

## **Space, Time and Language in Plutarch**

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## **Volume 67**

# Space, Time and Language in Plutarch

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Edited by  
Aristoula Georgiadou and Katerina Oikonomopoulou

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To the memory of  
Françoise Frazier



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## Preface

The present volume derives its inspiration from the papers presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Plutarch Society, titled *Space, Time and Language in Plutarch's Visions of Greek Culture: Introversion, Imperial Cosmopolitanism and Other Forms of Interaction with the Past and Present*, which was held at the European Cultural Center at Delphi, 16–18 May 2014. Our choice of Delphi as a venue for the meeting was closely connected with Plutarch's long-standing and deep ties with the city and its sanctuary: ties which extended from his visit to Delphi with his teacher Ammonius on the occasion of Nero's tour of Greece in 67 (*The E at Delphi* 385B) to his election as one of the two permanent priests of the shrine (perhaps in Trajan's reign),<sup>1</sup> down to the reign of Hadrian, when as *epimelete* of the Delphic Amphictyony he supervised the erection of a statue for the emperor (Dittenberger, *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 829A). The wide range of participants included faculty from North American Universities, the United Kingdom, Austria, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain, Portugal, Greece, Israel, Poland, as well as researchers and graduate students in Plutarchan studies.

The papers that were delivered at the Conference aimed to demonstrate how in Plutarch's works spaces, geographical sites, topographical landmarks, historical locations and locales, religious and mythological landscapes (real or imagined) can prompt reflection on a variety of issues: these include the relationship between local culture (in the Greek cities) and the Roman Empire (an inclusive, cosmopolitan space); the nature of the different kinds of interactions (cultural, military, linguistic, mythological and other) among Greeks, Romans and others at different moments in history (thus opening an avenue for understanding Plutarch's perception and construction of time); and the uses of spatial and temporal concepts and terminology in Plutarch's works.

The present volume includes revised and expanded versions of some of the papers presented at the Conference, with an additional contribution by Mark Beck. It addresses not only Plutarch scholars and Classicists, but anyone in the Humanities and Social Sciences interested in the concepts of space and time, and their codification through literary discourse.

Naturally, this volume does not exhaust all research avenues into the topics of space, time and language, as far as Plutarch is concerned. A next step would involve exploring Plutarch's handling of time and space in relation to other imperial authors, Greek or Latin. Moreover, it would be beneficial to enquire whether there are divergences in the concepts of time and space (and their linguistic representation) between the *Moralia* and the *Lives*, or across the different genres in which Plutarch writes. But we believe that what emerges clearly from all contributions is both con-

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1 Jones (1971) 26, 31.

cepts' unquestionable value for gaining a richer understanding of Plutarch's engagement with the past, his versions of Greek *paideia*, his philosophical layers, and his biographical techniques and moralism.

\* \* \*

The 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Plutarch Society would not have been feasible without the financial assistance of the International Plutarch Society (I.P.S.), the Municipality of Delphi, the Archdiocese of Thebes and Lebadeia, and the University of Patras Special Account for Research Funds (EAKΕ). We gratefully acknowledge their support.

Warm thanks go to Anastatios Nikolaidis, Christopher Pelling and Frances Titchener, who provided valuable advice on organisational matters as well as on the preparation and publication of this volume. We are especially grateful to Vasiliki Maria Vlachaki, who at the time was a postgraduate student at the University of Patras, for the zeal and efficiency with which she assisted us at all phases of the Conference's preparation. We are also indebted to Angeliki Tzanetou, who offered stimulating insights and sharp observations on the notions of space and time at critical moments of the project. Last but not least, we wish to express our gratitude to Peter von Möllendorff, the editor of the *Millenium-Studien*, for his advice and guidance during the preparation of this volume, as well as to the editorial team of the series for overseeing this book's passage into print.

Aristoula Georgiadou and Katerina Oikonomopoulou

## Introduction: Reading Plutarch through space, time and language

### The confluence of space, time and language: Plutarch's Delphi

Delphi is a place that 'is essential to understanding Plutarch in his historical and social context'.<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch's Pythian dialogues (*The E at Delphi*, *On the Oracles of the Pythia*, *The Obsolescence of Oracles*) the sanctuary is described in a manner that is reminiscent of Pausanias' descriptions of Greek religious sites (especially Delphi and Olympia) and their monuments. According to Jaś Elsner, 'Together, woven as a web of interconnected cross-references, the places and objects (that part of the Pausanian project which actually is a descriptive topography of Greece) constitute much more than a material account: they evoke, they *are* an imaginative geography in which each site and all the sites together are infused with the myth-historical essence of Greekness'.<sup>2</sup> For Plutarch, too, Delphi was a sanctuary of panhellenic significance, and a place whose monuments and dedications evoked manifold episodes of Greek myth and history. Precisely because of this, Delphi provides an apt introduction into the ways the three concepts (space, time, language) that form the main focus of this volume interact and fertilise each other (Pelling in this volume). In the Pythian dialogues, the sanctuary of Delphi is not simply the backdrop to the recorded conversations, but also functions as a place of pilgrimage for people travelling from distant parts of the world, as a repository of valuable objects,<sup>3</sup> and as a sacred space that triggers reflection on the past and present and prompts enquiry into oracular language and metre (Brenk, Kim and Lucchesi in this volume). Pythia, the priestess of Delphi, herself represents a confluence of the three concepts, through her ability to travel across space and time, in all directions simultaneously, and her divine way of prophesying.<sup>4</sup>

The frame dialogue between Basilocles and Philinus in *On the Oracles of the Pythia*<sup>5</sup> provides a most vivid illustration of how the three concepts are intimately linked (394E, transl. F.C. Babbitt, Loeb):

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1 Stadter (2004) 19.

2 Elsner (2001) 6.

3 Bal (2009) 138: 'objects have a spatial status'.

4 Purves (2010) 154.

5 Widely known as *De Pythiae Oraculis*. See Brenk and Kim in this volume.

*Basilocles.* You people have kept it up till well into the evening, Philinus, escorting the foreign visitor around among the statues and votive offerings. For my part, I had almost given up waiting for you.

*Philinus.* The fact is, Basilocles, that we went slowly, sowing words, and reaping them straight-way with strife, like the men sprung from the Dragon's teeth, words with meanings behind them of the contentious sort, which sprang up and flourished along our way.

The space that the sanctuary of Delphi and its monuments and treasures occupy offers visitors who travel to the site a profound religious and cultural experience. Philinus' reference to the men sprung from the Dragon's teeth (Σπαρτοί) on one level evokes the foundation myth of Thebes according to which Cadmus was given instructions by the Delphic oracle to found his city. Thus, the myth accentuates the oracle's omniscient command of Greek history and its diachronic involvement in the shaping of Greek identity. On another level, Philinus' comparison of the Spartoi to the 'warlike' conversations (λόγους ... πολεμικούς) that sprouted and grew, as it were (βλαστάνοντας ... καὶ ὑποφυσμένους), from the occasion of the interlocutors' tour of the sanctuary underscores the site's capacity to engender combative discourse.<sup>6</sup> Space, time and language are inextricably woven and as such decisively shape the texture of the ensuing dialogue. As Frederick Brenk states in this volume, 'Though highly engaged with the past, this is a dialogue which also points to the future, both of the Roman Empire and civilisation to come. In his desire for one world and universal peace, the real prophetic voice is no longer that of the Pythia, but of Theon'. Thus, '[t]he new space spoken of at the end [of the dialogue] is that of the Roman Empire, the new time, the present, and the new language, the prose of the Pythia' (pp. 86 and 85, respectively).

