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# Introduction: Putting Epic Space in Context

> An epic geography is a metaspace embedded in the second skin of the earth – a virtual mantle forming a narrative unfolding that simulates the skin. Motion through the texture of the mantle unfolds the narrative. When a scenario is formed within the second skin using its resources, an epic geography is formed.
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> R. Bunschoten, T. Hoshino, H. Binet, *Urban Flotsam: Stirring the City* (p. 273)

Current challenges that stem mainly from globalization and environmental concerns have reinvigorated scholarly interest in human geography.[1] Even though these current issues tend to sideline the diachronic dimension of geography by adopting seemingly non-anthropocentric positions, they essentially converge into one basic principle: the acts of a person locate her/his existence within surrounding environments. And the plural is here no coincidence. In fact, it is precisely the interrelated notions of human agency and experience that turn space into place and vindicate the necessity of the plural 'places.'[2] A series of *turns* (*linguistic*, *discursive*, *cultural*) have gradually signposted the development of cross-disciplinary discussion on space, now crystallized in the so-called *geographical* or *spatial turn*.[3] The decisive impetus was given by the social sciences that have been eager to examine (and, no less, theorize) the relation of geographical space (nature) to social space (culture).[4] The *spatial turn* reworks "the very notion and substance of spatiality to offer a perspective in which space is every bit as important as time in the unfolding of human affairs, a view in which geography is not relegated to an afterthought of social relations, but is intimately involved in their construction".[5] Pinning down the spatial dimensions of social processes casts space as the arena of social interface par excellence. From this point of view, space is far from static since it is constantly negotiated and reconstructed in the physical, cultural, and political map. The nation-shaping role of geography, the topography of isolation and integration, the bounding of space and the crossing of boundaries, the gendered dynamics of geography as well as the space of language and literature are some of the aspects that lie at the heart of modern criticism on human geography.[6]

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**1** De Blij 2009; Bruckmeier/Serbser 2008.
**2** Tuan 1977; Buttimer/Seamon 1980; Hirsch 1995; Creswell 1996; Malpas 1999.
**3** For overviews, see Soja 1989; Günzel 2007; 2009; 2010.
**4** Lossau/Lippuner 2004; Withers 2009; Warf/Arias 2009.
**5** Warf/Arias 2009, 1.
**6** Prescott 1965; Bachelard 1969 [1994]; Sibley 1995; Moss/Al-Hindi 2008.

For the last decades literary studies have been intensely inquiring into the way space is represented within diverse contexts of literary narration.[7] Even though the mechanics of cognition and representation has duly monopolized scholarly discourse on matters concerning the way geography leaves its imprint on literary artifacts,[8] elaborate practices of mapping space within its narrative environments gain in focus as they call attention to the formal traits underlying narrative structures. The prime question asked is how narrative media devise (spatially) coherent worlds.[9] Within this context, scholars attempt to come up with definitions and operative formulas that apply to the representational norms of narrated space (*erzählter Raum*). In an essay revising earlier and current views on the subject, Marie-Laure Ryan puts forward a taxonomy that distinguishes no less than five main categories of narrated space:

> a. *spatial frames:* the immediate surroundings of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse, b. *setting:* the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place, c. *story space:* the space relevant to the plot, as mapped by the actions and thoughts of the characters, d. *narrative or (story) world:* the story space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience, and e. *narrative universe:* the world (in the spatio-temporal sense of the term) presented as actual by the text, plus all the counterfactual worlds constructed by characters as beliefs, wishes, fears, speculations, hypothetical thinking, dreams, and fantasies.[10]

The varying extent to which these levels of spatiality inform narrative discourse accounts for the multifarious processes by which space is integrated into the narrative's broad spatio-temporal continuum, i.e., is narrativized. In the meantime, we can even speak of a fairly systematized 'narratology of space.'[11] The latest trend in this direction draws on the interpretative model of cognition and, thus, works on the assumption of a model-reader's thought-patterns, which conduce to the production of space in the narrated world. The inferential process to which the reader resorts to supplement the textual data related to space and to properly conceptualize various dimensions of spatiality applies to a reader-response theory and results in a concept of negotiated space in narrative contexts. In her own introduction to the narratology of space, the classicist and narratol-

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**7** Salter/Lloyd 1976; Mallory/Simpson-Housley 1987; Eilan/McCarthy/Brewer 1993; Hallet/Neumann 2009; Piatti 2009.
**8** Bjornson 1981; Ryan 2003; Hamilton 2011.
**9** See, most importantly, Herman 2009; Sommer 2009.
**10** Ryan 2009, 421–2.
**11** Smitten/Daghistany 1981; Zoran 1984; Bal 1985, 132–42; Dennerlein 2009.

ogist Irene de Jong[12] draws attention to the narrative categories at work when anchoring space in story: she differentiates between *setting* where the action unfolds and *frames* created by the virtual spaces of thoughts and memories, and gives prime place to the devices of *description* and *ekphrasis* used to represent places and/or props in a synoptic and detailed manner respectively. The focalizer (narrator, anonymous, character), she argues, is just as important as the standpoint (panoramic, scenic) from which space is presented each time. The usefulness of de Jong's categorization lies in the plethora of narrative functions bound up with the presentation of space (thematic, mirroring/contrasting, symbolic, characterizing, psychologizing, personifying). Faced with these trends, classics is invited to participate in the lively critical discussion on geography (especially with respect to narratology) and has in fact a lot to contribute, given that most of the questions that modern theorists ask can be examined in Greco-Roman antiquity.

