

REVIEW ARTICLE

THE ANCIENT NOVEL AT THE END OF THE CENTURY: SCHOLARSHIP SINCE THE DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE

When, as an undergraduate in the 1970s, I first declared my interest in doing my doctoral research in the area of the Greek novel, I was reassured, in all kindness, by a very senior Oxford classicist that I need not feel downhearted at the prospect of spending three whole years reading silly love stories, because there were some very interesting uses of the optative to be discovered in Heliodoros. At that period it was almost a ritual to apologize for the low literary quality of the material with which one was working, perhaps even, in more thoughtful moments, to distance it from the great works of the classical canon by evoking a newly literate but otherwise educationally challenged mass readership, including women, as its target audience. The most influential books on the ancient novel before 1970 sidestepped the content of the novels either by concentrating on the literary-historical problem of the genre's origin or by reading them as allegories that did not really mean what they appeared to say:¹ it was rare to find any sympathetic engagement with the novels as literature, although, of course, the Latin novels of Petronius and Apuleius had always seemed more central than their Greek counterparts, presumably because their authors were recognizably at the "high" end of the social—and hence literary—spectrum.

Over the last twenty-five years all that has changed. The columns of *L'Année Philologique* are bulging with new scholarship on ancient fiction, to the extent that it is becoming difficult to keep abreast of the secondary literature. The novels have migrated in from the margins, and now undergraduate courses involving ancient fiction are proliferating in both Europe and North America. However this phenomenon is to be interpreted, there can be no doubt that the two International Conferences on the Ancient Novel have been important landmarks on the novel's journey to centrality. The first, held at Bangor in North Wales in 1976 to mark the centenary of the publication of Rohde's still fundamental book, was organized by Bryan Reardon, a father figure to many of us in this field. The second, a much larger affair, took place in 1989, at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, where over a sweltering but inspiring week nearly a hundred papers were read by scholars from all corners of the globe. Many of the contributions heard at Dartmouth have since appeared in various journals and books. However, the conference organizer, James Tatum, has edited twenty-three of them for this handsome volume.² In a sense they are an unrepresentative memoir of

1. I am thinking particularly of Erwin Rohde's *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, first published in 1876, and more recently, B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances. A Literary-historical Account of their Origins*, Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 37 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967); Reinhold Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* (Munich and Berlin, 1962).

2. *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore and London, 1994).

the occasion: their corporate bias towards theory, related sub-genres, and *Nachleben* underestimates the place of literary analysis of the canonical novels. The areas covered by the essays in this book may well be, however, precisely those where the interest of readers from outside the narrow discipline of “Classics” is most likely to be engaged: a canny marketing ploy, as Tatum himself acknowledges, but also a salutary reminder that classicists can no longer afford to stand aloof from dialogue with sister disciplines.

The publication of Tatum’s volume, five years after the event from which it originates, provides an opportunity, at the editor’s invitation, to take stock of how the study of ancient fiction has developed since ICAN 2, and where we are now headed (who is going to organize ICAN 3?). But first I must discharge the normal duties of a reviewer and discuss the contents of the book in front of me.

Tatum has grouped his essays into eight sections, framed by modern and ancient theory (“Theorizing Ancient Fiction” and “How Antiquity Read Its Novels”). This lends the book the appearance of structure, and allows the editor to pursue what he identifies as major issues of theme and methodology (particularly the question of definition) in his introduction. But some of the categories are really rather arbitrary—the relationship of the ancient novels to a range of later texts is distributed over Sections II (“Remembering and Revising”), VI (“Fictions Sacred and Profane”) and VII (“Pursuing the Idea of Ancient Fiction”), and readers are ultimately best advised, I suggest, to approach each paper as it was conceived, as an independent treatment of a topic of its author’s choosing.