## Methodological approaches to space and time

The so-called 'spatial turn' in the study of ancient Greek and Latin literature<sup>7</sup> has helped spur a new understanding of the role descriptions of space play across different genres (such as epic, historiography, novel, biography). As scholarship has repeatedly shown, geographical locations and locales in ancient texts are not merely background settings for action or discussion, nor are they always portrayed in terms that we associate with 'scientific' geography: rather, ancient authors represent or imagine spaces in ways that are suggestive of how those spaces were experienced by human agents, and invested with emotions and ideas by them. In this context, scholars often discuss 'space and time' as constituting 'a fundamental unity',<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On this topic, see Brenk in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> Gilhuly and Worman (2014) 1: "spatial turn", a term used to describe the confluence of interests across many disciplines regarding what it means to be situated in space'. See also Warf and Arias (2009).

<sup>8</sup> Bemong et al. (2010) 3. See also Bridgeman (2007).



since constructions of time, themselves relative,<sup>9</sup> are essential to how space is perceived and constructed in turn, and vice versa (Beck in this volume). ‘Space and time’ thus yield a richly interdisciplinary field, as they allow for the methods of linguistic analysis and narratological theory to engage in dialogue with novel approaches from the sciences of geography, sociology and anthropology. These sciences also stress the importance of making a distinction between the concepts of place and space: the former should be understood as a site of human beings’ interaction with their natural and social environment, and charged with feelings from the uses people make of it; the latter is to be thought of in less concrete terms as ‘the area defined by a network of places’.<sup>10</sup>

In recent years there has been a considerable upsurge in scholarly publications in the field of Classics and Ancient History which explore space, place, landscape and territory, and time and temporality from the vantage points of philosophy, archaeology and social anthropology, landscape studies, memory studies, linguistics, gender studies and narrative theory. Particularly notable are Irene de Jong and René Nünlist’s *Time in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden and Boston 2007), and de Jong’s *Space in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden and Boston 2012), as they showcase the application of narratology through spatial and temporal descriptions in a wide array of texts, from epic to the Greek novel. Alex Purves’ *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Cambridge 2010) draws further attention to the temporal and spatial relations depicted in poetic and prose works, and, from a Bakhtinian perspective, demonstrates the impact of time on the perception and representation of space in narrative. Kate Gilhuly and Nancy Worman’s *Space, Place and Landscape in Ancient Greek Literature and Culture* (Cambridge 2014) shifts the focus toward the cultural, social and political projections and representations of places in literature. In addition, there are specialised studies on the concepts of space and place in ancient Greek philosophy, such as Keimpe Algra’s *Concepts of Space in Greek Thought* (Leiden and New York 1995), and Benjamin Morrison’s *On Location. Aristotle’s Concept of Place* (Oxford 2002).

An increasing output of scholarship offers examinations of space and time in specific ancient genres. Richard Seaford’s *Cosmology and the Polis: the Social Construction of Space and Time in the Tragedies of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 2012) analyses critical themes such as reciprocity, ritual and money through Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope.<sup>11</sup> The study of space in relation to theatrical space has obviously been the object of focus study in drama scholarship, such as David Wiles’ *Tragedy in Athens: Performance, Space and Theatrical Meaning* (Cambridge 1997) and Rush Rehm’s *The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton 2002). Moving on to epic, Christos Tsagalis’ *From Listeners to Viewers: Space in the*

<sup>9</sup> See Clarke (2008) 7–46. See also Gawlinski (2015); Hannah (2015a) and (2015b).

<sup>10</sup> Tuan (1977) 12. See also Pelling in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin (1981) 84–258. See also Beck in this volume.

*Iliad* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 2012) offers close readings of the *Iliad*'s spatio-temporal framework; also Marios Skempis and Ioannis Ziogas' *Geography, Topography, Landscape: Configurations of Space in Greek and Roman Epic* (Berlin 2013) delves into the rich territory of the configurations of Greek and Roman epic space with attention to ethnography, power, alterity, real and fictional landscapes. Most importantly, William Thalmann's *Apollonius of Rhodes and the Spaces of Hellenism* (Oxford 2011) focuses on the *Argonautica*'s so-called 'production of space'. As he explains, the voyage of the Argonauts serves to signify, organise and order space on the basis of human (and especially Greek) cultural activity and relations. As Thalmann notes, the production of space within the text is inextricable from the cultural politics of Apollonius' era.

Ancient history and the study of ancient religion have also concerned themselves with space and its political, social and ritual functions. Irad Malkin's *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge 1994) is a notable contribution to the exploration of colonisation, ethnicity and cult viewed through a whole spectrum of attitudes to territories and settlement in the Greek world. Lisa Nevett's study of the physical organization of domestic space (i.e. the *oikos*, which encompasses both the physical house and its occupants) in *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) sheds light on the relationship between material culture and social behavior. Susan Guettel Cole's *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley 2004) shifts the focus to the relationship between different types of landscapes (natural space, community space and sacred/ritual space) in order to uncover the role of gender in them. Natural landscapes (the mountains, the sea and its shore, the caves, the springs) are tackled by Richard Buxton in his *Imaginary Greece: The Contexts of Mythology*, Cambridge 1994, 81–96), in the context of the Greek *imaginaire*.

Roman imperial space in its relationship to imperial structures of power is an area of investigation where interdisciplinary approaches to the study of space have yielded particularly rich insights. Thus, Claude Nicolet's *L'inventaire du monde. Géographie et politique aux origines de l'Empire romain* (Paris 1988), and Richard Talbert and Kai Brodersen's collection of essays in *Space in the Roman World: Its Perception and Presentation* (Münster 2004) view ancient geographical texts as systems of knowledge which organised space and served the ideological and cultural interests of the Graeco-Roman world. Similarly, in *Frontiers of the Roman Empire. A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore 1994), C.R. Whittaker studies imperial borders and frontiers primarily as cartographic icons of the Roman Empire's power. Looking at specific imperial Graeco-Roman genres and authors, space both in a broad sense (cities, travels, roads, place-names) and in connection to specific themes (*locus amoenus*, *ekphrasis* or single-action space) is explored in Michael Paschalis' and Stavros Frangoulidis' *Space in the Ancient Novel* (Groningen 2002). The essays in Susan Alcock, John Cherry and Jaś Elsner (eds.), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford 2001) link the theme of travel and tourism in Pausanias' *Periegesis* with Roman power, cultural memory and religious pilgrimage. Last but not least, William

Hutton's *Describing Greece: Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias* (Cambridge 2005) examines the topographical principles that underpin the city and territorial descriptions of the *Periegesis*. Notably, it links these principles with Pausanias' linguistic choices, which, as Hutton finds, deliberately evoke Herodotus.

The conceptions and representations of space in antiquity have also been the theme of digital humanities projects in such as the *Hestia* project on Herodotus' representation of the ancient world (<http://hestia.open.ac.uk>), and the TOPOI project in Berlin (<https://www.topoi.org/>). Furthermore, the concept of space has been the central theme in recent international and multidisciplinary conferences and colloquia.<sup>12</sup>

## Situating space, time and language in Plutarch

Despite the richness of scholarship on space and time in ancient Greek and Roman culture as well as across different genres of Greek and Latin literature, there is to date no extensive study devoted to representations of space and time in Plutarch. Similarly, as we have shown, representations of space and time in other imperial Greek authors have been studied on the basis of a very limited sample (mainly the novels and Pausanias). Neither has special attention been paid to the significance of language as a means of portraying space and time or reflecting on them.