Every story has its place(s). As narrative genre par excellence, epic is concerned with representing spatial dimensions. Epic storytelling comes into existence by describing persons' movements through space. It recounts sets of successive events whose flow resembles the shifts inherent in a journey.[13] However, spatial visualizations of epic storytelling are not always compatible with the confinements of human existence, but occasionally become figurative enough to sketch out transcendent topographies pertinent to the divine or the dead. Since epic is, at least in Bakhtinian terms, a *chronotope* insofar as it preserves and transmits memories of past events held most frequently in remote, unaccustomed domains, but also in domestic, regular places,[14] geography counts among the constitutive elements of the cultural system each time inscribed into the vision of the epic world. Accordingly, the presentation of an epic story is, as a rule, steeped in ethnological features and cultural data viewed through the lens of myth, which ultimately segues into a historicizing discourse.[15] Epic narrative memorializes places and encodes their dynamic profile by means of embedded descriptions and dispersed toponyms laden with signification. Toponymics exemplifying genealogy, an expressive means that allows the past to project itself into the present, are explicitly set on a geographical basis and, in these terms, lay the geo-historical foundations of epic. Thus, next to various forms of repre-

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**12** De Jong 2012a.

**13** On the 'narrative as travel' metaphor, see Mikkonen 2007.

**14** For a dynamic, cross-cultural definition of epic as genre, see Martin 2005a. Cf. Nagy 1999b. For an assessment of the term *chronotope* with reference to Greek literature, see now Seaford 2012, 1–10.

**15** Raaflaub 2005; Konstan/Raaflaub 2010.

senting space within the narrative, epic is also keen to establish the extratextual space created between the mythical and historical world.[16]

The representational norms instantiated in the layout of overall spatial structures, the geographical excurses as well as the ekphrastic exercises with their distinct topographical frames claim a particular connection with the narrative idiosyncrasies of epic as genre.[17] Each epic forms a new delineation of geographical and spatial contours sketched in such ways as to convey pertinent cultural meanings, while also staging diverse scenarios of intercultural contact. Epic space emerges as a narrative medium forging distinction and complementarity. The juxtaposition of city and countryside as well as the inset, digressional character of landscape as opposed to the battlefield form two regular indicators of the essential position epic space occupies in marking up boundaries.[18] Gendered spaces bring out the tensions ingrained in social relations and often provide insight into the reasons why epic uses space the way it does. Socio-political implications on the representation of geographical planes are also often entwined in these settings and are in turn enmeshed with respective ideologies. As a result, 'geopoetics', that is, the discourse of political power and the way it is acted out on literary geographies, takes center stage in the hermeneutics of epic.[19]

Ancient Greek conceptions of space seem to be connected with two worldviews, which either distinguish themselves from one another or occasionally intersect: the cartographic, an all-embracing 'bird's-eye' mapping, and the hodological, the grounded perspective of the forward-moving person.[20] To begin with a pertinent example from the first category, the divine poetics of the *Iliad* as exemplified in the Muse-driven narrative and the affiliated motif of divine supervision advance a synoptic mapping of space enriched with diverse anthropological and ethnographic details.[21] Similarly, the epic viewpoint of the *Homeric Hymns*, where the gods are foregrounded as the main agents, exhibits an either vertical or horizontal spatiality (earthly geography extended to Olympian geography) in the way characters move into space. Drawing on the spatio-temporal ex-

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**16** De Jong 2012b, 36–8.
**17** Segal 1969; Kurman 1974; DuBois 1982a; Findlay 1984; Hatto 1989; Antoniades 1992.
**18** Parry 1957; Andersson 1976; Larsen 2004; Rosen/Sluiter 2007.
**19** Barchiesi 1999. Barchiesi's announced treatment of geopoetics in Vergil's *Aeneid* is much anticipated. Asper (2011) deals with the geopoetics of Callimachus whose special way of talking about places in his works "sum[s] up to a geography of Ptolemaic power" (p. 160).
**20** Janni 1984; Romm 1992; Cole 2010; Purves 2010a.
**21** Minchin 2007; de Jong 2012b, 27; Haubold (this volume). Seaford (2012, 13–20) suggests a division of Homeric space in the three interdependent categories of "(a) *cosmic space*, which embraces the entire cosmos, (b) *geographic space*, i.e. the space of land and sea that extends to the ends of the earth, and (c) *immediate space*, i.e. space visible from a single point."

pansiveness of the song of the Muses, Hesiod's *Theogony* lays out a well-wrought cosmic design in which the gods occupy space and acquire their powers.[22] The genealogical lore in the tales from the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* defines a Panhellenic space made up of local traditions which individual entries tend to display.[23]

The liminal states of wandering and travel are so deeply rooted in the cultural history of ancient Greece that its literature teems with relics of itinerant individuals and their experiences.[24] The *Odyssey*, for instance, is essentially the story of Odysseus' travels and has been thereby received as a work with both an intrinsic geographical edge and a genuinely ethnographical resonance that is eventually instrumentalized "to construct a reading of the worlds and peoples of the mythic past in order to make sense of a tumultuous and volatile present".[25] Within this context but not exclusively referring to Homer, the paramount role of colonization in shaping cultural identities and in blending the familiar with the other explores the effects of displacement and spatial dislocation as well as the individual's interface with novel geographies.[26] The grounding of colonization in mythical structures testifies to its political immanence, on the one hand,[27] and bolsters the historical tendencies toward constructing both virtual and actual 'spaces of Hellenism', on the other.[28]

In Rome, colonizing practices mingle with power relations more overtly and intensely, and exert their own special impact on the means and methods of acculturation within the frame of the *imperium*.[29] Whereas Roman epic retains some ties with its Greek predecessor, tone and focus shift irreversibly to what we may call the poetics of spatial dominion. This is neatly reflected in the texts that move away from the 'totalizing' geographies of Greek epic and develop their own vision of 'maximizing' spaces. Power and its modes of expression have a decisive impact on spatial constructions liable to expansion and therefore unbounded and subject to constant fluctuation. As an acute reader of Roman epic has succinctly put it, "in spatial terms the Virgilian and post-Virgilian epic attempts to construct a comprehensive and orderly model of the world, but it

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**22** Clay 2003; Pucci 2009.

**23** West 1985, 1–11; Hall 1997, 83–8; Rutherford 2005; Calame 2009, 119–20.

**24** Hartog 2001; Montiglio 2005; Hunter/Rutherford 2009.

**25** Dougherty 2001, 9. For a rationalizing approach to the geography of the *Odyssey* see Bittlestone/Diggle/Underhill 2005.

**26** For thorough accounts on the pragmatics of Greek colonization see Tsetskhladze 2006; 2008; Tsetskhladze/de Angelis 2004.

**27** Dougherty 1993; Malkin 1998; Antonaccio 2007.

**28** Thalmann 2011; Stephens 2011; cf. Leontis 1995.

**29** Salmon 1970; Bradley/Wilson 2006; van Dommelen/Benjami 2007.

turns out that such models are inherently unstable. The instability of the Virgilian world is an open-ended invitation for succeeding epic poets to revise and redefine".[30] For precisely the spatial dynamics of the *imperium* spring from the Roman aspiration to 'globalization' and thus generate narratives about the mediation of space and its integration.

Of course, the Roman inclination towards a linear, hodological mapping of space[31] as opposed to a panoramic, cartographic one has been influential in shaping the epic discourse along with its narrative elaborations. The ensuing topology establishes itself in an intensely reinvigorated version of *ekphrasis*, where landscape description is on a par with the complexities of visual perception.[32] The emphasis placed on rarefied description and enlisting of micro-spaces may collide with the rhetoric of macro-space that can be grasped better in terms of cartographic rendition, though it does facilitate the practical need to situate things in space on the meeting-point between real and conceptual geography. The numerous monumental sites of Rome no doubt evoked knowledge associated with real, conceptual, sometimes even psychological geography, in order to establish a proper spatial footing.[33]

Although this volume covers a very long period, spanning from Homer to Quintus, and includes both Greek and Latin works, the traditional preoccupations of the epic genre guarantee a plethora of unifying themes. The clash between the East and the West defines the geographical dynamics of the *Iliad* and is repeatedly and variously reworked in Roman epic (Elliott, Skempis, Keith, Manuwald). Within the new framework of imperial politics and globalization, the dichotomy between East and West is recast as a transition of power from Greece to Rome, reflecting the translation of Greek epic poetry to Rome. The global worldview of epic poetry focuses on the encounter between the familiar and the unknown (Haubold, Sistakou, Skempis, Shorrock, Keith, Slaney), often perceived as a polarity between center and periphery (Ziogas, Bexley, Shorrock).

Human space is separated from the divine realm – epic poetry clearly demarcates two worlds, which often interact with each other (Sistakou). Whether this distinction triggers ethnographic digressions (Haubold), reflects social contexts (Lateiner), or emphasizes the gods' easy travels (Parkes), it features as one of the most prominent boundaries in a genre preoccupied with drawing borderlines and redefining established landmarks (Ormand, Skempis, Carvounis, Manu-

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**30** Hardie 1993, 3. On the influential spatial imagery of the *Aeneid*, see Hardie 1986.
**31** Brodersen 1995; 2004; Brodersen/Talbert 2004; Talbert 2008; 2010.
**32** Barchiesi 1997a; Tissol 1997; Jenkyns 1998; Fowler 2000; Elsner 2002; Goldhill 2007.
**33** Larmour 2007.

wald). The crossing of natural bounds (Shorrock, Bexley), supposedly fixed but often surprisingly fluid (Bexley, Manuwald), in combination with the designation of artificial borderlines stresses the intricate politics of constructing space in epic poetry.

The contradistinctions between war and peace, village and city (Edwards), national identity and ethnic otherness (Haubold, Lateiner, Edwards, Bexley), civilization and wilderness (Purves, Ormand, Sistakou), and indoor and outdoor space (Elliott) invite the readers to interpret thematic motifs and structural patterns of epic poetry by defining narrative space. Epic space becomes a crucial factor, not a mere background. While human beings interact with the historical and literary backdrop of landscapes, the construction of a hero's identity becomes indistinguishable from narrated space; a character's biography extends to shape a landmark and vice versa (Carvounis, Skempis, Kyriakidis, Ziogas, Bexley).

Epic heroes transform the landscape, while the landscape defines their characters and destinies. Linguistic tropes, such as the interplay between literal and metaphorical descriptions (Ormand) or narrative proper and similes (Purves, Lateiner), bring about spatial metamorphoses. Epic poets revisit, negate, and forge semantic relations of geographical names; etymology (Skempis, Kyriakidis, Ziogas, Bexley) and aetiology (Edwards, Carvounis, Slaney) negotiate new space for old places, casting mythical and historical topographies in an updated socio-political context (Lateiner, Parkes, Keith, Manuwald).