Of the major Greek novelists, only Longus is accorded a paper of his own: in fact three. Bryan Reardon’s “Μῦθος οὐ λόγος: Longus’s Lesbian Pastorals” (pp. 135–47) fittingly opened the conference. Reardon is troubled by the novel’s apparent mismatch between comic realism and serious symbolism, which he identifies as rooted in the hybridization of novel and pastoral, the one dynamic and human, the other static and idealistic. Rather than attempting to square the circle and produce the impossible, an allegory that also functions as a story, Longus retreats from the seriousness of his own text, deconstructs himself, and withdraws in ironic inscrutability at the crucial moment. What earlier generations of critics might have dismissed as an artistic failure becomes a significant intellectual strategy: Reardon’s own immaculately stylish prose relishes the irony of his conclusion. W. Geoffrey Arnott’s “Longus, Natural History, and Realism” (pp. 199–215) is a patient examination of the flora and fauna of *Daphnis and Chloe*. It would be easy but quite wrong to mock this kind of scholarship. However cutting-edge one’s own narrative theory, one must be grateful to know that Longus’ natural history is accurate; that knowledge is bound to affect in some small way our reading of his fictional world. Froma I. Zeitlin’s “Gardens of Desire in Longus’s *Daphnis and Chloe*: Nature, Art, and Imitation” (p. 148–70) could come from a different planet: this is a sophisticated and discursive treatment of the protocols of nature and art in relation to both literature and love. Unfortunately, what we have here is merely a section from an already well known and easily accessible paper;³ anyone remotely interested in Longus ought to have read the whole thing,

3. “The Poetics of *Erōs*: Nature, Art, and Imitation in Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*,” in *Before Sexuality: the Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler, and F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), pp. 417–64.

and the publication of an extract (as distinct from an overview of the whole argument) is frankly superfluous.

Turning to the Latin novelists, John Bodel contributes an excellent paper on "Trimalchio's Underworld" (pp. 237–59), which begins with the now familiar intertextual association of Trimalchio's house with Hades, moves on to find a realistically funerary flavour in the decorative art he has gathered around himself, and ends by interpreting the all-pervading motif of death as a metaphor for the place of a freedman in Roman society: a compelling bridge between "social" and "literary" readings of the episode. Ken Dowden ("The Roman Audience of the *Golden Ass*," pp. 419–34) argues for an early date for Apuleius' novel, perhaps around 155 as against the usually accepted 170. This would put the work firmly in the author's period in Rome, and indeed its patent literary aspirations suggest it was not intended for a parochial audience in North Africa. Dowden's arguments are circumstantial but cumulatively forceful; still, the apparent silence of the prosecution in that courtroom in Sabratha in 158/9 is puzzling if the novel were in circulation by that time.

A number of writers tackle what we might call the sociology of the novel. Two are of extreme importance: Susan A. Stephens' "Who Read Ancient Novels?" (pp. 405–18) and Ewen Bowie's "The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World" (pp. 435–59) effectively demolish the idea that the novels were in any sense popular literature. Stephens works from the papyrus fragments;⁴ they are not significantly different as physical objects from other literary papyri, certainly not down-market, and not particularly numerous in relation to the standard authors. Bowie assembles literary evidence to the same effect: he argues that the apparent critical disregard of novels is illusory, simply the result of there being no major literary theorist at work during the genre's brief shelf-life (he dates Heliodoros early in the third century and identifies him with the sophist Heliodoros the Arab), whereas the novels themselves give every sign of having been written for a public with a high level of reading competence.⁵ The relative restriction of literacy among women leads Bowie to question the hypothesis of female readership, but Brigitte Egger's examination of the representation of marriage in the novels ("Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels: The Boundaries of Romance," pp. 260–80) suggests a model of secure gender-roles that seems to appeal to women as much as to men. Although the fictional women enjoy rather less freedom and legal status than their real-life counterparts, they stand at the emotional center of these texts, offering women "a narcissistic fantasy of erotic omnipotence." The woman's double role as disempowered victim and wielder of sexual sway is, as Egger points out, reminiscent of modern popular romance. The parallel with "Harlequin" novels is explored polemically by Holly W. Montague ("From *Interlude in Arcady* to *Daphnis and Chloe*: Two Thousand Years of Erotic Fantasy," pp. 391–401): the exercise was no doubt worth conducting, but ultimately unilluminating, given the differences of context and cultural level.⁶ Susan Saïd's "The City in the Ancient Novel" (pp. 216–36) is a fine piece, in a recognizably European

4. Her edition, with J. J. Winkler, of these fragments has just appeared: *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments* (Princeton, 1995).

5. Xenophon of Ephesos may turn out to be an important exception; see below, p. 71, on this point.

6. See also Montague's "Sweet and Pleasant Passion: Female and Male Fantasy in Ancient Romance Novels," in *Pornography and Representation*, ed. Amy Richlin (Oxford, 1992), pp. 231–49; and, less ideologically, Stefan van den Broeck, "Dafnis en Chloë op Hawaii," *HZnMTL* 46 (1992): 225–44.

critical idiom, classifying the representation of civic space in fiction. Fictional cities physically reflect the cityscapes of reality, but their ideological selectivity (more palaces than ἀγοραί) reflects the power-structures of the Empire. Historically the representations move from stereotyped abstractions to sophisticatedly antiquarian or touristic evocations of specific sites.