Plutarch's significance for such a line of study lies in the fact that his diverse and wide-ranging oeuvre offers a much more extensive set of case studies on how space and time are conceived, portrayed, or interlinked across different genres, when compared with that of other ancient Greek authors. The *de Jong* and the *de Jong* and Nünlist volumes on *Space in Ancient Greek Literature*, and *Time in Ancient Greek Literature* respectively, include chapters on Plutarch by Mark Beck, both of which focus principally on select *Lives*. In this project, we have undertaken an investigation of these two concepts across a much broader range of Plutarchan writings (both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*). While narratological and Bakhtinian approaches do have a presence in the volume (see especially Beck, Duff and Fletcher), as do theoretical concepts utilised by traditional and 'new' cultural geographers (see Pelling and Oikonomopoulou), these methodologies are not restrictive of the volume's scope. In fact, one of the volume's aims is to show how philological approaches (close reading and intertextual reading) in their own right can shed light on Plutarch's spatial terminology or linguistic choice, when it comes to the representation of space, concrete or metaphorical notions of space in his writings (e.g., Frazier, Alcalde- Martín, Ca-

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the conference on *Psychogeographies: Space and Place in Latin Literature*, organised by King's College London and Royal Holloway, in July 2013, on places as products of the interrelationship of humans and their natural environment; and the more recent conference *Re-visioning Space(s), Time and Bodies* (Sydney, April 2015), whose main aim was to 'open up new insights and conversation between the arts, humanities, business studies and natural/social sciences' (<http://www.iiinz.org/call-for-papers.html>).

tanzaro), and the ways in which space can illuminate aspects of his biographical, philosophical, religious and political thought. Similarly, philological approaches, in conjunction with socio-cultural readings of Plutarch's writings, can clarify his conceptions of time, especially in terms of the ways in which he situates himself in the Second Sophistic's fascination with the past. Thus, some chapters discuss time in terms of how Plutarch's works initiate a dialogue between past and present, or in terms of how the past is received in Plutarch's writings and defines his thought (e.g., Geiger, Goeken, Roskam and Driscoll).

Accordingly, in the volume we seek to explore how space is depicted and described within certain types of narrative settings (such as in the context of religious pilgrimage or the symposium: see e.g., Brenk, Kim, Fernández Delgado and Pordomingo, Driscoll, Nikolaidis), as well as to chart various types of space and their historical, philosophical, religious or political dimensions (e.g., Alexiou, Demulder, Meeusen, Lipka, Vamvouri Ruffy and Volpe). We further investigate time as a concept that is intrinsically linked to that of space, as its perception is often shaped by spatial representations, and as a concept in its own right, which is central to Plutarch's thought (see especially the contributions in parts 4 and 5). In this way, we revisit some key themes in Plutarch scholarship, namely, moralism, Greek and Roman identity, *paideia*, relationship to Empire. Language forms a key part of this horizon of concerns for Plutarch and his Second Sophistic contemporaries. Consequently, some chapters explore the ways in which conceptions of space and time in Plutarch's writings may interact with or influence his views on and about language as a key component of cultural identity, as well as his choice of linguistic idiom (especially Berardi, Brenk and Kim).

The volume is subdivided into thematic sections, each of which is treating a special theme. The first part—under the heading: 'Moving through space and time in Plutarch'—consists of the contributions of Christopher Pelling and Mark Beck and introduces the readers to some major aspects of the interrelationship between space and time in Plutarch's works, as well as the theoretical tools and concepts that can be used in order to analyse it.

Christopher Pelling underlines the importance of experiencing space hodologically (that is, as a journey or route travelled, as opposed to the vision of a bird's-eye map) in Plutarch's dialogue *On the Oracles of the Pythia* and in the *Life of Alexander*: in the former text, the characters' tour of the site of Delphi provides them with the opportunity to reflect on the past (marked by a long history of Greek strife) as well as the present (the ways Greek affairs have improved thanks to Rome). The pace and register of the dialogue itself, moving from the combative to the calm, mirror this transition. In the latter instance, Alexander's military journey eastwards prompts in him an intense reflection of the past (namely, the fate of the Persian kings Cyrus and Xerxes), through visits to particular *lieux de mémoire* (Xerxes' fallen statue and Cyrus' grave).

Mark Beck, next, analyses the narrative texture of Plutarch's *Lives* in terms of the narrator's manipulation of time and depictions of space. Making systematic use of

well-known narratological concepts, he discusses the role of temporal acceleration or deceleration in specific *Lives*, and the function of *ellipses*, *analepses*, foreshadowing and *prolepses*, achronic narrations or references to the narrator's own time. Secondly, using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope', he examines instances within the *Lives* where physical monumental structures (such as the Parthenon in the *Life of Pericles*) are discussed in terms of their role in re-enacting or reviving key episodes of history and collective memory, thus perfectly fusing space and time for specific biographical aims (exemplarity, characterisation, moralisation).

Part 2 ('Time manipulation and narrative signification') contains three contributions whose common theme is Plutarch's manipulation of time in his narratives for various purposes. Françoise Frazier explores Plutarch's construction of the 'monumental landscape of Athens' in his *Lives*. She carefully plots through Plutarch's use of temporal markers, tense variety (especially the delicate distinction between the present and imperfect tenses) and choice of verbs that point to the preservation, location and lore surrounding Athenian monuments, sanctuaries or dedications. In this way, she shows that Plutarch's descriptions of Athenian monuments seek to link past and present in a way that is inverse to that of Pausanias: the aim is not to treat the present as a starting-point for evoking the past, but, rather, to inscribe the past onto the present shared by Plutarch and his imperial readers, thus fashioning imperial Athens as a space of living memory.

Timothy Duff, next, demonstrates how aspectual choices in Plutarchan narrative create meaning, by distinguishing between two key functions of the imperfective aspect (conveyed in particular through the use of imperfect indicatives and present participles). In the first instance, the 'backgrounding function' of the imperfective aspect serves to present events of the wider historical context as backdrop to the principal actions of a biographical subject's life (which are usually in such cases narrated by a main verb in the aorist tense); in the second instance, the imperfective aspect slows down the narrative speed to create static 'tableaux', which the readers experience from a 'participant' perspective (that is, as if they were present themselves). As Duff demonstrates, Plutarch explicitly theorised the narrative advantages of the second function, which he and other critics associated with greater narrative vividness.

Lucy Fletcher, finally, discusses temporal foreshadowing and anticipation in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias*, which, as she argues, serve to underscore the significance of key events (most importantly, the Sicilian expedition) which unfold later in Nicias' life. Further, she notes that this process of signification extends beyond the textual space and time of the *Life of Nicias* itself, reaching the end of the *Nicias–Crassus* pair.

Part 3 ('Religious locales as places of reflection on language, discourse and time') includes three contributions on the ways in which the religious space of Delphi functions as a means of reflecting on the unity or disunity between different phases of history, as well as of providing the opportunity to ponder the element of change (especially in linguistic usage) over time.

Frederick Brenk teases out the complex interconnection between space, time and language in Plutarch's dialogue *On the Oracles of the Pythia*, discussing how the

space of the Delphic sanctuary opens up a large vista of reflection on Greek history, which encompasses manifold and geographically diverse Greek communities. As he observes, the dialogue is structured upon the apparent contrast between the distant past and the present reality, with its second half praising the new space of the Roman Empire. The dialogue's attitude to prophetic language (prose as opposed to verse) follows this pattern, with the second half praising (through the character Theon) the new prose speech by the Pythia.

Lawrence Kim looks closely at *On the Oracles of the Pythia* as well, but with a focus on how Theon's positive attitude to discourse shift (pertaining to the change from poetry to prose in the style of the Pythia's oracular responses), distinct from that of his interlocutors, shades into a positive appraisal of moral and cultural change, from an extravagant past to a moderate present.

Delphi is also the focus of Michele Lucchesi's study of the *Lives of Lycurgus and Lysander*: as he shows, the oracle features in these *Lives* as a symbolic place whose oracular responses and monuments serve to associate different important phases of Spartan history.

