

SPACE AND TIME

PURVES (A.C.) *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative*. Pp. xii + 273. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Cased, £50, US\$85. ISBN: 978-0-521-19098-5.

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In her introduction, P. contrasts the poetics of epic poetry with those of prose, calling the former ‘cartographic’ and the latter ‘anti-cartographic’ and associating them respectively with map versus road, space versus time, vision versus language, unity versus variation, and immortal versus mortal perspective. She uses the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* to illustrate epic poetics, considering it a paradigm for the totalising impulse of narrative: just as the internal warrior and external reader can view in one glance a whole world depicted on the shield, so too heroic epic presents a complete, ordered and timeless view of human experience. P.’s typology describes not so much different kinds of narrative as different ways in which narrative conceptualises what it is doing, and she approaches these different models by looking at symbolic images and scenes. The space and time of her title thus turn out to be features not of a narrative *per se*, but of its characteristic metapoetic figures.

Chapter 1 teases out some implications of a cartographic poetics. From Aristotle’s reading of epic, P. argues that the philosopher’s emphasis on vision and on a plot whose size can easily be seen together (*eusynopton*) implies that in his view plot resembles both a landscape and an animal. Zielinski’s reading of Homer furthermore suggests that plot resembles a landscape that can move. These two readings are extended in P.’s interpretation of the shield as a trope for epic poetics, in so far as the shield’s collection of vignettes allows the (mortal) viewer to take in the larger world they represent, even as the movement within these vignettes represents the perspective of gods or Muses, who can see the whole without its being ‘stilled’ or compressed.

Chapter 2 addresses the ‘countercartographic’ poetics of the *Odyssey*, taking as the paradigm for this Tiresias’ forecast of an inland journey Odysseus will make after returning to Ithaca. In so far as he will find people who know nothing of the sea, and the sea was central to heroic poetry, Odysseus will find himself ‘off the map’ both literally and metapoetically. The sign that he has come to the end of his journey will be a stranger mistaking his oar for a winnowing fan. Hence Odysseus will arrive at a place where signs lose their meanings, and the identification of the oar as a winnowing fan implies a shift from heroic to agricultural values. Finally, the scene with Penelope begins with a simile comparing her to a sailor who has reached land after a shipwreck; this recalls how Odysseus reached Scheria after the wreck of his raft, and arrived in Ithaca immediately after the ‘wreck’ of the Phaeacian ship, which Poseidon turns to stone. The end of the poem thus paradoxically suggests the wreck or dissolution of epic poetry.

The next chapter turns to the early mapmaker Anaximander and the prose mythographer Pherecydes. In his *Theogony*, Pherecydes says that at the wedding of Zas and Chthonie, Zas gave his bride a robe embroidered with Earth and Ocean. The robe of Chthonie embodies the paradox of cartography since, as a representation of the world, it scales things down to fit on a garment, yet in covering Chthonie (Earth) it is as large and detailed as the world itself. The paradox is similar to that in the shield of Achilles, except that the concern with scaling (rather than with stillness and animation) reflects map technology. Anaximander’s map was probably round, and Herodotus criticised mapmakers who portrayed a perfectly circular

earth, with Asia equal in size to Europe. We thus have a third paradox resulting from the schematisation involved when we rely on ‘mathematical instruments and proportions’.

In Chapter 4 P. argues that although the *Histories*’ affiliations with the periplus align them with cartography, Herodotus overtly espouses the poetics of journey and time. In describing Asia, Herodotus rejects the map of Hecataeus and so embraces ‘an exclusively verbal’ (rather than synoptic) approach. Moreover, the description of Scythia as a trackless terrain in which people can vanish is emblematic of narrative whose outcome is unknown. The governing trope of the *Histories* is the map of Aristagoras, which would be comparable to the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. When Cleomenes, on learning how long it takes to reach Susa, rejects both Aristagoras’ map and his request for assistance, Herodotus reintroduces time into a spatial view of the world and so destroys the cartographic illusion. His own account of the stages, in parasangs, along the Royal Road instead endorses a ‘hodological’ poetics, that is, a poetics of journey and time.

The last two chapters view Xenophon’s *Anabasis* as anti-cartographic and his *Oeconomicus* as cartographic. Chapter 5 asserts that this same author, by contrast with Homer and Herodotus, ‘pushes the countercartographic form of narrative to an extreme’. The master trope of the *Anabasis* is the aporia of the Ten Thousand as they travel north through Asia Minor: the soldiers find themselves in unfamiliar terrain, among strange peoples, without the reassuring measures of distance that had earlier marked off their progress from Sardis toward Susa. A scene renders this trope in visual terms. The journey north comes to an end as the Ten Thousand finally catch sight of the sea. While the synoptic view from Mount Thekes takes in the presumed end of their quest, on reaching the sea at Trapezus they find this is in fact not the end, and this deferral of an ending, together with the loss of bearings, leaves the narrative indeterminate.