Daniel L. Selden's "Genre of Genre" (pp. 39–64) is the most assertively theoretical paper in the volume. His central point is that our perception of the ancient novel as a genre is a modern one, going back no further than Huet in the seventeenth century, who was attempting to find a classical pedigree for the fiction of his own time and thus defuse its revolutionary force. Our appropriation of the category "novel" to ancient fiction in turn, Selden argues, is a thinly veiled strategy to reinforce our own socio-economic and literary hierarchies. But having deconstructed the "genre" of the novels, Selden seeks to regroup these texts by reason of their common exploitation of "syllepsis" (which to me looks suspiciously like Bakhtin's "dialogism"): their apparent ability to exist simultaneously in more than one cultural code. This grandiose claim is very far from being substantiated by the relatively minor examples Selden adduces, and I do not think it would withstand careful investigation except in a form too attenuated to be meaningful. The real agenda of this essay is to co-opt these texts as allies in a campaign against the chronic exclusivity of the classically derived Western intellectual tradition. At this point the argument becomes a political one, but there is nonetheless an urgent issue here. The canonical Greek romances are clearly united by their motivic repertoire, and (pace Selden) were perceived as a corpus by readers of late antiquity and the Byzantine period; but how exactly was that corpus related, conceptually and practically, to other sub-forms and national traditions of fiction in the ancient world?

No other contributor confronts this question head-on, but several deal with specific marginal texts. David Konstan ("*Apollonius, King of Tyre* and the Greek Novel," pp. 173–82) discovers an erotic model distinct from the romantic symmetry of the Greek novels, one that de-eroticizes marriage and problematizes the relation of father to daughter.⁷ Stefan Merkle ("Telling the True Story of the Trojan War: The Eyewitness Account of Dictys of Crete," pp. 183–96), summarizing his book,⁸ finds unsuspected literary merit in a work usually perceived as tedious and artless. Judith Perkins ("The Social World of the *Acts of Peter*," pp. 296–307) shows how a genuinely popular narrative voice articulates the same quest for meaning as the sophistic romances, redeploying similar strategies for subversive ends. Reinhold Merkelbach ("Novel and Aretalogy," pp. 283–95) returns to familiar religious territory, and finds significant similarities between authentic religious narrative and the fictions. We can profit from this demonstration of the continuities of the narrative spectrum without following Merkelbach all the way into his famous interpretation of the novels as mystery-texts.

A final group of chapters deal with the relation between the ancient novels and later texts. At one level this can work as simple *Nachleben*, as with Peter Bien's dem-

7. The same case is made in slightly more detail in Konstan's *Sexual Symmetry. Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 100–113. I discuss this book below on p. 72.

8. Stefan Merkle, *Die Ephemeris Belli Troiani des Diktys von Kreta*, Studien zur klassischen Philologie, vol. 44 (Frankfurt am Main, 1989).

onstration ("The Reemergence of Greek Prose Fiction in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," pp. 370–90) that the modern Greek novel owes nothing to its classical counterpart), or when Faustina C. W. Doufkar-Aerts ("A Legacy of the *Alexander Romance* in Arab Writings: Al-Iskandar, Founder of Alexandria," pp. 323–43) traces an account of the foundation of Alexandria by the tenth-century Arab historian Abû'l-Ḥasan al-Mas'ûdî to its local sources. Suzanne MacAlister ("Ancient and Contemporary in Byzantine Novels," pp. 308–22) takes us into another area with which classicists ought to be more familiar; her demonstration that the Byzantine romancers have unobtrusively depaganized the narrative apparatus of implicitly predictive dreams and accommodated the mechanics of romance to their Christian culture is a salutary reminder that apparent imitation often masks creative reinterpretation. At its best this approach can establish a later text as an interpretative lens through which a new reading of the earlier writer can be brought into focus. Walter Stephens ("Tasso's Heliodorus and the World of Romance," pp. 67–87), Diana de Armas Wilson ("Homage to Apuleius: Cervantes' Avenging Psyche," pp. 88–100), James Romm ("Novels beyond Thule: Antonius Diogenes, Rabelais, Cervantes," pp. 101–16),⁹ and David Rollo ("From Apuleius' Psyche to Chrétien's Erec and Enide," pp. 347–69) all succeed in showing us new aspects of old texts. This is criticism of a very high order. Best of all is Margaret Anne Doody's "Heliodorus Rewritten: Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and Frances Burney's *Wanderer*" (pp. 117–31), which takes two novels recognizably analogous to the *Aithiopika* (the question of direct influence is immaterial) in order to explore the effect of gender on narratorial persona.