Katerina Oikonomopoulou's contribution, finally, regards relative and relational space as key concepts through which we can interpret the way in which the aetiological enquiries contained within Plutarch's collection of *Greek Questions* attempt to link the past (meaning the mythical and pre-classical past of Greek communities) with the imperial present shared by Plutarch and his readers. After mapping out the main types of spatial experience depicted across the different aetiologies, it discusses the special role the enquiries assign to the oracle of Delphi, as the only centre to an otherwise chronically fragmented and polycentric Greek world.

In parts 4 and 5 ('Models of the past I: configurations of memory and history for Plutarch's imperial readers' and 'Models of the past II: Plutarch and the classical era', respectively) the contributions explore time in Plutarch's works in terms of his attitudes to and perceptions of the historical past. They link these attitudes to Plutarch's political, ethical, and broader ideological concerns.

Joseph Geiger argues that, despite Plutarch's long and serious engagement with Roman history and antiquities, the scarcity of references to contemporary Roman subjects and monuments in the *Parallel Lives* and the *Moralia* may be attributed to his political cautiousness.

Joshua Pugh Ginn, next, discusses Plutarch's perception of mid-republican Roman culture, at the moment of its first contact with Greek culture. As he demonstrates, this was not just a story of Greek culture migrating to Rome, but also of Roman virtues spreading to Greece.

Susan Jacobs views Plutarch's *Lives* as texts which seek to conflate past and present by incorporating contemporary political concerns into their depiction of the motives and strategies of historical figures. In this way, they aim to offer credible *exempla* for men active in imperial Graeco-Roman political life.



Eran Almagor traces parallelisms between the relative conceptions of time and space in the *Lives of Agesilaus and Pompey*. As he shows, these prompt reflection on the place of Greece and Greek civilisation in the fall of the Roman Republic.

Geert Roskam explores Plutarch's treatise *On the Malice of Herodotus* in terms of its conception of the great Greek historian of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Herodotus: as he argues, the treatise in question is not about historical exactitude, but about moralism. It thus betrays Plutarch's moral approach towards literature.

Paolo Desideri considers the theme of travel in Plutarch's *Life of Solon*. As he shows, Solon's journeys into foreign lands and the people he encountered there were valuable sources of knowledge which decisively shaped the lawgiver's political career and reforms. The wisdom Solon acquired during these trips (especially his meeting with Croesus) provides a paradoxical link with the *Life of Publicola* (with which *Solon* is paired), as the Greek lawgiver's knowledge is in a way transposed to Publicola's time and life.

Elisabetta Berardi examines the evolution of Plutarch's language between the epideictic work *On the Glory of the Athenians* and his later ethical-pedagogical treatise *On Listening to Lectures*, from moderate Atticism to a high *koine* influenced by Atticism, respectively. As she observes, this linguistic change relates to a shift in Plutarch's relationship to his classical models: the former work reveals a scholastic adherence to texts such as Thucydides, whereas the latter a more creative use of literary allusion (especially to Plato).

Myrto Aloumpi compares the connotations of the concept of *philotimia* in Plutarch's Athenian *Lives*, with the import the term *philotimia* carried in 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century Athenian sources (such as Thucydides or Demosthenes). As she argues, the distance between Plutarch's conception of *philotimia* as a quality inherent in the individual (whose manifestations however vary depending on the context), and *philotimia* in democratic Athens (a civic virtue, whose public dimension is favoured over its private aspect) bespeaks different socio-political conditions, as well as of genre.

The two contributions of part 6 ('Philosophy and religion between past and present') examine processes of integrating non-Greek knowledge (particularly Egyptian) in Plutarch's moral-philosophical and religious writings, and discuss the dialogue between past and present that these processes generate.

Bram Demulder examines how considerations of space (meaning Greek vs. non-Greek cultural space) and time (pre-Platonic past vs. Plutarch's middle Platonic stance) interact and shape Plutarch's dualism (the idea that reality ultimately consists of two non-reducible principles) into a multi-layered, culturally and historically informed notion. After arguing for a presence of different types of dualistic world-views in Plutarch's thought (depending on whether the subject is Platonic ontology and epistemology or ethics), he discusses the wider intellectual context in which these views are articulated, marked as it is by Plutarch's conscious attempt to integrate non-Greek and pre-Platonic (Egyptian and Zoroastrian) knowledge into his dualistic philosophy.

Michiel Meeusen, lastly, stresses that the symposia depicted in the *Table Talk* function as much more than spaces for the contemplation of Greek (or Graeco-Roman) cultural tradition. As he argues, Egyptian knowledge in the *Table Talk* has a special role to play in the forging of what he calls a ‘transcultural morality’. In this construct, Greek knowledge is allied to Egyptian religion and culture in order to contribute to the sympotic speculation about philosophical truth, thus transcending issues of cultural identity.

Part 7 (‘Space, time and notions of community’) explores the relevance of the concepts of time and space in perceptions of community (local or cosmopolitan) in Plutarch.

Taking his cue from rhetorical *topoi*, Evangelos Alexiou reads *cultural topoi* as collective attitudes and as moral indicators of personal attributes which are in line with or in contradiction to collective attitudes. As he argues, cultural *topoi* serve to map out distinctions or continuities between the past and the present.

Maria Vamvouri Ruffy argues that Plutarch’s treatise *On Exile* promotes a notion of a cosmopolitan space, which overrides that of local space. She shows how this notion is constructed within the text by means of re-interpreting Athenian myths of autochthony, and re-contextualising Athenian heroes, philosophers and poets, such as Theseus, Socrates, and Euripides, in terms of their exile, cosmopolitan outlook or migrant life. Lastly, she explores the treatise’s notion of exile as a constructed condition, opposed to the natural laws of the world. Man’s true homeland is the celestial landscape which envelopes that of the earth.

Paola Volpe Cacciatore traces semantic shifts in the term *xenos* (stranger/guest/exile) between the classical era and Plutarch’s time. Taking her case-studies from Plutarch’s *Lives* as well as from the treatise *On Exile*, she associates the term’s different meanings with Plutarch and his contemporaries’ multiple identities (Greek and Roman), Plutarch’s relationship to the Roman Empire, and ideas of cosmopolitanism in his works.

In part 8 (‘Sympotic spaces: forging links between past and present’) the contributions focus on one particular type of space in Plutarch, that of the symposium, in terms of the ways in which sympotic conversation serves to link the past with the present.

Anastasios Nikolaidis discusses the ways in which the sympotic conversations in the *Table Talk* focus on the past, for the most part. However, the instances where Roman participants or specialists (such as grammarians or doctors) feature in the same sympotic space as Greek participants afford the opportunity to situate the dialogues in their contemporary cultural context.

David Driscoll explores the social and cultural dynamics of sympotic space by looking closely at Homeric quotation in *Table-Talk* 1.2, which is concerned with assigning seating at the symposium. As he observes, the social hierarchies of Plutarch’s world are mapped out in the sympotic space not only physically, in the seating arrangement of the guests, but also verbally, as correct knowledge of poetry legitimises one’s elite status and right to be present at the symposium.



Johann Goeken argues that, through rhetoric, which becomes the common language of the *pepaideumenoí* during the Roman Empire, Plutarch transforms the symposium into an open space of communication between Greeks and Romans. He does so by occasionally taking distance from Plato's *Symposium* in the *Table Talk* and the *Symposium of the Seven Sages*, in order to foreground the role of rhetoric as a 'champs du savoir'. José Antonio Fernández Delgado and Francisca Pordomingo further underline the importance of rhetoric for Plutarch's construction of symposium as an intellectual space, by examining the influence of the rhetorical *thesis*-theory on the structure and argument of a group of the convivial *quaestiones* ('Whether...?'-questions) debated in the *Table-Talk*.