Connecting the past with the present, while looking forward to the future, defines the temporal range of epic poetry. The all-inclusive chronological sway of epic should be examined in parallel with its global worldview. Time marks up space, and topography often opens a time-window (Purves, Sistakou, Kyriakidis, Manuwald, Slaney). Since epic poetry deals with bygone eras and appropriates previous traditions, the temporal dimension of topography is repeatedly brought to the fore. Even the oldest extant Greek epic, the *Iliad*, is now seen as the culmination of an epic tradition rather than its beginning. Instead of being the father of geography and ethnography, Homer most likely responded to an already established ethnographic tradition (Haubold). Subsequently, Homeric geography and landscapes create an authoritative tradition and leave their traces in Greek (Carvounis, Shorrock) and Roman (Elliott, Bexley) epic. Geography becomes a passion of Hellenistic poets and authors, whose geographical interests deeply influence Roman epic poets (Skempis, Kyriakidis). But after Vergil, the Romans can resort to their own epic tradition. The epics of Statius and Valerius Flaccus, for instance, open an intriguing dialogue with mythical topography (Parkes, Slaney) and the narrative dynamics of Ovidian landscapes (Keith).

Epic travels can be seen as the rediscovery of epic traditions. An exploration of epic space suggests the well-known parallel between a hero's journey and a poet's narrative trip (Sistakou, Parkes, Slaney, Manuwald). An epic poem is an adventure, which the readers share with the poet and the heroes. Author, characters, and the readership contribute to the poetics of constructing and interpreting epic space. And all the contributors of this volume examine this fascinating aspect of epic geographies, topographies, and landscapes.

But let us have a closer look at each chapter. In what sense does the discourse of what we call ethnography relate to the production of cultural space? To answer this question, **Johannes Haubold** ("Ethnography in the *Iliad*") turns to the *Iliad* and re-examines the first grains of ethnographic writing, identified as such in Book 13. Far from adopting the conventional viewpoint that favors the rise of ethnography in *Il*. 13.1–9, he argues for the poem's self-reflexive stance toward the tradition of ethnographic writing that precedes it, insofar as it appears to appropriate samples of this tradition. This he manages by re-reading the Iliadic passage at issue against the backdrop of its narrative setting and of the questions it raises concerning the embedding of cultural space. Ethnographic discourse, he submits, is an elaborate means of expressing cultural distinctiveness in a broad sense. The mechanisms of narrative generate ties between this discourse and the epic genre's general concern with sketching out cultural history, on the one hand, and the specific thematic principles of the *Iliad*, on the other. In more detail, the catalogue of northern peoples to which Zeus turns bored with the Trojan War (just as the reference to the Ethiopians and the Hippemolgi in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*) serves as a purely digressive ethnographic distraction. It turns out that the *Iliad* is rather unwilling to track down tokens of cultural otherness among mortals, but is certainly interested in differentiating divine from human culture. The gods of the *Iliad*, Haubold maintains, are laden with exotic traits, thus attracting an interest fairly equivalent to the one in ethnographic digressions. As the shift of focus from the human to the divine sphere shows in *Iliad* 13–14, ethnographic moments are centered on the divine and its representation.

One of the most famous Homeric excursuses, the story of Odysseus' scar in *Odyssey* 19, gives **Alex Purves** (""Thick Description": From Auerbach to the Boar's Lair (*Od*. 19.388–475)") impetus to examine the embedding of wilderness (natural space) within narrative frames. Purves takes as her starting-point Auerbach's position that Homeric style grants latitude of space and time to the narrative at key-moments such as the recognition of Odysseus by Eurycleia. By further discussing Auerbach's insistence on the language of illumination and the expunction of depth, perspective, and background from Homeric narrative, the author inquires into the dimensionality of narrative time and reflects on the

way time and space coalesce to form the digression in Book 19. Purves argues that a temporal sequence marked by the use of successive adverbs opens a spatial window that enables the passing over from the urban setting of Odysseus' current encounter with Eurycleia to the natural landscape of his past experience with the boar on Mt. Parnassus. What is more, the thickness of the boar's lair serves as a hypertextual vehicle for advancing the spectrum of associations that connects the natural landscape in question with other landscapes hosted in similes as well as with Odysseus' expedient bed in Scheria. As a result, thickness in Homer is indexed as a natural quality that unravels its rich semantic implications within a frame of homologous references. This sort of interconnectedness endows the Homeric text with particular depth – and strikes at the heart of Auerbach's argument. For *pukinos* ("thick") establishes itself as a term indicative of the inherent texturedness of the narrative setting in which it is embedded, thus acquiring quasi-poetological overtones. Besides signposting the induction of nature into Homeric storytelling, the term gives way to "thick descriptions" of multilayered signification and varied narrative tempo.

In his essay "Homer's Social-Psychological Spaces and Places", **Donald Lateiner** analyzes the mechanics of cognition that underlies Homer's relation to space. After a terminological survey designed to illuminate spatial concepts and their narrative use by mortals and immortals, Lateiner delves into the world of epic narrative in order to demonstrate that Homeric characters perceive and experience proxemics, that is, spatial analogies, within the diverse social contexts to which these pertain. Homeric poetry, he argues, is replete with elaborate examples testifying to the way human and divine movement maps out space and unfolds its social implications. To underpin his argument on the cognitive production of localities, he deals with the distribution of space among the gods of the *Iliad* as well as with sites of real and imagined cultural geographies in the *Odyssey*. In the field of narrative stylistics, the form of narration affects the different kinds and degrees of focalization in the description of places. Similes, in particular, negotiate the notions of distance and proximity as well as public and private according to the experiences to which they are attached.