I have omitted one item from my discussion. Tatum chooses to open his collection by reprinting a hard-to-find essay by John J. Winkler from 1982 ("The Invention of Romance," pp. 23–38). In all honesty it is a rather slight piece, but its presence and its importance are symbolic. Jack Winkler was in his terminal illness at the time of the Dartmouth conference, but was represented at an emotional session by a proxy reading of what later became the chapter on Longus in his book *The Constraints of Desire*.¹⁰ Yet in a very real sense, it was his conference. If any of us had been asked then to name the most influential work of the previous decade, Jack's book on Apuleius would surely have topped the poll, and his article on Heliodoros (itself given its first outing at Bangor) would have been high on the list too.¹¹ Many of the papers given in 1989 would simply not have existed without him.

And this is the point with which I wish to begin the more ruminative section of this review article. What is apparent now, at a distance of six years, is that ICAN 2 was essentially a backward-looking occasion, the summation of an era—the Winkler era, if you like. Of course, given the time lag involved in scholarly publication, we cannot neatly divide the history of novel-scholarship into pre- or post-ICAN 2. Some of the most important work to have appeared in the last few years was

9. Summarizing the last chapter of his *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought. Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 215–22.

10. "The Education of Chloe: Hidden Injuries of Sex," in *The Constraints of Desire. The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London, 1990) pp. 101–26; a shorter version exists as "The Education of Chloe: Erotic Protocols and Prior Violence," in *Rape and Representation*, ed. L. A. Higgins and B. R. Silver (New York, 1991), pp. 15–34.

11. *Auctor & Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius's "The Golden Ass"* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1985); "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*," *YCS* 27 (1982): 93–158.

conceived before Dartmouth and first aired there, and no doubt the critical idioms and intellectual frameworks that dominated proceedings in 1989 will continue to generate new and significant work. Nevertheless, my sense is that the post-structuralist-narratological project, with all its theoretically grounded assumptions that fictional narrative is a self-contained and self-referential "ludic" system primarily concerned with its own status and strategies and resistant to closed interpretation, is no longer making the running and was indeed always a stronger force in North America than in Europe.¹² I do not intend to offer here a systematic survey of the post-ICAN 2 bibliography,¹³ but an impressionistic selection of what I see as the main strands of current scholarship.

Naturally, interest in the rhetoric and technique of the novels continues, and here the insights of narratology cannot be ignored. For example, Niall Slater's book on Petronius¹⁴ is very much a counterpart to Winkler on Apuleius in adopting a self-consciously methodological perspective to its text: in this case the reader-response criticism pioneered by Stanley Fish and others. Slater moves from a reading of the extant portions of the novel, via a "reading" of its narrative voices and play with genres, to a "reading" that has the *Satyricon* as a deliberately uninterpretable text whose reader perpetually reenacts its characters' search for meaning. The obvious danger with this kind of criticism is its tendency to identify the critic's own responses as those of the "implied" reader, and thus to impose anachronistic concerns and interests on the text; in this case the element of subjectivity is redoubled by the fragmentary nature of the material. Winkler himself is not immune to this charge, but in his Apuleius book particularly he made a sophisticated attempt to reconstruct the reading horizons of an original audience. The silence of ancient critics on the novel is infamous, but we are not entirely without evidence. The later Greek novelists, for instance, were conditioned by the intellectual currents that we group under the (misleading) label of the Second Sophistic, and there are plenty of writings produced within that ambit that might provide a rhetorical context for the practice of the novels. Graham Anderson's recent *The Second Sophistic* includes a chapter on novels from this perspective, but it lacks rigor.¹⁵ Far better, though partial, is Shadi Bartsch's essay on the role of description in Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus.¹⁶ This fruitfully supplements a theoretical context derived from contemporary sources with a sensitive observation of what the novelists actually do with their material, tapping into their reader's culturally conditioned reading competences ("what they always already knew") in order to lure them into second-guessing the plot in ways that set up surprises and reversals. The evidence does not, I think, warrant Bartsch's Winkleresque conclusion that these writers were theoretically problematizing the reading-act, but it does demonstrate the devices they employed to maximize the pleasure (a recurrent idea in ancient discussions of storytelling) to be derived from their works. Further work within the ambit of the Second Sophistic will tell us much (but not

12. Jack Winkler's own last work, like his essay on Longus, was already moving towards a more outward-looking type of reading.