The contributions of part 9 ('Space, place, landscape: symbolic and metaphorical aspects') discuss different types of space in Plutarch's works, including symbolic and metaphorical uses of the concept of space in different contexts.

Carlos Alcalde-Martín treats monumental space in connection to eyewitness testimony in Plutarch's *Lives*. Questioning Buckler's (1992) claim that monuments in Plutarch serve primarily to corroborate literary sources, he argues that statues and other monuments contribute also to the moral portrait of his protagonists, as well as serve to validate the link between past and present. In this way, like Françoise Frazier, he stresses the role monuments play as means of forging a link between past and present.

Michael Lipka discusses sacred space in Plutarch's works (such as holy precincts and sanctuaries) in connection to his conceptions of the divine. As he argues, when mention is made of sacred space in Plutarch, this is always in connection to the old, individuated gods of the polytheistic past. For Plutarch, the gods who actively affect human affairs appear under abstract names (God, Tyche or Daimon) and are detached from the ritual geography of the human lifeworld.

Sophia Xenophontos focuses on military space in the *Lives of Pyrrhus and Marius* as a vital sphere for the construction and interpretation of the biographical account. This is because it helps cast light on how the two heroes behave in other contexts, such as the family, politics, philosophy, and rhetoric, which in turn has implications for the heroes' morality and cultural identity.

The final paper by Andrea Catanzaro considers the way in which Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom treat the sun's course as a metaphor for the imperial ruler's space of action. At stake in both authors, he argues, is the issue of the imperial ruler's limits of power and relationship to his subjects. He carefully teases out the spatial and temporal language used in the treatment of this metaphor.



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## **1 Moving through space and time in Plutarch**



Christopher Pelling

## Space travel and time travel in Plutarch

**Abstract:** One important insight of recent scholarship has been the importance of figuring space ‘hodologically’, as a lived experience as one travels through it, rather than (or, occasionally, as well as) through the vision of a bird’s-eye map. Plutarch’s own use of the Delphic Sacred Way in *On the Oracles of the Pythia* is a particularly clear and evocative hodological account, exploiting the suggestions of ‘place’ as well as ‘space’ (to adopt another useful modern distinction) to stimulate reflection on the entire course and rhythm of Greek history, with memories of internecine Greek conflict giving way to the calm of the Roman present: the move from combativeness to more tranquil conversation also mimics this process. The chapter then explores *Alexander* and the differences made as the narrative moves eastwards and then back towards the west. Outlandish experiences certainly cluster towards the edges of the world, as we might expect, but is there evidence that these generate any change in Alexander himself? The chapter argues that the perceptible change in Alexander’s character has little to do with the east entering his soul; *lieux de mémoire* are however relevant, again prompting reflections on the whole of Greek history and provoking the sense of melancholy and even macabre that pervades the final chapters. Life as a journey: that particular cliché began its journey a long time ago.

Space travelling is all the scholarly rage. There has been a lot of interest recently in how ancient authors figure space in their narratives; or ‘place’ rather than ‘space’, in the favourite theoretical distinction. Space is a matter more of nature, place of culture: space is what is given us by geography, the facts of the physical landscape; place is what humans have done to it, building their cities and their monuments, endowing particular localities with associations and human liveliness. Spaces are covered by air, places embedded in ‘atmosphere’. It is important too that ancient texts often treat place and space in a ‘hodological’ way: that is, a journey tends to be described by the impressions as one goes, by visualising each stage in turn, rather than with the take-it-all-in-with-a-single-view image that we get from a bird’s-eye map. There were of course such bird’s-eye maps in antiquity: there is the famous story of Aristagoras wielding one in front of Cleomenes in Herodotus (5.49). But Cleomenes is bewildered by it all, and it needs to be explained to him. It may be second nature to us to cry out for a bird’s-eye map to go with, say, a narrative like Caesar’s *Gallic Wars*, or even to start mapping one out mentally for ourselves on to that vague shape of France that we already have in our head. The ancient visualising equivalent would be more like a sat-nav reconstruction, once again seeing place as something travelled through sequentially. (Equally, one should not overstate the difference: if one is asked to describe a journey one knows well, say from one’s home to one’s of-

fice, one typically figures it in a hodological way, and may be quite surprised by a later bird's-eye view of the curves in a familiar road.)

Another interest has been metatextual, seeing how journeys in the text may have analogies in the way the text itself works, turning the reader into a sort of narrative journeyer. Purves (2010), in particular, took that approach a long way. The textual grounding for such an approach is of course secure, however far we decide to push it. The 'path of song' is familiar from archaic times;<sup>1</sup> many will think too of how Herodotus promises to 'go forward' (προβήσομαι) 'journeying through' (ἐπεξιών) cities big and small alike (1.5.14), covering them in his text as earlier he had in his travels.<sup>2</sup> Herodotus has indeed been the focus of a project in which I have been involved myself, the Herodotus Encoded Space-Text-Image Archive (HESTIA):<sup>3</sup> Among other things, that has been concerned with alternative ways of digitally 'mapping' the place-names appearing in Herodotus' text. During that project we noticed how often questions of space or place overlap with questions of time. It might be a question of distance: did things happen in the same way, following the same physical rules, in the distant past as they do today, and do they happen in the same way in distant lands in the present? (Compare Thucydides' use in the *Archaeology* of distant practices in the present to cast light on his reconstruction of practices in the distant past, 1.6.5–6.) But it is also striking how often local disputes over place—whose territory should this be?—become disputes over the past, over traditional claims and legends echoing back into time immemorial.<sup>4</sup>

Not that this overlapping of space-questions and time-questions is any surprise. One need only think of the way that Aeschylus' *Persians* is so unusual among Greek tragedies, but replaces distance in time with distance in space. And that same early programmatic chapter of Herodotus goes on to explain how his travels have given him an insight into human mutability, into big cities becoming small and small cities becoming big: travel through space, or rather through places (for 'cities' are quintessentially places), has given him insight into time (1.5.3–4)—just as, a little into his narrative, the much-travelled Solon will have such insight into human change and vulnerability.

And what of Plutarch? I shall take two texts, *On the Oracles of the Pythia* and the *Life of Alexander*, seeing how place works on people and does so sequentially and 'hodologically', and in particular tracing that interaction of place and the past, of space and time.

1 From *Od.* 8.73–74 and *h. Herm.* 451 on: further passages are collected by Lefkowitz (1991) 27 n. 44.

2 More on this at Pelling (1999b) 331–333, 356, with further bibliography.

3 <http://wiki.digitalclassicist.org/HESTIA>. Cf. Barker et al. (2010); Pelling (2011c) 3–4; Barker et al. (2013).

4 More on this in Barker et al. (2016), which also includes more on HESTIA. Barker and Pelling (2016) explore the link of space and time in, particularly, Herodotus 5.