Taking as a point of departure the axiom that society should match ethical values, **Anthony Edwards** analyzes the ascription of morals to geography on the basis of human interface. In his chapter "The Ethical Geography of Hesiod's *Works and Days*", Edwards surveys the overarching polarity between village and city, the ethical connotations of which uphold a phenomenological approach to space. Moral values are contingent on the places perceived through experiences of social interaction and therefore construe a "socially valued space", as the author terms it. Given that the *Works and Days* has a particular interest in the projection of minor localities, the main set of spatial oppositions is to be

traced in the pivotal distinction between *ergon* and *agore*, a distinction that implies the more general, yet unstated geographical opposition between *agros* and *polis*. Within the frame of his dispute with Perses, Hesiod puts a stark emphasis on the moral semantics of *ergon*, a term denoting both the site (farm) and the activity associated with it (toil). The prosperity gained from the *ergon* emerges as a correlative of labor and justice, a constellation sanctioned by the divine. Conversely, in the *agore*, the seat of lawsuits within the context of bad strife and injustice, prosperity can be attained by claiming the property of others. In this light, Edwards goes on to analyze the aetiologies of labor in the Pandora narrative and the myth of the golden race. It turns out that a whole set of dialectical oppositions such as the binarity of strife and the division between judgment-*dike* and justice-*dike* revolves around the intrinsic concept of 'labor'. The ethic-centric rhetoric in the *Works and Days* shows how a personalized conflict, the one between Hesiod and Perses, can take the form of a spatialized opposition.

In his chapter "Uncertain Geographies of Erotic Desire in the Hesiodic *Catalogue:* Atalanta", **Kirk Ormand** casts light on the transformative qualities of space. Taking his cue from the interdependence of action and interaction, Ormand argues that the definition of space rests on a constant negotiation that generates meanings other than the established ones. The literary motif of erotic pursuit in the story of Atalanta takes center stage in this process. In its cardinal form, the story narrates Atalanta's aversion to marriage, which leads to the arrangement of a footrace in which suitors are called to compete with her in swiftness. The winner has his life spared and takes Atalanta as his wife. The uncertainty in representing female desire, Ormand maintains, reflects its fluid state in the unstable configurations of the geographical space that claims to host this desire. As a consequence, the geography of the race undergoes a threefold mutation. In Theognis, a boy unwilling to have a love affair with the *persona loquens* is paralleled to the sexually disinclined Atalanta. Here the element of competition is entirely missing, and Atalanta's negative stance toward marriage transposes her to the realm of untamed nature. To describe Atalanta's relation to space, Ormand takes up Foucault's concept of 'crisis heterotopia', a spatial alterity for individuals undergoing a critical situation. Atalanta's displacement into the wild gives rise to the semantic multiformity of the footrace in Hesiod. Given that the *Catalogue* focuses on the running contest between Atalanta and Hippomenes, Ormand argues for its metaphorical conceptualization as a hunt, which puts Hippomenes in the position of the fleeing subject. The very moment when Atalanta takes hold of Hippomenes turns the hunt-like race into a battle where the warrior seizes his opponent with fatal consequences. Yet Atalanta grasps an apple instead of Hippomenes, a token of her flight's ceasing and

her consent to marriage. The 'battle' has an intertextual edge as it evokes the Homeric duel between Hector and Achilles in *Iliad* 22 and especially the footrace before the Scaean Wall.

In an exciting new take on the geography of Hellenistic poetry, **Evina Sistakou** ("Mapping Counterfactuality in Apollonius' *Argonautica*") sets out to explore how the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius copes with fictive, counterfactual geography as opposed to the historicized geography of the real world. Given that the *Argonautica* hovers between the discourse of epic and travelogue, this dichotomy makes good sense since it reflects upon the boundaries of realism and fictionality in terms of the complementary ways an epic construes its spatialities. For Sistakou, Apollonius is conscious as far as the historical spaces of the ancient Mediterranean and beyond is concerned, but counterfactual geography is what bears out the immanent ties of his poem with the epic genre. Fantasylands, landscapes of epiphany, spaces of desire, heterotopias, mythical places, and territories of mirage make up the canvas on which geographies of the unreal are shrewdly drawn. Hellenistic epic, so it seems, insists on the fabrication of fictional spaces and places in order to manifest its provenance from established predecessors and proclaim creative continuity in terms of genre.

In her essay "Geographical Landmarks and Time in Quintus' *Posthomerica*", **Katerina Carvounis** goes through the *Posthomerica* in order to showcase the imprint of Homeric stories on the historical landscape of the late Imperial period. In the core of her study, Carvounis argues that Quintus' engagement with landmarks already registered in the Homeric epics springs from an astounding self-awareness of his late position in the epic tradition. Within this context, at times the epic poet revises the presentation of Homeric landmarks according to literary and philological insights into the respective geography (as in the case of Miletus), at times he makes the connection between mythical past and Trojan theme explicit (as in the case of Anchises' bed). Carvounis shows that narratives about landmarks with either a metamorphic twist or an instance of divine epiphany exhibit a predominantly aetiological character, which is meant to fill the gap between narrated past and historical present. On the one hand, metamorphosis is exemplified in the figures of the mourning mothers Niobe and Hecuba, who have turned into rock-formations with commemorative function (Niobe morphs into Sipylos and Hecuba into Cynossema). On the other, narratives about how the rivers Paphlagoneios and Glaucus came into being entail instances of divine mediation in the burials of the heroes Memnon and Glaucus. The result is that persons and landscapes intersect. In all cases, however, the individual history of landmarks turned into monuments is subjected to a radical recontextualization of the Homeric material to a Hellenistic and Imperial setting.