13. For this see E. L. Bowie and S. J. Harrison, "The Romance of the Novel," *JRS* 83 (1993): 159–78.

14. *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore and London, 1990); a version of the final chapter was read at ICAN 2.

15. *The Second Sophistic. A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London and New York, 1993), esp. pp. 156–70.

16. *Decoding the Ancient Novel. The Reader and the Role of Description in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* (Princeton, 1989). See my discussion in *CP* 86 (1991): 153–58.

everything) about the way the novels present themselves, from a linguistic level upwards.

Bryan Reardon's *The Form of Greek Romance*¹⁷ is a long-matured attempt to extrapolate the ancient theoretical context, not shy of intellectualizing but not fixated by modish certainties. Reardon's primary concern is with the question of genre, whose essence he attempts to define both by studying the practice of the individual novelists and by a wide-ranging survey of ancient theorizing about fiction. There are problems here, in that none of the ancient theorists was concerned with the same subgroup of fictions as Reardon: a theory of fiction is not necessarily the same thing as a theory of the novel, and there is no obvious reason to assume that what Aristotle said about drama in the fourth century B.C. would have been a determining force in the writing or reading of a romance in the second century after Christ. Nevertheless, such ideas, diluted by time and familiarity and perhaps not even consciously assimilated, were ingredients of the cultural soup in which the novelists and their readers swam. It remains true, however, that our best source of evidence for the novelists' concept of their form is analysis of the texts themselves.¹⁸

A compelling modern European approach to the genre as a whole is that of Massimo Fusillo.¹⁹ He adopts three distinct lines of attack. The first is the novels' "polyphony," their ability to absorb and enter into dialogue with the whole range of previous literature. Long-noted echoes of epic, drama and so on are thus not relics of the genre's prehistory, but part of its system of meaning and also a strategy to inscribe itself in the continuity of Hellenic culture. (In this connection, we may note Thomas Paulsen's fine—and philologically nuanced—reading of Heliodoros' novel as a conscious interplay between tragedy and comedy.)²⁰ Fusillo's second avenue is a formalist, Genettian taxonomy of narrative levels and voices, the third an examination of the romance's paradigmatic theme, love. This is a topic to which I shall return.

The whole notion of genre (or rather the genre) is still problematic. The similarities between the five core Greek novels are clear enough (though Fusillo interestingly excludes Longus from his discussions) at levels of both form and theme, but their relation to other fictional types is still to be fully investigated. The point is that the novels are defined as a corpus not just by their mutual similarity, but by their resemblance to and difference from other texts that fall within the broader category of "fiction." We need to reconceptualize the novel as a section of a spectrum, from which it was not hermetically separated.

There has been no new find within the last decade to compare in importance to the fragments of Lollianus' *Phoinikika* or the so-called *Iolaos Romance*, which seem to offer Greek analogues to the comic Roman novels. But the fragments that we do possess

17. B. P. Reardon, *The Form of Greek Romance* (Princeton, 1991).

18. I attempt to define the nature of the Greek novel's fictionality, and its place within ancient literary systems in my essay "Make-believe and Make Believe: the Fictionality of the Greek Novels," in *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, ed. Christopher Gill, T. P. Wiseman (Exeter, 1993), pp. 175–229. See too the more sociologically nuanced collection *Der antike Roman. Untersuchungen zur literarischen Kommunikation und Gattungsgeschichte*, ed. H. Kuch, Veröffentlichungen des Zentralinstituts für alte Geschichte und Archäologie der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, vol. 19 (Berlin, 1989).

19. *Il Romanzo greco. Polifonia ed Eros* (Venice, 1989); French translation by Marielle Abrioux, *Naissance du roman* (Paris, 1991).