## *On the Oracles of the Pythia*

If one wants an example of hodologicality in Plutarch, Delphi, the scene of the conference from which this book springs, is the place to look. *On the Oracles of the Pythia*, particularly the dialogue's first half, describes the conversation as the group wind their way up the Sacred Way, and the climb is described in terms of what they see and the effect this has on them: 'place', indeed, and all that this very holy and very special place can suggest. As always with Plutarch conversations, it ranges widely and learnedly. The first topic centres on the rusting process: what can it be that gives those statues of the navarchs their peculiar blue-green tinge, appropriate as it seems for those old sea-dogs, 'standing there with the true complexion of the sea and its depths' (395B)? Then the conversation turns to matters of religion and history, with one prompt or another given by whatever they are passing: that statue of Hieron the tyrant—could it be coincidence that it fell down on the very day he died, any more than it was coincidence that the statue of a certain Spartan lost its eyes just before his death at Leuctra (397E–398A)? A little later we get to the treasury of Cypselus: why Cypselus, and not the Corinthians as a whole ... (400D–F)? Next, those statues of courtesans (401A): are they not shaming? Yet ponder the history of Greece: isn't it better to commemorate the odd prostitute than all those infamous battles of one Greek against one another? And so it goes on, until their guest suggests it might be time to sit down and get back to the question they had originally raised, why oracular answers are now given in prose when the famous cases of the old days were given in verse (ch. 17). Here too place matters:

Boëthus immediately observed that the place itself helped to solve our visitor's problem. 'There used to be a shrine of the Muses here,' he said, 'near the outlet of the stream ... Simonides speaks of the place...' (*De Pyth. or.* 402C)<sup>5</sup>

Admittedly, *how* the place helps is not clear, as the text is defective: it is probably something about how the place used to inspire, not just because of its beauty and the presence of Apollo, but also because of that cult of the Muses that 'used to be'.<sup>6</sup> But, somehow, it matters.

Arguably, place matters a good deal more: this is not a dialogue that could be happening just anywhere. That atmosphere of Delphi has its effect. This is initially the case in the most literal way: the air here is particularly thick, and it has affected that rusting process (396A). But this discussion in those early chapters also introduces other themes that are going to come back in interestingly different registers: how

<sup>5</sup> Translations from *de Pyth. or.* are adapted from Russell (1993); those from *Alexander* are my own.

<sup>6</sup> As Ziegler assumed, (1949) 193 = (1951) 830. Schröder doubts this in his commentary, (1990) 310–312, on the grounds that in that case '[i]hre Function wäre einzig die einer szenischen Ausmalung': that 'einzig' is misjudged in view of the general importance of place in the dialogue and its capacity to give inspiration and intellectual guidance.

far, for instance, purely physical explanations are enough to explain those things that look like coincidences, like the sea-colouring of the navarchs—but are they, really, just coincidences, when there are so many of them and there is so much of a godly presence in the air? And it is not just religion that is in the air, but history, all that Greek history that is commemorated there, for good or for ill.

Do you not feel pity for the Greeks as you read the inscriptions of shame on these beautiful dedications: ‘Brasidas and the Acanthians, from Athenian spoils’; ‘The Athenians from Corinthian spoils’; ‘The Phocians from Thessalian spoils’; ‘The Orneates from Sicyonian spoils’; ‘The Amphictyons from Phocian spoils’. (*De Pyth. or.* 15.401C–D)

That is a favourite theme of the *Lives* as well, of course, where Plutarch several times dwells on the senselessness of the Greeks throughout their history in fighting one another, so that eventually it had to be left to the Roman Flamininus to give them that peace that their own bickering had denied them for so long (*Flam.* 11). (Admittedly, not all of that emphasis carries across to the dialogue: Roman memorials, including those of Flamininus, are not mentioned either.<sup>7</sup> There may be a reason for that as well, as we will later see.) Once more, then, though in a rather different way from Herodotus, Plutarch’s hodological moving through space encourages insight into time: these *lieux de mémoire* are dripping with memory, the wrong sorts of memory. Too many battles, too many tyrants, too much Greek blood ... . Notice the memories that do *not* figure here: no Marathon, no Salamis, no Plataea (though Plataea does figure in the sister dialogue *On the Decline of the Oracles*, and the climbers must have passed the Tripod of Plataea just before getting to Hieron); no, it is the Peloponnesian War and Leuctra and Lysander fighting Thebans that get the space. The Persian Wars figure only once—in the mention of the statue of Apollo carrying a spear set up by the Megarians ‘in consequence of the victory *that expelled the Athenians from the city* after the Persian Wars’ (402A). So even there it is Greek against Greek. The silence is echoing.

Still, times change: the second half of the dialogue is concerned with that, as Theon—a real person,<sup>8</sup> but still a significant name—gives his explanation of why the oracles no longer come in verse. There is a lot of insight there, including a plea against overstatement: some of them still do come in verse, and even in the past some doubtless came in prose. And religion and history are still firmly in the air, and firmly intertwined. A lot has the air of Tacitus’ *Dialogus* about it, despite the difference of theme: here too there is a nuanced treatment of an issue, arguably but also questionably one of ‘decline’, weaving it into a broader treatment of cultural change. For it is not just about oracles: philosophy and astronomy too tended to come in metre back then; any change can be seen as part of a more general tendency to do away with flummery and concentrate on clarity. And ‘decline’? By the end of

<sup>7</sup> McInerney (2004) 49–50.

<sup>8</sup> *RE* nr. 10, v<sup>2</sup> (1934) 2059–2066 (Ziegler); Puech (1992) 4886. Cf. Swain (1991) 326–327.



the work, religion and history are coming together in a different register. Look around you—place again—and you get a different view: are things really so bad? All this prosperity, all the healthy state of Delphi in (presumably) the early second century CE:<sup>9</sup>

Our wealth has given her form and beauty and a splendour of temples and meeting-houses and water-courses such as she has never had for a thousand years. The inhabitants of Galaxion in Boeotia became aware of the epiphany of the god because of the abundant flow of milk ... But here he gives us a brighter, stronger, clearer sign. He has given us prosperity and splendour and honour, in place of the drought of our former desolation. I love myself [this is still Theon speaking] for my zeal and service in this cause, with Polycrates and Petraeus. I love also the leader<sup>10</sup> of this policy, who takes thought and cares for most of these achievements [then a 25-letter lacuna, which perhaps—frustratingly—might have clarified who this ‘leader’ was<sup>11</sup>]. But so great a change cannot have happened in so short a time by mere human effort, without the presence of the god among us and his divine guidance of the oracle. (*De Pyth. or.* 409B–C)

Religion and history, once again. Place—Delphi—gives you insight into both, and shows how you cannot understand the one without feeling the presence of the other; past and present drip from the monuments; and the god is everywhere. And if that ‘leader of this policy’ is indeed Hadrian—a big ‘if’—<sup>12</sup> or even if he is a

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9 Which is when the work has usually been dated: there is no suggestion of a dramatic date any different from that of composition. However, Müller (2014) 65–66 n. 2 prefers a late first-century date, largely because of the thematic similarities to *De def. or.*, whose most likely dramatic date is c. 83 CE according to Ogilvie (1967). If this were true, both these works would date from before the period when Plutarch became a priest at Delphi himself (c. 95 CE). The same might be true of *De E* as well, which Obsieger (2013) 19 follows Ziegler (1949) 75 in dating to the 90s. But (a) Ogilvie himself dates the composition date of *De def. or.* later, between c. 95 and 115 CE: all these dates may be less precise than Ogilvie and Müller assume, but there seems no reason to assume that the dramatic and composition dates are close to each other. Were Plutarch in fact writing *De def. or.* in, say, the 110s, he could easily have chosen to retroject the dramatic date to link it with Demetrius’ voyage (410A). (b) Whatever we decide about *De def. or.* or about *De E*, there is no reason to assume that *De Pyth. or.* is particularly close in date because of its similarity of theme.

10 Russell (1993) has ‘initiator’.

11 Flacelière builds boldly on his hypothesis (see next n.) and prints <αὐτοκράτορ Ἀδριανὸν Καίσαρα> in his Budé edition, (1974) 40 and 82.