As for Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, P. finds a governing trope in Ischomachus’ observation that it is a beautiful thing when shoes are laid neatly in order. The episode that tells the story of Lysander in the garden of Cyrus provides a complementary image: the orderly arrangement of trees in the walled park is like an outdoor version of the well-managed house. The emphasis Ischomachus places on order in the household suggests a synoptic view in so far as its otherwise hidden contents are made visible and ‘fully opened to surveillance’. An analogy with the memory houses of Roman times leads to the further observation that the cartographic poetics of the *Oeconomicus* are conditioned by technology: new memory systems replace the need for a map or a muse. The chapter and the book end with an epilogue arguing that at the end of the *Odyssey*, being back in his father Laertes’ orchard allows Odysseus to remember ‘the numbers and names of those trees, in the correct order’, thus anticipating the memory house.

P.’s project in a sense does for Greek narrative what Andrew Ford and Gregory Nagy did for Greek epic and lyric poetry, showing that metapoetics can offer productive readings even of the ‘pedestrian’ Xenophon. Some may balk at her methodology, in so far as select scenes embody, by a kind of synecdoche, the metapoetical stance of the work as a whole. Some may wish that her discussions about how narrative views its own function were accompanied by more extended readings of those narratives. In either case, this would be to fault her project, not its execution. My own criticism is that the readings are often tendentious. Take, for example, the map of Aristagoras. The leader from Miletus wanted his map of the Persian empire to persuade the Spartans to help the Ionians, but when

Cleomenes heard it took three months to travel from Sardis to Susa he refused. In this way, Herodotus, according to P., demonstrates the ‘failure of cartography’ as a model for ‘depicting the world’. Her reading, however, overlooks the more obvious fact that Aristagoras misuses cartography when he equates the ease of ‘seeing’ the whole empire with the presumed ease of conquering it; this is a story, in other words, about power and its illusions, more than metanarrative. Later on, P. says that Aristagoras succeeded in Athens thanks to the same map, but Herodotus makes no mention of a map in that part of his story. Furthermore, she explains how Aristagoras’ narrative to Cleomenes is cartographic since ‘before he has even begun his journey, the reader/protagonist is provided with an explicit plan of the entire space he is about to traverse, including the premature revelation of the secret chamber where the king hides his gold’. The opposite is in fact the case, and an interesting feature of this episode is that Herodotus has Aristagoras describe his map in linear, hodological terms, denying himself the map’s peculiar advantage of ‘exact and instant legibility’.

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EPIC OFFERINGS

HITCH (S.) *King of Sacrifice. Ritual and Royal Authority in the Iliad*. (Hellenic Studies 25.) Pp. xii + 235. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, Center for Hellenic Studies, 2009. Paper, £13.95, €16.20, US\$17.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-02592-9.

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This book, based on H.’s doctoral dissertation, is the first comprehensive study of representations of sacrifice in the *Iliad* – an ambitious undertaking indeed. Treating scenes of sacrifice as a thematic and as a structural device, the work itself is a masterful blend of seemingly different elements into a cogent and well-argued whole. As accessible as it is academic, this meticulous analysis will be welcomed by Homerist, Narratologist and specialist of Greek religion alike.

In the first of the four chapters, H. lays the foundations of her approach. Defining sacrifice as ‘the slaughter of animals in a ceremony devoted to the gods’ (p. vii), she begins by noting that individual depictions of sacrifice, as with all Homeric ‘type scenes’, are very much *metri causa*, used by the earliest composers and performers to fulfil a specific metrical need. Formulaic though they may be, no two sacrifice scenes are identical, and it is these admittedly minor variations that H. sees as being pivotal to understanding the ritual and contextual significance of sacrifice within the poem. Examining Homeric and non-Homeric terms used to denote sacrifice, H. argues that Homeric (more specifically ‘*Iliadic*’) sacrifice is effectively *sui generis* and cannot therefore be looked at in terms of historical Greek sacrificial practice or modern models of Greek religious ritual. Seeing a distinction between sacrifice and the unmarked eating of meat at feasts, H. mentions that while the same terms for animal slaughter (*ἱερεύειν* and *σφάζειν*) are used of sacrifice and feasting, scenes of feasting lack references to divinity, and she shows how those verbs are nuanced according to context.

H.’s analysis is set in motion in Chapter 2, with a definition of the terms and ideas relevant to her approach. Setting up a distinction between the ‘enacted’