20. *Inszenierung des Schicksals. Tragödie und Komödie im Roman des Heliodor*, Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium, vol. 10 (Trier, 1992).

indicate that ancient fiction was a much broader church than the extant texts suggest of themselves. No doubt the selective tastes of Byzantine Christians, on whom classical literature depended for its survival, are an important distorting factor here. Several recent studies have been directed at bringing the fragments into better focus, not least from a textual point of view. Among these the exemplary treatment by Rolf Kussl of the *Ninos Romance*, the *Herpyllis Romance*, and the more recently identified *Apollonios* fragments (which revive the possibility of a Greek original for the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*) deserves special mention, as does a series of articles by Antonio Stramaglia.²¹ But there have also been important studies of works of fiction which lie outside the canon: Fusillo's edition and commentary on Antonius Diogenes, Merkle's full-length treatment of Dictys of Crete and Beschoner's of Dares of Phrygia (two fictitious "eye-witness" accounts of the Trojan War), and superb collections of essays produced under the leadership of Niklas Holzberg on the *Aesop Romance* and fictions in letter-form.²² Here traditional and pragmatic approaches to literary criticism combined with meticulous scholarship have brought important advances in knowledge. It is clear for example that the level of literary expertise and ambition in these "fringe" works is often much higher than usually supposed, and that the "letter-novels" have a number of formal features in common that define them as a corpus. We need to extend the study of the margins of the novel yet further: paradoxography (including horror stories), fictional Utopias within a historiographical frame, pagan aretalogies, even the joke collection of the *Philogelos* require integration into the wider frame.

Another tradition with which we urgently need to come to grips is that of early Christian fiction, both Apocryphal Acts and hagiographies. Richard Pervo has begun to map out the lines that connect pagan and Christian fiction, though his perception of the classical novels is distorted by a belief that they are "popular" works.²³ Here the modern history of academic disciplines has worked to separate interpenetrating traditions that emerged within the same late antique cultural context. Moreover, we are becoming more conscious of the multi-cultural nature of the eastern Empire. Heliodoros and Iamblichos were Syrians, Chariton worked in Aphrodisias, Achilles Tatius was, on one account, a native of Alexandria. National and racial barriers were permeable. Some of the papyrus finds of fiction from Egypt have a distinctly local flavour, while a Jewish tradition of fiction hybridized with the Greek romance to produce *Joseph and Asenath*. A start towards exploring some of these perspectives is

21. Rolf Kussl, *Papyrusfragmente griechischer Romane*, Classica Monacensia, vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1991); Antonio Stramaglia, "Due storie di fantasmi raccontate da fantasmi? P. Mich. inv. 3378 (Pack² 2629) e Apuleio, *Met.* IX, 29–31," *ZPE* 84 (1990): 19–26; id. "Innamoramento in sogno o storia di fantasmi? P. Mich. inv. 5 = PGM² XXXIV (Pack² 2636) + P. Palau Rib. inv. 152," *ZPE* 88 (1991): 73–86; id. "Prosimetria narrativa e 'romanzo perduto': P. Turner 8 (con discussione e riedizione di PSI 151 [Pack² 2624]) + P. Mil. Vogliano 260," *ZPE* 92 (1992): 121–49; id. "Fuga dal ginaceo? PSI 725 (Pack² 2626)," *ZPE* 94 (1992): 64–76; id. "Sul frammento di romanzo (?)" P. Michael. 4 (Pack² 2271)," *ZPE* 97 (1993): 7–15. María Paz López Martínez's doctoral dissertation *Fragments papiráceos de novela griega* (Alicante, 1993) has only recently come into my hands.

22. Massimo Fusillo, *Antonio Diogene. Le incredibili avventure al di là di Tule*, La città antica, vol. 4 (Palermo, 1990); Merkle, n. 8 above; A. Beschoner, *Untersuchungen zu Dares Phrygius*, Classica Monacensia, vol. 4 (Tübingen, 1992); *Der Äsop-Roman. Motivgeschichte und Erzählstruktur*, ed. N. Holzberg, Classica Monacensia, vol. 6 (Tübingen, 1992); *Der griechische Briefroman. Gattungstypologie und Textanalyse*, ed. N. Holzberg, Classica Monacensia, vol. 8 (Tübingen, 1994).

23. R. I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight. The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, 1987).

made in a collection of essays I edited with Richard Stoneman,²⁴ but a note of caution is in order. Our own multicultural agenda should not be allowed to predispose us to find what is not there: Heliodoros' novel, for instance, has an African heroine, but his Africa is a construct of a Hellenocentric world-view; there is no authentic alternative experience offered here. If the novels parade an interest in non-Greek peoples and were able to absorb influences from non-Greek traditions, their self-presentation is still relentlessly Greco-Roman and in relation to the Greco-Roman canon.

A rather different angle on the novels that has grown since Dartmouth is their exploitation as documents of social history. They are not, of course, photographs of reality, but it is undeniable that they sprang from, and in their turn helped to shape, a historically located cultural matrix. The way in which they represented the world of the Empire to itself has been extensively studied by European scholars, particularly those influenced by the *Annales* school of history.²⁵ G. W. Bowersock's 1991 Sather Lectures also treated fictions as part of the history of their period.²⁶ This entails much more than scouring them for historical references: the sudden burgeoning of fiction in the reign of Nero is itself a historical event in need of explanation. Bowersock traces the novels' exoticism to a reassertion of cultural difference within a homogeneous and peaceful administration, and the emergence of an ecumenical Hellenism that was able to embrace what had formerly been considered barbarian. Their interest in the miraculous is rather more controversially interpreted as a response to the miracle narratives of Christian mythology, which for pagan readers redefined the parameters of narrative prose, effectively enabling fiction in the form of history. This book, coming at the material from a possibly unexpected direction, is certain to provoke debate. In particular, Bowersock's speculations confirm that the question of the origins of the Greek novel is alive and well and is not going to let itself be reformulated out of existence. Another important line of enquiry has been opened by James O'Sullivan, whose meticulous analysis of the text of Xenophon of Ephesos leads him to the conclusion that it displays all the signs of formulaic oral story-telling.²⁷ By putting back Xenophon's dates so that he becomes the earliest of the novelists, O'Sullivan is able to read the *Ephesiaka* as a transitional moment when popular stories crossed the border into literature. I am not convinced by every aspect of this case, but as an explanation of the oddity of the *Ephesiaka*, it cannot be rejected out of hand, and certainly shakes the widely held view that what we have is an epitome. Modern studies of orality will help us to define to what extent the plot-structures and language, of the earlier novels at least, are rooted in non-literary practice, though any demarcating line between written and oral fiction should be conceived of as permeable in either direction.

24. *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, ed. J. R. Morgan, and Richard Stoneman (London and New York, 1994).

25. We may name in particular *Piccolo mondo antico. Le donne, gli amori, i costumi, il mondo reale nel romanzo antico*, ed. P. Liviabella Furiani and Antonio M. Scarcella (Naples, 1989), and *Le monde du roman grec*, ed. M.-F. Baslez, Philippe Hoffmann, and Monique Trédé, *Études de littérature ancienne*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1992).

26. *Fiction as History. Nero to Julian*, Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 58 (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1994).

27. *Xenophon of Ephesus. His Compositional Technique and the Birth of the Novel*, *Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte*, vol. 44 (Berlin and New York, 1995).

The single area of social history most germane to the novels is of course the history of sexuality. Five items stand out here. The first is the third section of Fusillo's book as noted above, which makes a start towards documenting features such as the symmetry of gender relations in the novels (taken by Foucault as a sign of a new sexual dynamic) and the instantaneousness and totality of romantic passion. Two important contributions concern themselves with Longus. Froma Zeitlin²⁸ examines the strategies by which Longus seeks to ground the conventions of sexuality in nature: Daphnis and Chloe are paradigmatically "natural" but "inevitably" act out and so validate social norms. Jack Winkler²⁹ evangelically read Chloe's story "against the grain" as a parable of protest against the institutionalized violence of patriarchy; this is the closest we have yet had to a feminist reading of (as opposed to polemic against) any of the novels. Arguably, novel-scholars have been slow to react to the seminal work of Foucault,³⁰ but two diametrically different books have recently appeared. David Konstan³¹ refines Foucault's formulation in order to define the erotic system underlying the narrative of the Greek novels: the exact equality and mutuality of the protagonists is opposed to the asymmetry of the classical pederastic model; passion is a valid basis for permanence and marriage, not disruptive; the protagonists are to be distinguished from repulsive secondary characters not by the quality of their desire, but rather by their fidelity over time, fidelity being conceived in an emotional rather than strictly physical sense. Konstan is clear, against Foucault, that this is not a reflection of reality but a literary construction, a coded attempt to relocate the self against a shifted social and political grid. I think he underestimates the didactic thrust of these texts, however, the extent to which they seek to influence their readers to import romantic values into their real lives. Simon Goldhill is more radical:³² in his view Foucault fundamentally misread the "ludic" nature of the fictional text, the subversive humor with which these works ironize their own and others' "philosophy"; the novels do not speak for themselves, but open up sites of negotiation where constructions of the self can be played with. The points against Foucault are well made: no one would seriously disagree that the literary structure of an imaginative work determines the meaning of the statements it contains. In the end Goldhill equivocates, I think, between arguing that Foucault's reading of erotic fictions was just too simplistic and literal, and suggesting that they, by definition, must forever elude interpretation as documents. Do texts mean or not-mean? The intellectual strength and sheer fun of Goldhill's book are undeniable, but my sense is that it is swimming against a changed tide. The novels are not just ludic or self-consciously problematic or even (as Foucault read them) straightforwardly descriptive: they are in a real sense seriously didactic. The dynamics of their didacticism are only just beginning to be explored.³³