The analysis of the evidence Carvounis collects from the *Posthomerica* bears witness to an increased level of spatial monumentality, one of epic's intrinsic traits.

The power of narrative to create and transgress spatial boundaries is a germane issue to **Robert Shorrock's** essay "Crossing the Hydaspes: Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and the Boundaries of Epic". Quite apart from the literary boundaries that the *Dionysiaca* notoriously break down, the narrative of Nonnus' lengthy poem covers a considerable range of geographical distance, which spans from Greece and its cultural periphery around the Mediterranean to the near East and Asia. Dionysus' movement through space prompts Shorrock to flesh out his argument about literary geography going hand in hand with generic pluralism. After acknowledging the vast interface of the *Dionysiaca* with literary models, he proceeds to a thorough examination of the poem's links with both historical and literary sources by using Dionysus' first encounter with Indian space as a case in point: the crossing of the Indian river Hydaspes signposts the geographical midpoint of Dionysus' itinerary from Asia Minor to India and back again, and marks the arithmetical central-point of the epic. By pointing out thematic similarities between the narratives of Plutarch and Nonnus, Shorrock argues that Alexander corresponds to Dionysus in his battle against the Indians. Moreover, Hydaspes is presented not just as a physical borderline that signals Dionysus' foray into a foreign land, but also gives Nonnus the opportunity to engage in dialogue with *Iliad* 21, which recounts Achilles' battle against the river Scamander. Callimachean echoes from the *Hymn to Apollo* invest Hydaspes with metapoetic signification and draw forth the *Dionysiaca*'s adherence to the thematic principles of epic poetry. In intratextual terms, Shorrock substantiates a connection between Hydaspes and the Nile, which he places within a globalized frame that forges comparison of India with Egypt as a means of creating geographical boundaries. Appealing the amalgam-like semanticization of literary space as it is, Shorrock manages to illustrate the diversity of textual ties that nuance Nonnus' representation of Hydaspes and add up to a sophisticated literary landscape.

**Jackie Elliott** ("Space and Geography in Ennius' *Annales*") examines aspects of spatial and geographical juxtapositions in the extant fragments of Ennius' *Annales*. Though the work is fragmentary and the task of contextualizing and interpreting fragments not an easy one, Elliott shows how Ennius' epic poem revisits the dynamic tension between the West and the East, recasting a geographical and cultural conflict which features prominently from Homer and Herodotus to Roman epic and history. Moving from the smaller to the more substantial fragments, Elliott sheds new light on the interplay between indoor and outdoor space in Ilia's dream and the 'good companion' fragments. While Ilia's disorientation in an environment defined by men underlines the gendered tension in Ennius' landscapes, the traits which the Ilia episode shares with

the 'good companion' fragment suggest that gender is one, but not the only, determinant in Ennius' epic space; land as a means of communicating the distribution of power among the actors is a crucial aspect which transcends gendered dichotomies.

According to **Stratis Kyriakidis** ("From Delos to Latium: Wandering in the Unknown") the semantic relation between Delos/ Ortygia and Latium signposts Aeneas' quest for the unknown land where he is destined to found a new city. As the reader experiences the delay of the revelation of Aeneas' final destination, the etymology of Delos (from δῆλος, "clear") or Ortygia (from *orior*, "to appear") contrasts with the etymology of Latium (from *lateo*, "to conceal"): at Delos the ultimate destination remains obscure (ἄδηλος) because of Anchises' *error* in the interpretation of Apollo's oracle. Although Latium as the hero's destination remains latent until he reaches Carthage, it ceases to be so when Aeneas acknowledges it as his journey's end. Delos and Latium create a bipolar situation parallel to the hero's esoteric development which is inscribed in space through his *errores*. To this end, Vergil appropriates the Greek myth of Delos-Latona in his poetics by showing his Callimachean preferences vis-à-vis the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*; the Delos-Latona semantic relation is reallocated as a Delos-Latium geographical framework. Interestingly, the story of Delos, the floating and obscure island, which eventually assumed a fixed identity and position, mirrors the wanderings of Aeneas and reflects the hero's characterization. Relying on the semantic range of *error*, which means both "wandering" and "mistake", Vergil invites us to read his verses as a map depicting the Trojans' erratic and erroneous course from Delos to Crete; as a matter of fact, his catalogue of the Cyclades mirrors the actual position of Naxos, Donusa, Olearos, and Paros in relation to Delos/Ortygia.

The narrative sequence Caieta-Circe in the beginning of *Aeneid* 7 is the focus of **Marios Skempis'** chapter ("Phenomenology of Space, Place Names and Colonization in the 'Caieta-Circe' Sequence of *Aeneid* 7"). By exploring the geographical background of Caieta and Circe, Skempis demonstrates the intricate spatial nexus between two seemingly unrelated minor figures of the *Aeneid*. Vergil not only locates the vignettes of Caieta and Circe in Italy, but also foregrounds the transformation of these female figures into geographical toponyms. The narrative link between Caieta and Circe is set against the geographical background of the Italian peninsula. Through a detailed examination of lexical and geographical issues in archaic Greek epic, Hellenistic literature, and prose geographical sources, Skempis shows how Vergil employs a rich literary tradition in order to map out a poetics of colonization in his Roman epic. Greek myth and Roman geography merge into the epic palimpsest of the *Aeneid*. An intriguing aspect of structuring epic narrative against the backdrop of literary geogra-

phy is the blurring of human identity and space as well as the interplay between proper names and narrative segments. For Skempis, naming or changing the name of a site signals Aeneas' cultural appropriation of territorial otherness.