12 The matter is complicated: for Hadrian, Flacelière (1971) and, e.g., Holzhausen (1993); *contra*, Jones (1966), 63–65 = (1995) 100–104, Schröder (1990) 15–20 and the full and careful discussion of Swain (1991), though along the way Swain discredits many of the arguments used by others who reach the same conclusion. In particular, the epigraphic arguments turn out to be very indecisive. The other favoured candidate for this ‘leader’ has been Plutarch himself, as Hirzel (1895) ii. 205 n. 1, Ziegler (1949) 25 = (1951) 661, and others, including Swain and Sieveking and Gärtner in the Teubner text (*Plutarchus ipse videtur esse*), have thought: not impossible, but I am still not convinced that this would sit comfortably in the work of the man who also wrote *On Inoffensive Self-Praise*. Schröder (1990) 21 decides for a person unknown to us, whose name would have been specified in the lacuna: disappointing if so, but that may well be right. One point in the debate is relevant here. Jones (1966) 64 = (1995) 101–102 observed that the reference to the Pylaea at 409A points to Thermopylae rather than Delphi; but the argument has moved on since that passage, and the empha-

Roman governor, then that gets even closer to that insight of the *Lives*, that the Romans have eventually brought to Greece what Greece has been unable to provide for itself. That, indeed, may help to explain why the dialogue passes over those memorials of Roman successes: it was not the bloodshed of the Roman past that mattered for Plutarch now, it was the peace of the Roman present.<sup>13</sup>

Maybe indeed the place, and those insights that the place affords, drive the work in a further sense. That history of Greek strife giving way to calm; in a way, the text mimics that too. The first half of the dialogue has not been conspicuously good-tempered. There was a gibe at the expense of the guides (395A);<sup>14</sup> there was quite a lot of quarrelsomeness too, between Stoics and Epicureans and between physical reductionists and those that insist on the divine presence.<sup>15</sup> The initial description of the conversation had some edge to it:

We were walking slowly, Basilocles, sowing and harvesting in battle festering<sup>16</sup> and warlike words that kept sprouting and growing under our feet on the way, like the warriors that sprang from the dragon's teeth. (*De Pyth. or.* 394E)

Admittedly, some of the *Table Talk* becomes combative too, but there the good symposiarch knows how to damp things down; here there is no symposiarch to do that. Yet it calms down anyway. That quarrelsomeness has gone by the second half, as they sit quietly in the sun and muse on time and its changes. The rhythm of the dialogue itself has mimicked the rhythm of the history on which they muse, and calm has broken out.

## Alexander

Breaking out into the unknown can be expected to bring some uncanny experiences. It is noticeable that the more outlandish 'marvels' in Herodotus tend to be at the ends

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sis throughout the dialogue on their physical surroundings—cf. 'you see', also at 409A—would be dissipated were the final focus to shift abruptly and exclusively to 50 kilometres away. Flacelière (1971) 182 gets this right, also stressing the close relationship between the two: 'Entre les deux sanctuaires, il n'y a pas concurrence, mais symbiose'. See also Brenk in this volume, and his footnote 22.

**13** So this is a qualification of McNerney (2004) 51: 'The Pythian *logoi*, in fact, excise Delphi's recent past ... Plutarch is often seen as unusually accommodating towards Rome, but that accommodation stopped at the doors of Apollo's sanctuary'. Not excision, I think, but selectivity: what mattered was not whether, but how, one welcomed Roman thoughts to the sanctuary.

**14** Though admittedly Theon, the one whose voice is most often equated with Plutarch's own, was polite enough to let the guides have their say first at 397D–E.

**15** So perhaps not so 'exemplary' of the conversational virtues initially paraded in ch. 1 (394D–395A) as Müller (2014) 73 suggests. On *De Pyth. or.* 394E, see also the Introduction to this volume.

**16** On the reading here cf. Bolkestein (1964) 367–368, defending the MSS reading ὑπούλους: 'the word indicates the evil that is festering under the surface and suits well the image of the Spartoi ...'. It is accepted by Flacelière and Sieveking-Gärtner, but not by Schröder.

of the earth: gold-digging ants, flying snakes, Ethiopians who regularly live to the age of 120, and ‘dog-headed men, and headless men with eyes in their breasts, so the Libyans say, ... and other beasts in huge numbers, not at all fabulous’.<sup>17</sup> And as Plutarch’s Alexander presses on into the unknown, he certainly comes across some outlandish things: some of them are physical—the spontaneously combusting air in Babylonia (*Alex.* 35), the well that miraculously produces oil in India (57.5–6)—and some more to do with the people, as with the bizarre practical experiment that Alexander’s retinue try with that Babylonian combustability, trying to set a slave boy on fire.

As the *Life* moves eastwards, then, do we sense the world is changing? And is Alexander changing with it? That has been argued recently by Tim Whitmarsh,<sup>18</sup> in one of two outstanding discussions (the other is by Judith Mossman).<sup>19</sup> In his view, the change and decline in Alexander’s behaviour are related not merely to his distance from Hellenicity but to the way in which the east enters his soul (my words, not his, and he emphasises too that the soul itself aids the process by already being ‘fiery’): a challenge, he argues, to Hellenic identity itself.

My own emphasis would be different.<sup>20</sup> Certainly Alexander has changed by the end of the *Life*; but it is hard to see much interest in anything the East has done to him, in anything those eastern places or peoples had to offer. The points are about Alexander, not about place. When we get to Indian philosophers—the Gymnosophists, then Dandamis and Calanus—we may well feel the distance from the clear air of Aristotle and the Hellenic philosophy of his youth, but the emphasis is on what he has lost, not on anything he has gained. When Richard Stoneman tried to find genuine Indian thought in those ‘naked philosophers’, he did get somewhere—but not with the Plutarch versions, but with the stories or related stories in other sources.<sup>21</sup> Plutarch just does not seem very interested in anything that Indian thought has to offer, other than a spot of nakedness and bizarrerie. Yes, odd things continue to happen over there, none odder than when Calanus builds his own funeral pyre and self-immolates. But there does not seem much to *learn* from that, either for Alexander or for Plutarch’s readers. Whitmarsh argues that Plutarch is here ‘test[ing] his own conceptions of Hellenism in the crucible of narrative’ ... offering ‘a voyage of self-discovery (and in a sense self-destruction) for his readers as well as his subject’.<sup>22</sup> Yet this is not a particularly *harrowing* test, and there is not much here to make any complacent Greek lose his sleep. There is nothing wrong with Hellenicity; it is Alexander that has gone wrong.

<sup>17</sup> Gold-digging ants: Hdt. 3.102.2. Flying snakes: 2.75.1, 3.107.2, 3.109.1. Long-lived Ethiopians: 3.23.1; dog-headed men etc., 4.191. Cf. Romm (1994), esp. 57–59, 91–92, 95–96.

<sup>18</sup> Whitmarsh (2002), esp. 186–192.

<sup>19</sup> Mossman (2006), esp. 287–301.

<sup>20</sup> I discuss this more fully in Pelling (2016).

<sup>21</sup> Stoneman (1995).

<sup>22</sup> Whitmarsh (2002) 191–192.

Let us return to the connection of space and time. There is certainly a perspective of time in the *Alexander*, and it is connected with 480 and all that: is all this vengeance for Xerxes' invasion? Vengeance for those great battles of the past is marked by the special destination of some of the spoils sent home after Gaugamela, to Plataea and (oddly) to Croton, 34.2–4. This is also where he sees the fallen statue of Xerxes lying on the ground in Susa.

He stood over it, and spoke to it as if it were a living thing: 'There you lie. Shall we pass you by, remembering your campaign against Greece? Or shall we raise you up because of your greatness of soul and goodness in other respects?' He spent a long time pondering in silence; then continued on his way. (*Alex.* 37.5)

But the time he takes already suggests that this is no easy decision. A chapter later, and the drink-fuelled arson of the royal palace driven by Thais gives a clearer example of how vengeance can be out of joint, and Alexander himself swiftly repents.