28. Zeitlin, "Poetics," (n. 3. above).

29. Winkler, "Education," (n. 10 above).

30. A very nice Foucault-based reading of *Daphnis and Chloe* is Cécile Daude, "Le roman de Daphnis et Chloé, ou comment ne pas être un 'animal politique,'" in *Mélanges Étienne Bernard*, ed. Nicole Fick and J.-C. Carrière, *Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon*, vol. 444 (Paris, 1991), pp. 203–25. This, however, is less concerned with the erotic than with the redefinition of the self.

31. Konstan, "Symmetry," (n. 7 above).

32. *Foucault's Virginity. Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (Cambridge, 1995).

33. Perhaps I can mention my own article (and my own contribution at Dartmouth), "The Story of Kneumon in Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*," *JHS* 109 (1989): 99–113, as an example of how a novel can be read as a statement of moral and erotic values.

What underlies so much of the work to which I have alluded in this review is what we might call a new positivism. The desire for the novels to mean something and not to slip away into an infinite regress of indeterminacy and self-referentiality has resulted in a reversion to the pragmatic methodologies of traditional philology and history. We have read the theory, but for the moment the study of the ancient novel is not theory-driven. This is nicely illustrated by the case of Apuleius. There has been a marked disinclination to build on Winkler's work: Carl Schlam's new book on the author³⁴ begins with a chapter headed "Meaning in the Narrative" and proceeds to argue, with duly cautious qualifications, that the novel is arranged not just to entertain but to articulate a series of moral, social, and religious messages.

How can we explain this apparent faltering of the critical trends of the early eighties? Are we just regrouping for the next leap forward? The theoretical, ideological approach so prevalent at Dartmouth derived in large part from disciplines other than Classics. It gave a sense of direction and revolution to the study of the ancient novel, to which it seemed to apply more readily than other classical literature, but it also showed up the startling gaps in our tool chest. These texts still need to be properly edited, located, elucidated, interpreted, worked over to give the theory something solid to bite on. I doubt if this is the whole answer, however. Our interest in the novels is no less a historical phenomenon than they are themselves. Something about these works made them speak to a period. The growth in interest in them coincided with a painful period of readjustment and self-redefinition for Classics as a profession. The politically led deprivileging of the subject's traditionally perceived values opened the door to these non-civic, subversively erotic, above all innovative inhabitants of the canon's chronological and geographical margins. Contemporaneously, the growth of new critical theory seemed to provide a conceptual framework within which iconoclastic thinking could take place. But these same ideological frameworks all too often denoted a withdrawal from engagement with moral substance: a system that deconstructed and privatized hierarchies of value and meaning, applied to texts that themselves marked a disengagement from public systems, was, perhaps, our equivalent of minimalist music and post-modern architecture, not altogether unconnected with the cultural and political dislocations of the unspeakable eighties. I suppose what I am saying is that the Winklerian project, which was after all just a drop in a tide running through the Humanities, was (for all its humaneness and intelligence) the product of historical forces too large to see close-up. Now perhaps times are on the move again and, with a change of power in the U.S. and the British Tory party shambling towards a richly deserved electoral oblivion, we are fumbling to rediscover lost certainties out of our disillusion. The novels will not be exiled back to the margins, but what we next see in them will be, as with all scholarship, a reflection of our changing selves.

J. R. MORGAN
*University of Wales,
 Swansea*

34. *The Metamorphoses of Apuleius. On Making an Ass of Oneself* (London, 1992).