

NEW ANCIENT STUDIES COURSE IN FALL 2024!
ANCS 350-01: THE ANCIENT GREEK NOVEL
T/Th 1:00-2:15, PAHB 441
Dr. David Rosenbloom



The Fair Anthia Leading her Companions to the Temple of Diana in Ephesus, Joseph Paelinck, c.1820, Museum of the Fine Arts, Ghent, based on Xenophon of Ephesus' novel, *Anthia and Habrocomes*.

Ancient-Greek contributions to the development and advancement of democracy, drama, philosophy, historiography, biology, medicine, astronomy, architecture — among other elements of culture — are common knowledge. Less well known is the ancient Greek role in the evolution of the novel and other forms of imaginative prose fiction in the half-millennium from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE. Early novels are mainly romances in which love conquers all — but only after the lovers endure excruciating dislocations and twists of fate — captivity, slavery, torture, live burial, attempted suicide, crucifixion. Pirates and brigands operate virtually unchecked; government is non-existent, ineffective, or part of the problem. These narratives span a wide geographic range, from Nubia (ancient Aethiopia) and Egypt to the Levant (Phoenicia and Syria), Anatolia, and the Near East, and across to Greece, Italy, and Sicily. Employing tropes of tragedy, new comedy, pastoral, tales of physical transformation (metamorphosis), and historical fiction (including science fiction), these works are often imbued with a unique religiosity focused on the Egyptian goddess Isis.

We will read six works in English translation: four romances, a novella of a man's unfortunate transformation into an ass (he had wanted to become a bird) and his crazy misadventures, and a fantasy travelogue of excursions to such places as the moon and the Islands of the Blessed in the Underworld.

This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject.