

IRENE DE JONG (ed.), *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative, Volume Three*.

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Whereas the former two volumes in the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* series were devoted to concepts which have received a good deal of critical attention ('time' and 'narrators, narratees, and narratives'), the narratology of space has by comparison been rather neglected, and one of the goals of this book is to give this methodology a more solid grounding for the study of ancient texts than it has had hitherto. An Introduction is followed by 29 chapters on the use and presentation of space in a generous selection of canonical authors, ranging from Homer to Heliodorus. In the words of the preface, the contributors were set the threefold task of 'see[ing] which of the aspects of the device under consideration (set out in the Introduction) are found in his or her author; ... describ[ing] how this author handles those aspects; and ... relat[ing] his handling to that of earlier and later authors' (p. ix). Although the editor admits that constraints of space and methodology tended to militate against detailed consideration of the final issue, the volume as a whole, and groups of essays on particular subjects, gives a sense of how representations of space in ancient literature developed across periods and genres, as well as how it was represented by individual authors.

Both students and researchers will derive benefit from the individual essays as introductions to the topic of space in given authors. There is, however, not much here that more seasoned critics will find new or challenging, and while readers may find little with which to disagree strongly, at least some, I suspect, will be left wishing for more interpretative meat on the methodological bones. All the essays examine their subjects thoroughly, giving plentiful citations of primary texts and making numerous valid observations, but the volume's methodological constraints limit the opportunity for connecting purely narratological points with wider interpretative questions. It might be objected that this is an unfair criticism to level at a book which sets out to provide an overview of a topic; yet while this objective is admirably fulfilled, the volume could have offered deeper and more original reflections on space as a narratological construct without neglecting its more basic goals. Its failure to do so is partly a consequence of the decision (operative across the series) to

treat individual authors on a chapter by chapter basis rather than exploiting the vistas that may have been opened up by a more thematic approach. More serious problems are created by the taxonomy laid out in the Introduction and by the taxonomical approach based on this, around which the subsequent analyses are structured: I shall highlight the benefits and shortcomings of this approach by discussing a number of individual contributions.

Irene de Jong's Introduction sets out what she considers to be the 'theoretical concepts most useful for an analysis of space in ancient narrative texts' (p. 2). She begins with the distinction between fabula-space and story-space: '[j]ust as we distinguish between fabula-time and story-time ... we may distinguish between fabula-space and story-space: the fabula space would be a (theoretically) complete depiction of the location(s) of a narrative, while the story-space is the actual space as the text presents it to us' (pp. 2-3). This analogy is based on the constructedness of the temporal and spatial modes described: story-time is a construct of the text, not simply a purely temporal event in the reader's consciousness, and story-space is likewise a projected fictionality. More could have been said, however, about the issues which surround the distinction between story-spaces and the real spaces to which they relate. A particular focus of recent criticism, especially prevalent in postcolonialist studies, has been the examination of the ideological inflections to which space is subject when constructed in narratives, a critical issue which is affected by the familiarity (or unfamiliarity) with the relevant spaces and landscapes expected in readers. Given that many ancient texts mythologize landscapes with which intended readers are at least partially familiar, it would have been useful to have had this issue flagged in the Introduction.¹

De Jong also elaborates the distinction between setting, the location(s) in which the events of a story take place, and 'frames', defined as 'locations that occur in thoughts, dreams, or memories' (p. 4), before cataloguing the types of space which occur in drama. These are scenic space, the setting of the play as represented by the physical structure of the stage, the extra-scenic space, which consists of the area immediately offstage, and distanced space, 'which has no immediate relationship with either scenic or extra-scenic space, but lies beyond the areas visible to the audience' (p. 5). The distribution of spatial references in a text is also mentioned as a subject which repays analysis (p. 5). This is followed by sections on description, including ecphrasis, as a spatial mode (pp. 5-8), on the focalization of space by narrator or character (pp. 8-9), and on the spatial standpoints of speakers (pp. 11-13). The remainder of the

¹ De Jong's essay on Homer includes a useful overview of this subject in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (pp. 36-8).

Introduction deals with the functions of space, which are defined as thematic, mirroring, symbolic, characterizing, and psychologizing respectively. The first refers simply to locations being important to a narrative, while the second involves spaces which mirror or contrast the themes of the narrative of which they form part. The symbolic functions of spaces pertain to their having significance which goes beyond their localizational function: de Jong cites the *locus amoenus* as a prominent instance of a space freighted with symbolic significance (p. 15). The characterizing and psychologizing functions are connected, in that the former occurs when spaces tell us something about the ‘milieu, character, or situation’ (p. 16) of the people who inhabit or move through them, while the latter tells us more specifically about a character’s psychological state or feelings.

While this taxonomy offers a satisfyingly clear-cut set of boxes into which to place various examples of spatial discourse, much could have been gained by further analyzing some of the concepts involved. More problematically, its use creates the twin dangers of an arbitrary simplification of instances in which spatiality is manifold in its functions, and an overly restrictive general methodology in which the taxonomizing drive marginalizes the possibility of setting spatiality in relation to other concepts or modes of discourse. Both problems are prevalent in de Jong’s essays on Homer and the Homeric hymns, which sacrifice detailed engagement for breadth of coverage. While this permits the development of an overview of spatiality in the Homeric poems, it also means that many of her readings are frustratingly limited. Given the amount of scholarship on ecphrases and inset narratives in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, one wonders what we gain from being told, under the heading of extended descriptions mirroring the main narrative, that ‘[t]he scenes of the two cities on Achilles’ shield ... recall the *Iliad* itself’ or that ‘[t]he scene on Odysseus’ brooch [*Od.* 19.228-31] anticipates the story’.

De Jong’s treatment of *Il.* 1.348-50 exemplifies the potential reductiveness of the aforementioned analytical categories. In this passage, Achilles, having just given Briseis up to Agamemnon’s heralds (*Il.* 1.326-47), goes and sits alone by the sea-shore, where he calls on his mother for assistance (348-51):

αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
δακρύσας ἐτάρων ἄφαρ ἔζετο νόσφι λιασθείς,
θῖν’ ἔφ’ ἀλδς πολιῆς, ὀρόων ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα πόντον·
πολλὰ δὲ μητρὶ φίλῃ ἠρήσατο χεῖρας ὀρεγνύς·

But Achilles immediately sat weeping, having shrunk far from his companions, on the shore of the grey sea, looking out at the limitless ocean. He stretched out his hands and earnestly beseeched his mother ...

De Jong cites this passage as an instance of a topos of characters going down to the shore (other examples being Chryses at *Il.* 1.34, Odysseus at *Od.* 5.82-4, and Achilles again at *Il.* 23.59-60 and 24.12), and comments that ‘the coast bordering on the loud-thundering, endless, or dark sea signals feelings of isolation or despondency’, before moving on to discuss the more common comparison of feelings to natural phenomena. This rather vague formulation sits uneasily with the details of the passage. The ‘feelings of isolation [and] despondency’ in the above passage are signalled primarily by Achilles ‘weeping’, by his ‘shrinking aside’ (λιασθείς) and being ‘far from his companions’ rather than by the nature of the space, the specification of which follows the description of Achilles’ behaviour. Achilles’ location at this point certainly correlates powerfully with his isolation, both physical and psychological, but de Jong’s description of the passage misleadingly implies that this impression arises from the space itself, whereas it would be more accurate to say that it is emphasized as a result of the conjunction of the natural properties of the environment with Achilles’ actions and implied feelings.

The implications of the passage are also considerably richer than de Jong’s reading would suggest. Achilles’ repetition of Chryses’ action earlier in the narrative is suggestive of the connection between them,² and the unusualness of ὀρώων ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα πόντον also marks Achilles out as a distinctive actant, preparing the way for his role later in the narrative. We might also wonder about the nature of the space that is being projected by this phrase. What kind of space is Achilles looking at? Does he, however briefly, envisage the sea as a route home, anticipating his plan for departure at 9.417-29?³ Evidence for debate over the significance of Achilles’ actions in anti-quity can be found at Σ *Il.* 1.349c1, which gives two possible explanations of νόσφι: ὅπως μὴ γελῶτο παρὰ τῶν ἐταίρων. ἢ πρὸς τὴν διάλεξιν τῆς μητρὸς. The latter is picked up in the comment at Σ *Il.* 1.349c2 ὅπως μὴ γνώριμον τοῖς ἑτέροις ἢ τὸ πρὸς τὴν μητέρα ἐντύχημα. On the former reading, we have an Achilles ashamed at his situation and fearing the mockery of his companions, and on the latter a

² For which cf. I. de Jong, ‘Iliad 1. 366-92: A Mirror Story’, in D.L. Cairns (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Homer’s Iliad*, (Oxford, 2001) 478-95.

³ A similar idea is found at Σ *Il.* 1.350c, which comments ἱκανὴ παραμυθία τοῖς ἐπὶ ξένης λυπούμενοις εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν ἀφορᾶν, δι’ ἧς τῶν πατριδῶν εἴργονται, comparing *Od.* 5.84.

calculating figure anticipating his next move. Equally, it is possible to see both motivations at work, and given that both are plausible, and both register a gap in the text's articulation of his actions, the strongest interpretative manoeuvre might be to see his action designedly opaque, foreshadowing the various ways in which he is misunderstood by various characters later in the narrative. De Jong interprets the passage as a psychological use of spatial discourse, but according to the interpretations just outlined the sea-shore could also be understood as an instance of mirroring and characterization. Moreover, if we regard access to Achilles' state of mind as being problematized in this scene, the move of seeing the passage's spatiality as psychologizing becomes concomitantly difficult. Perhaps more importantly, the passage demands to be seen as part of an intratextual nexus, and its construction of space is implicated in wider interpretative considerations.

One aspect of this implication is raised briefly towards the end of the introduction. The piece concludes with claims for the significance of space in ancient literature, against what de Jong describes as the notion prevalent in modern theory that only with nineteenth century novels does the 'full range of possibilities' connected to spatial description begin to be explored (p. 17),⁴ and some remarks on the nature of space as an 'historical category'. Here de Jong invokes Bakhtin's celebrated notion of the chronotope, the name he gave to 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature'. For Bakhtin, literary constructions of time and space were closely connected: '[t]ime ... becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history' (p. 18). However contestable Bakhtin's formulation may be, it has considerable value as a methodological opening, allowing for an examination of spatial discourses in relation not only to other textual features but also to the changing social, political, and historical determinations of space. De Jong's statement that 'the practical value of [the chronotope] for the kind of narratological analysis undertaken in this volume is ... small' (p. 18) is symptomatic of the volume's narrow focus. The absence of reflection on the historicity of space as a category both philosophically and historically inflected is a particular problem in a volume which aims at giving a chronological overview of its subject matter, and is sharpened by the fact that much

⁴ De Jong cites numerous examples of this tendency, but cf. R. Debray, 'The Book as Symbolic Object', in G. Nunberg (ed.) *The Future of the Book* (Berkeley, 1996) 148 for an argument about the 'topological' nature of ancient religious practice and its consequences for literary texts.

recent theorizing has dwelt on how literary texts respond to space as an experiential modality, an approach which has been fruitfully taken up by numerous classical scholars.⁵

This weakness is felt especially keenly in the chapters on the Hellenistic poets, who were writing in an intellectual climate deeply preoccupied with space. The Hellenistic period witnessed dramatic shifts in the nature of the geographical spaces occupied and inhabited by Greeks. The eastwards extension of Greek culture during Alexander's conquests and beyond, and the development of the 'Successor Kingdoms', bringing Greeks into new kinds of extended contact with near-eastern cultures, clearly leave their mark on contemporary literature, leading to an interest in the influence of geography on identity and behaviour, and in the interactions of different ethnic groups, that is evident across genres. Scholarship on Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* has frequently emphasized the text's negotiation of questions that relate to the nature of national identities and relations between Greek and non-Greek populations, and Jacqueline Klooster's chapter on Apollonius pays particular attention to how the text represents the 'altering and ordering [of] the landscape' by the Argonauts (p. 75). She argues persuasively that Orpheus, 'who changes and orders nature with his songs' (p. 75), acts as a metaphor for this wider process, pointing out that Orpheus' poetry is characterized in terms often used to describe the Argonauts' aetiology-producing activities. One prominent example occurs in the catalogue of the Argonauts in book 1, where Orpheus is first described (1.26-31):

αὐτὰρ τόνγ' ἐνέπουσιν ἀπειρέας οὖρεσι πέτρας
 θέλξαι ἀοιδάων ἐνοπιῇ ποταμῶν τε ῥέεθρα·
 φηγοὶ δ' ἀγριάδες κείνης ἔτι σήματα μολπῆς
 ἀκτῇ Θρηκίῃ Ζώνης ἔπι τηλεθόωσαι
 ἐξείης στιχόωσιν ἐπήτριμοι, ἃς ὄγ' ἐπιπρό
 θελγομένας φόρμιγγι κατήγαγε Πιερίηθεν.

And they say that he bewitched hard boulders in the mountains with the sound of his songs, and flowing rivers. And the wild oak trees still flourish on the Thracian shore of Zone, signs of his song, standing in dense, orderly rows. These were the ones he led down from Pieria, bewitched by his *phorminx*.

⁵ Cf. K. Clarke, *Between Geography and History* (Oxford, 1999).

Klooster perceptively points out that the phrasing of ἐξείης στιχόωσιν ‘seems to allude to hexameter verse’, and sees an allusion in the oak trees, ‘arranged in orderly rows by Orpheus’ songs, to the use of ὕλη as a technical term for poetic material. On this basis, she suggests that ‘Orpheus may function as a symbol for the poet ... and his ordering of traditional stories into a unified narrative’: like the Argonauts, Orpheus leaves proof of his activities for future generations to see.

Her argument might be further strengthened by seeing in ἐπιήτριμοι a punning allusion to the genre of ἔπος in which Orpheus sang and which recorded his achievements. The use of τηλεθόωσαι is also suggestive in this respect, recalling and contrasting its use in Glaucus’ famous simile of the leaves at *Il.* 6.147-8 (φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ’ ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ’ ὕλη / τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ’ ἐπιγίγνεται ὄρη): there the emphasis is on the impermanence of natural growths, whereas Apollonius stresses the trees’ endurance. Apollonius here, as often elsewhere, uses Homeric language to create a non-Homeric effect, in this case highlighting the distinctively aetiological aspect of his narrative. Given this Homeric echo, and the stress on Orpheus’ musicianship (θελγομένης φόρμιγγι), one might also detect in φηγοὶ ... ἐξείης στιχόωσιν an allusion to the material book, contrasting Apollonius’ medium with those of his poetic predecessors. The book involves the production of numerous story-spaces, but is itself an ordering spatial frame. Consequently, it constitutes a distinctive type of ‘space’, one that acts as a physical analogue for Orpheus’ trees while also operating as a site for their palimpsestual transformation.

Klooster’s reading brings out the tension between different perspectives; ‘the space travelled by the Argonauts is thematically presented as a vast, hostile and undesirable element which does not excite their interest’ (p. 64), and yet for the narrator and the reader it is clearly a matter of considerable interest (p. 75). This tension is particularly to the fore in passages such as the description of Syrtis (4.1235-49), which Klooster analyses as space in which the boundaries between elements break down: ‘sea, land, and sky are all vast, undifferentiated expanses’ and nature is ‘inverted’, with an overabundance of water that is too shallow, and plants growing there rather than on land (p. 68). This is an example of the psychologizing use of spatial discourse, in which ‘[t]he desolation of the landscape beautifully mirrors the despair that takes hold of the Argonauts’. A similarly affective space is re-presented in the description of the weeping Heliades (4.596-626), ‘an incredibly gloomy and disturbing landscape’ which also has broader thematic resonances (p. 69). These and other passages, such as the description of the Symplegades (p. 67) ‘involve the narratees in the heroes’ plight’. Yet while Klooster’s analysis works

well as a whistle-stop tour through the *Argonautica*'s landscapes, it would have been useful if the sociopolitical and historical resonances of its representational modes had been teased out, especially in the light of W.G. Thalman's recent treatment of the poem as a response to the Hellenistic Greek diaspora, compensating for geographical displacement by constructing a myth which integrates culturally various locations within an Hellenocentric frame.⁶

Klooster's piece on Theocritus, while informative in purely narratological terms, is likewise hampered by its minimal engagement with the critical issues that pertain to the spatial descriptions. Chapters of this length obviously cannot offer anything like comprehensive doxographical coverage, but there are some points at which purely narratological analysis begins to feel less focused than neglectful. One example is her reading of the *locus amoenus* at *Id.* 7.132-55, which 'it seems ... signifies, on a structural level, the fusion of Simichidas and Lycidas' poetics: both elements from earlier and contemporary poetry, and direct 'pastoral' inspiration are mixed'.⁷ Surprisingly, she makes no reference here to James J. Clauss' observation that 135-7 contain the acrostic 'Pan', which he argues gives a crucial clue to Lycidas' disputed identity.⁸ On his reading, we are given here a textual version of the epiphany which Simichidas has failed to notice; the revelation that 'Lycidas' is actually Pan sets Simichidas' earlier threats to that god (110-18) in an especially ironic light. This in turn has consequences for how we might understand the *locus amoenus*: if Simichidas is viewed, in the light of the missed epiphany, as something of a simpleton, it would hardly be possible to read the *locus* as a space of poetic 'fusion'. We might, for instance, read the description ironically, its overabundance simultaneously registering literature's (re)creative power and exceeding Simichidas' capacity to understand its significance. However one negotiates these issues, their complexity demands a multifaceted interpretative approach.

Similar problems are found when we turn to essays on oratory. Spatial descriptions are perhaps not something that the non-specialist would readily associate with the fourth century orators, and Mathieu de Bakker's pieces on Lysias and Demosthenes are to be commended for attempting to elucidate this

⁶ W.G. Thalman, *Apollonius of Rhodes and the Spaces of Hellenism* (Oxford, 2011) 192-220.

⁷ This argument rehearses, as she acknowledges in the next sentence, the terms of a reading by Nita Krevans ('Geography and the Literary Tradition in Theocritus', *TAPA* 113 (1983) 201-20).

⁸ Cf. J. J. Clauss, 'Once Upon a Time on Cos: A Banquet with Pan on the Side in Theocritus "Idyll 7"', *HSCP* 101 (2003) 289-302.

feature of their speeches. In his treatment of Demosthenes, de Bakker catalogues numerous types of spatial references, to foreign cities and festivals, to *lieux de mémoire* provided by Athenian topography, and to the performance space of the court or assembly. The piece would have benefited, however, from more explicit reflection on the nature of spaces Demosthenes constructs, and specifically on their status as reflexes of other textual strategies and modes of conduct. One passage de Bakker discusses is Demosthenes' vivid description of Meidias and his brother breaking into his house, and using insulting language in front of his mother and sister (21.78-9):

εἰσεπήδησαν ἀδελφὸς ὁ τούτου καὶ οὗτος εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ... καὶ πρῶτον μὲν κατέσχισαν τὰς θύρας τῶν οἰκημάτων, ὡς αὐτῶν ἤδη γιγνομένης κατὰ τὴν ἀντίδοσιν· εἶτα τῆς ἀδελφῆς, ἔτ' ἔνδον [λύσης] τότε καὶ παιδὸς οὔσης κόρης, ἐναντίον ἐφθέγγοντ' αἰσχρὰ ... καὶ τὴν μητέρα κάμῃ καὶ πάντας ἡμᾶς ῥητὰ καὶ ἄρρητα κάκ' ἐξείπον·

He and his brother burst into the house ... they first broke down the doors of the rooms, as if the property had become theirs by forfeit. Then, in the presence of my sister who was then still at home and only a young girl, they used foul language ... and hurled abuse, decent and indecent, at my mother, and me, and all of us.

De Bakker analyses the passage in terms of 'the opposition between public and private space' (p. 402) and asserts that '[b]oth are in their own ways sacred and require specific rules of behaviour of which the transgression reflects badly upon the character of the opponent' (pp. 402-3). Oddly, however, he omits to mention the clause ὡς αὐτῶν ἤδη γιγνομένης κατὰ τὴν ἀντίδοσιν, which stress the presumptuousness of Meidias and his brother: they not only transgress the public/private boundary, but actively deform it by trying to turn the latter into the former.

A more serious issue is the level of abstraction at which the discussion is pitched. De Bakker states that Demosthenes 'uses' the public/private opposition as a 'spatial concept', but this phrasing disguises the extent to which the significance of the space described in this passage emerges from the behaviour that happens within it. While Demosthenes clearly invokes Meidias' violation of the rules of behaviour normatively associated with the house, seeing the passage as structured around the public/private opposition risks missing the point that Meidias' behaviour is unacceptable *per se*, as evidenced by the fact that some of his abuse cannot be repeated even now in the trial (ἄρρητα). The

location of this behaviour is certainly meant to increase the audience's disdain for it, but plays a role ancillary to other aspects of his characterization. De Bakker notes that Demosthenes makes much use of toponyms rather than extended spatial descriptions, partly on the grounds that 'more spatial orientation could have interrupted the flow of the argumentation and forced him into digressions that would have distracted the audience' (p. 404). He also makes a telling observation about the order of place names at 1.12-13: '[w]ith this random order, Demosthenes underlines Philip's ability to strike wherever he wants at any time' (p. 404). More could have been made, however, of place names being given in this pared-down form. A prominent reason for this technique is that in the context of the argument they exist as counters in a political and military situation rather than distinctively realised spaces.⁹ A similar dynamic is at work in Demosthenes' presentation of himself as a leader of a *theoria* at 21.115, as sponsoring campaigns in Euboea and Olynthus at 21.161, and passages about Meidias' incompetence in foreign affairs (21.132-5, 163-7, 173). When analysing these passages, de Bakker comments that '[i]n holding up ... a map of Athenian foreign interests as a backdrop to his argumentation, Demosthenes attempts to make his audience aware of the delicate relationships with various cities to which Meidias poses an immediate threat'. Yet the primary stress of 21.115 is on Meidias' untrustworthiness and on the illogicality of his case against Demosthenes, which his behaviour in allowing him to go abroad demonstrates (οὕτω τοίνυν οὗτός ἐστ' ἀσεβῆς καὶ μιαρὸς καὶ πᾶν ἂν ὑποστάς εἰπεῖν καὶ πράξει, εἰ δ' ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος ἢ πρὸς ἐχθρὸν ἢ φίλον ἢ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὅτιοῦν διορίζων, ὥστ' ... ἅρ' ἄν, εἴ γ' εἶχε στιγμήν ἢ σκιὰν τούτων ὧν κατεσκεύαζεν κατ' ἐμοῦ, ταῦτ' ἂν εἶασεν;). This is not to say that the geographical dimension that de Bakker identifies is not important, but it is an adjunct to other considerations: rather than being deployed for the sake of *ethopoeia*, it emerges from it.

The volume is at its most successful when authors employ the Introduction's methodology most loosely, or employ narratological concepts as starting points rather than destinations. Kathryn Morgan's essay on Plato is especially strong in this respect, combining attention to discursive contexts, such as the palaestra and private houses, with an appreciation of their wider philosophical resonance. The observation that 'the philosopher is not at home in this world' (p. 427) leads into a discussion of spaces which transcend the physical world, such as the backdrop to the myth of Er, and 'political geographies', such as the description of Atlantis at the beginning of the *Critias*. Here Morgan draws on her own previous work to point up Atlantis' allegorical and

⁹ Cf. Aeschines' mockery of this tendency at 3.82.

paraenetic features, and the essay as a whole is richly informed by the specificities of Plato's handling of spatial themes. Nor is Morgan's by any means the only stimulating contribution: those unfamiliar with the primary material will learn much from Luke Pitcher's essays on later historio-graphy, and Koen de Temmerman's analyses of Chariton and Achilles Tatius also contained many strong insights and analyses. But while the collection provides a useful synthesis of the advances in the field, its contribution to the development of the ideas and methodologies it charts is much less meaningful. Given the amount of scholarly firepower that its contributors bring to bear, one wonders how much more could have been achieved within a more ambitious intellectual framework.