"What's in a place name?" inquires **Ioannis Ziogas** in his contribution "The Topography of Epic Narrative in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" as he comes to grips with semasiological issues of geographical names in Ovid. The author takes a new critical path that is set to combine literary onomastics with the narrativity of space, and, in so doing, poses pertinent questions: How does the meaning of a place name well up and to what extent do narrative turns develop this meaning? The answers Ziogas provides are clear-cut: place names and personal names are subservient to the consolidation of characters within the spatial continuum of the narrative. His case studies comprise examples of the etymological empowering of epic topographies such as the Arcadian connections of Lycaon, Venus' ambiguous relation to her epithet Cytherea, and Glaucus' trip to Circe through Zancle and Rhegium. The notion of geographical displacement lies at the heart of the argument insofar as it focuses on the twisting of myth to meet the needs of Roman geopolitics. In the light of *Metamorphoses* 14–15, which includes stories of heroes traveling from Greece to Italy, the author turns to the beginning of the epic and argues that Ovid downplays the traditional connection of Apollo's laurel with Delphi and links it to Rome and Augustus. Interestingly, the programmatic tale of Apollo puts two places that claimed to be the center of the world (Delphi and Rome) in the periphery of Ovid's narrative. In a similar vein, the *ekphrasis* of Fama's house invites the reader to view Fama's sway between center and periphery in relation to the global range of Rome's dominion. Poised between myth and history, the *Metamorphoses* projects a characteristic blend of chronological and topographical shifts that are interlocked with the passage from Troy to Rome. Nestor's story about the impregnable Caeneus as recounted to the Thessalian hero Achilles can also be seen within the discourse of decentralizing Troy, since Nestor's account suggests a parallel between the Centauromachy and the Trojan War and thus redirects the narrative focus from Troy to Thessaly.

The reception of Vergil in early imperial Roman literature has been studied thoroughly. However, far less attention has been paid to the centrality of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in epics of this period. To that end, **Alison Keith** ("Ovidian Geographies in Flavian Mythographical Epic") explores the transposition and transformation of Ovid's landscapes in Valerius Flaccus and Statius. In the beginning of his *Argonautica*, Valerius programmatically evokes Ovid's introductory scene of the Argonautic narrative in *Metamorphoses* 7, suggesting a new epic and imperial expedition from East to West along the lines of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Valerius' Argo revisits the landscapes of Ovid's epic voyage. Hecate's grove in

the *Argonautica* is focalized through Ovid's Enna and Medea through Proserpina and thus Valerius re-introduces a distinctly Ovidian interaction between epic landscapes and the violence of desire. Moving from Valerius to Statius, Keith demonstrates how the topography of civil strife in the *Thebaid* is sketched out against the geographical blueprint of Ovid's Theban tales in *Metamorphoses* 3. Ovid's Thebes, the city of Cadmus' exile, extends its rule over a deadly landscape of trackless wilderness. Similarly, Statius' Thebes, to which Polynices returns as an exile, is inhabited with monstrous hunters and wicked ambushers, and so constitutes an accursed site and an appropriate setting for internecine warfare. By spreading out the ominous aura of Ovid's landscapes over the literary and imperial programs of their epics, Valerius Flaccus and Statius highlight the marital and martial themes of the *Argonautica* and the *Thebaid* respectively.

Lucan's iconoclastic catalogues and their geography of devastation are the focus of **Erica Bexley**'s chapter ("Lucan's Catalogues and the Landscape of War"). Comparing the catalogue of Caesar's troops in *Pharsalia* 1 to Homer's catalogue of ships and Vergil's catalogue of Italian allies, Bexley argues that Lucan concentrates not on the assembling forces, but on the spaces they abandon. Such a pointed inversion of the traditional epic catalogue illustrates the self-defeat inherent in civil war at the same time as it undoes Caesar's expansionist conquest of Gaul; as Caesar's troops leave Gaul for Rome, they contract Rome's imperial power. The catalogue of Pompey's troops in *Pharsalia* 3 likewise represents Rome's collapse. More conventional than Caesar's, Pompey's catalogue expresses the inverted nature of civil war via content rather than form: the assembling republican allies anticipate the train of mourners at Pompey's funeral as well as recalling this general's famous triumphs; as a triumph in reverse, Pompey's catalogue therefore illustrates the narrowing effect civil war inflicts upon Roman imperial geography. Following this focused analysis, Bexley proceeds to demonstrate how Lucan's catalogues reflect more general themes in the *Pharsalia* as a whole. She examines the presence of water (rivers, sea, the Ocean) as a natural boundary whose symbolic transgression by unrestrained tyrants amounts to war against nature. Human beings and natural phenomena interact in intriguing ways, with rivers in particular replicating the conflict waged between Pompey and Caesar. An analysis of proper names, too, shows that Lucan sacrifices geographic accuracy in favor of etymologies that suit his epic program. Finally, Bexley argues that Lucan's catalogues avoid establishing genealogical links: Romans barely feature in either list of troops and, in *Pharsalia* 7, a brief catalogue of animals literally removes all traces of Roman soldiers from the battlefield. By abjuring the catalogue's traditional genealogical function, Lucan suggests that civil war has destroyed Roman bloodlines.

