciating the full diversity of ancient novelistic literature?
7. Can we justifiably apply the term ‘genre’ to the ancient Greek romances/ideal novels?
What are the problems and/or advantages of seeing this collection of texts as a distinctive genre?

Helpful Reading:

- Reardon, B. P. (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Los Angeles and Berkeley), ‘Introduction’
- Walsh, P. G. (1970) *The Roman Novel* (Bristol), Chs. 1 and 2 (‘Intro’ and ‘The formative genres’)
- Whitmarsh, T. (2008) *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel* (Cambridge)