

Ewen BOWIE

**The chronology of the earlier Greek novels since
B.E.Perry: revisions and precisions.**

This paper revisits the problem of the chronology of the earlier Greek novels. For Perry (whose hypotheses were formed by 1951 although only published in 1967), Reardon (1969), Papanikolaou (1973) and Dihle (1978), Chariton and the author(s) of *Ninus* and of *Metiochos and Parthenope* were writing in the first century BC, and thus to be read (especially in Reardon's view) in the context of late Hellenistic society. This paper bases its arguments on:

- a. The linguistic features of *Ninus* and *Metiochos and Parthenope*, which do not support the early dating given to both by Dihle (when discussing the latter in 1978) any more than the early date for Chariton can survive the arguments of Ruiz Montero (1991) and Hernandez Lara (1994), scholars whose lexical work offers a more sophisticated theoretical framework than that of Papanikolaou.
- b. On a more rigorous examination of the *terminus ante quem* given by the papyrus of *Ninus*.
- c. On the *terminus ante quem* offered by the ostrakon (first identified as bearing a text of *Metiochos and Parthenope* in 1977).
- d. On references in Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus and *Ninus* to events of the period 37 ñ 66 AD.
- e. On points of shared concern between the sculpture of Aphrodisias ca. 50 AD and the *Ninus* romance.

It proposes that:

- i. all four works were probably written ca. 50-70 A.D.
- ii. **Chariton's romance was probably written earlier than the *Ninus***
- iii. three were probably written in Aphrodisias and the fourth in relatively nearby Ephesus.
- iv. the genre should be seen as having initially had only a local vogue.

A second section of the paper adduces arguments for dating Antonius Diogenes between A.D.100 and 130 and Achilles Tatius around A.D. 140-150

The final section of the paper briefly assesses the implications for this dating of the first burst of extended Greek prose fiction not in the hellenistic period but in the high Roman empire, between A.D. 50 and A.D. 70, taking account of recent work on the nature of the Hellenistic city and of the culture of the Greek cities in the Roman empire respectively.