Epic journeys and poetic expeditions go hand in hand in Latin literature. **Ruth Parkes** ("The Long Road to Thebes: The Geography of Journeys in Statius' *Thebaid*") follows the route between Argos and Thebes in the *Thebaid* and traces a tension between the magnetic pull of Thebes and the poet's as well as the characters' reluctance to reach the city where the epic's focal action takes place. The Argive army takes too long to reach Thebes in both narrative and chronological terms, a delay which conveys Statius' postponement to recount his nefarious subject matter of civil war and fratricide, recalling Lucan's marked disinclination to focus on his epic's topic. The prolonged duration of the Argive expedition is further underpinned by the effortless travels of the gods as well as by the speed of Polynices' journey from Thebes to Argos and, most importantly, by the bereaved wives and female relatives of the Argives, who need a far shorter time than their men to travel from Argos to Thebes. Different characters repeat the same itinerary for different purposes and in different speed. This repetition, Parkes demonstrates, contrasts with the Argives' failed homecoming and suggests a parallel between the doomed military expedition and the trip of the female mourners who are likened to a defeated army. The *Thebaid*'s much-traveled routes further pit the Argive expedition against the altruistic travels of Hercules and Theseus. Locations and landmarks resonate with mythological echoes, highlighting the ominous and impious impact of the Argive army on the landscape. Thebes is the goal in Statius' epic, but the trip is what really matters.

Of course, the Flavian epic which explores the literary and political dynamics of traveling is Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*. **Helen Slaney** ("The Voyage of Rediscovery: Consuming Global Space in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*") discovers the ironies of a first ship laden with the long literary tradition of the Argonautic expedition and the global pretensions of the Roman Empire. The landscapes exposed by the first ship are anything but untouched, drawing the Argonauts and their readers towards an uncanny encounter with the familiar made strange. Valerius insists on the Argo's primacy only to shatter the illusion of the first voyage by denying Jason and his crew any aetiological command of uncharted territory. By contrast, aetiology is a recurring activity in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, even though the Argo of the Hellenistic poet is not the first ship. The depth of intertextual allusions in Valerius' *Argonautica* makes Argo's belatedness surface more readily. As distant and unknown places can only be perceived in preconceived terms, it becomes all the more explicit that every discovery is not a new experience but a projection of the explorer's cultural background to unfamiliar landscapes. For Slaney, Valerius self-consciously undermines the possibility of exploring new places and lands untainted by imperial preoccupations, in order to challenge the epic's own participation in constructing a global Rome.

Argo's maiden voyage in Valerius Flaccus further revisits a recurring theme in Roman epic, namely the transition of power from East to West. **Gesine Manuwald** ("Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica:* the Argo's Maiden Voyage from Europe into the Unknown") focuses on topographical turning points in the *Argonautica* and examines how the selection of geographical information is linked to the overall framework of the epic. Valerius' voyage transcends the agenda of the Argonauts of Greek myth since it will have serious impact on the future distribution of power. By opening up the seas and thus initiating conflicts between distant peoples, the Argo delineates the boundaries between East and West and enables the transition of power from Asia to Greece and later from Greece to another people, presumably the Romans. Interestingly, Manuwald demonstrates how Valerius' Argonautic expedition suggests the fluidity of frontiers between East and West. The frozen Pontus, which touches Europe on one side and Asia on the other, undermines the stability of this natural boundary, while the peninsula of Cyzicus is neither Europe nor Asia, neither island nor mainland and it neither connects nor separates. What is more, the presentation of Amycus' kingdom as the barrier between Europe and Asia highlights the construction of artificial limits separating the two continents. The Argonauts define East and West, but the negative repercussions of Argo's maiden voyage might foreground the problematic nature of Roman imperialism.

The publication of a multi-authored volume dedicated to a unifying theme is always a firm indication that scholarly interest in the theme not just grows, but also flourishes. As a consequence, the recent publication of *Space in Ancient Greek Narrative* edited by Irene de Jong is certainly a time-marker.[34] Seminal studies that consolidate the importance of space in epic narratives and pave the way for further elaborate work on spatial configurations within the broad field of narratology have recently come out.[35] At the same time, the Research Cluster "Topoi", based in Berlin as a collaboration act of Humboldt-Universität and Freie Universität, is set to explore in depth processes of "formation and transformation of space and knowledge in ancient civilizations" and thus promises to produce cutting-edge scholarship on the diverse epistemological frames within which ancient cultures map out and conceptualize space.

The present volume is to be seen in the context of these developments and aspires to contribute to scholarly interest in 'epic geography' by offering new insights and readings. For the purposes of this volume, we focus on Greek and

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**34** The approach of the volume is narratological and therefore designed to supplement de Jong/Nünlist/Bowie 2004 and de Jong/Nünlist 2007.

**35** Trachsel 2007; Purves 2010a; Tsagalis 2010b; 2012; Clay 2011; Thalmann 2011.

Roman epic, a poetic genre traditionally linked with the historical, political, and cultural dynamics of geography. The aim is to discuss the extent to which spatial configurations classified under the tags 'geography', 'topography', and 'landscape' intersect with the premises of epic narrative and further compositional parameters within this genre-specific framework. The questions we address mainly concern matters of representation and conceptualization of space. As well as exploring the geographical and topographical determinants inherent in epic, a special goal of the volume is to elaborate on certain contexts that render the interrelation of conceptual and representational space meaningful for the formation of the genre and its narrative tropes. The choice of epic poets is eclectic, not comprehensive, with emphasis on non-canonical works, and our main aim was to achieve thematic coherence rather than produce a companion-like volume that covers many authors. Nonetheless, we trust that the volume covers a wide and representative range of Greek and Roman epic poems and will inspire further studies on the topic. By introducing a multifaceted approach to epic geography we hope to provide a critical evaluation of spatial perception, of its repercussions on shaping narrative as well as of its discursive traits and cultural contexts.