That Xerxes moment must be in our minds later when he returns close to the scene of Thais' disgrace, and comes to Cyrus' grave at Pasargadae. He finds it forced upon and desecrated.

He executed the perpetrator, even though he was not the least noble of the Pellaeans, a man called Poulamachus. He read the inscription, and gave orders that a version in Greek letters should be engraved below. It read as follows: 'Reader, whoever you are and wherever you come from—for this much I know, that you will come—I am Cyrus, who gained the Persians their empire. Do not, then, begrudge me this handful of earth that covers my body'. This affected Alexander very much, as he reflected on uncertainty and change.<sup>23</sup> (*Alex.* 69.4–5)

Once again, it requires faith to find anything distinctively eastern in the insight:<sup>24</sup> the stress on human mutability, on how even the greatest are brought low, is quintessentially Herodotean, even if Herodotus too uses the fate of the great eastern dynasts to make it particularly clear. The stress on the 'earth' is particularly evocative, that great swathe of earth, γῆ, that he conquered for Persia, contrasting with the handful that now he pleads to retain. (That neat touch is likely to be Plutarch's own: Arrian 6.29.8 and Strabo 15.3.7 simply have 'do not begrudge me my memorial', τοῦ μνήματος,<sup>25</sup> and Plutarch has a similar 'land' conceit in Cleopatra's marvellous lament at *Antony*

<sup>23</sup> Ziegler here adds from Zonaras <τῶν πραγμάτων> before τὴν ἀδηλόγητα καὶ μεταβολήν, and he is followed by Flacelière. Zonaras not infrequently imports slight alterations to Plutarch's phrasing, and this is not the only place where Ziegler is over-influenced by his choice of words. The addition does not seriously affect the sense, but without the extra words the phrasing is even more evocatively generalised.

<sup>24</sup> Similarly Zadorojnyi (2013) 381–382, stressing the 'essentially Greek optics' of Alexander's viewing and the distinctive Greekness of the lesson that is learned.

<sup>25</sup> So does Eustathius on Dionys. *Perieget.* 1069. Strabo explicitly attributes this version to Aristobulus, and Arrian too has just cited Aristobulus for a related item.

84.6.<sup>26</sup>) Nor does Arrian have Alexander particularly thoughtful or affected by this, though he is clearly annoyed and eager to track down the culprit.<sup>27</sup>

That thoughtfulness in Plutarch certainly adds to the atmosphere of those final chapters. Mossman called them ‘melancholy’:<sup>28</sup> perhaps they are more, really ‘macabre’, not least in that episode of Calanus’ self-incineration that immediately follows. Death, most certainly, is in the air; and whatever else one says about this, it is pretty clear that place, this particular *lieu de mémoire*, is having a strong effect on the person who observes. What is more difficult is to pin down exactly what sort of effect this is. Mossman compares it to the previous Xerxes moment, and suggests that the earlier occasion showed more Hellenicity while this second one shows a worrying affinity to the Persian king.<sup>29</sup> I am not so sure; of course, there was more reason for vengeance against Xerxes than against Cyrus, even though Cyrus too did some enslaving of Greek cities, in his case in Asia Minor. Maybe it is rather a matter of different forms of Hellenicity, the quest for vengeance (Xerxes) or the calmer insight into the nature of the human condition (Cyrus). Notice that the instruction is to take the existing Persian inscription and provide a Greek version underneath. This is wisdom for everyone, both Greek and Persian. I am tempted to find this Alexander wiser than the earlier one, even if only momentarily before he relapses into his next drunken stupor; wiser, but also, as Mossman rightly underlines, much, much sadder.

## Conclusion

So maybe, to adopt another Mossman formulation,<sup>30</sup> travel has indeed broadened Alexander’s mind; maybe it is that Herodotean insight once again, the way that travel through space can give insight into the workings of time, especially the changes that time can bring—that ‘uncertainty and change’ of the Cyrus inscription. It is harder to find any particular effect on Alexander of the places themselves, of the sort we saw in the Delphic dialogue; it is more a question of the journey he has taken, the distance he has travelled, the amount he has lost as well as, perhaps, that final bit of wisdom that he has gained; and once again, this is more a point about Alexander the individual, not of any effect on him of the *specific* places or peoples that he encounters.

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26 κινδυνεύομεν δὲ τῷ θανάτῳ διαμείψασθαι τοὺς τόπους, σὺ μὲν ὁ Ῥωμαῖος ἐνταῦθα κείμενος, ἐγὼ δ’ ἡ δύστηνος ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ, τοσούτο τῆς σῆς μεταλαβοῦσα χώρας μόνον. (‘It seems that death will force us to change places. You, the Roman, have found a grave in Egypt, and I, unhappy woman, will lie in Italy, gaining just enough of your country for that’, translation adapted from Scott-Kilvert and Pelling [2011].)

27 Alexander’s ‘distress’: 6.29.4. In his version the investigation proves fruitless, and there is no mention of ‘the Pellaean’.

28 Mossman (2006) 294.

29 Mossman (2006) 293–294: ‘a progression in his character, if not (I would suggest) a deterioration’.

30 Mossman (2006) 292.

Life as ‘a journey’: the cliché makes one shudder. Googling the book-title ‘My journey’ showed 2 million+ hits: the first page showed *My Journey: from Horses and Iceboxes to Aero Planes and Refrigeration* as well as *My Journey in Karate: The Sabaki Way*, and I could go no further. But there is some of that in *Alexander* too, just as after all there was in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. The journey of this particular cliché began a long, long time ago.

Mark Beck

## Time and space in Plutarch's *Lives*<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Plutarch is a sophisticated narrator. Many years of research have established this beyond question. This chapter focuses on his conscious manipulation of time and space in his narratives of the *Lives*. After setting forth the narratological terminology used in this analysis, the chapter goes on to analyse departures from the normal chronological sequence of events (*analepsis*, *prolepsis*, achronic narratives), variations in the narrative rhythm (acceleration, deceleration), and the reasons behind Plutarch's deployment of such techniques. The chapter then turns to an analysis of some of the key narratives involving space in the *Lives* with the application of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. Plutarch's chronotopic narratives tie his protagonists' actions with places, monuments, and physical structures that serve to memorialise the superlative nature of their achievements. In particular, this chapter draws attention to Plutarch's narrative construction of time and space as it relates to the various modes of characterisation and vivid dramatic portraiture encountered in the *Lives*.

Plutarch, as narrator, finely constructs the narration of individuals' lives with multiple aims in mind. His overriding aim is the representation of exemplary individuals in a lifelike, fairly detailed way so that we, the narratees, may acquire a vivid and lasting impression that personally motivates us in our own lives to imitate or emulate what we can of the biographical subjects' great qualities. Exemplarity, *mimesis*, characterisation and moralisation figure strongly in the attainment of this complex and multifaceted end. The narratological construction of time and space thus serves these aims in the *Lives*. Before specifically focusing on these narrative techniques, we should commence our analysis with a brief description of the challenges confronting Plutarch as narrator.

In terms of time we may approach this from the perspective of 'layers'.<sup>2</sup> Four layers may be envisioned: material, *fabula*, story, and text. Collection of material for construction of the story and text would constitute the initial layer. The material in this instance would consist of prior narrative accounts, either historiographical or biographical texts of Plutarch's predecessors (earlier historians and biographers) or ancillary material he might gather himself or witness via, for example, autopsy (particularly important for the construction of space). The *fabula* consists of 'the aggregate of events reported in a narrative in their chronological order'.<sup>3</sup> The restructuring or

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on my two more extensive contributions on time and space in Plutarch published in de Jong and Nünlist (2007) and de Jong (2012a), respectively. In citing Plutarch's *Lives* I follow the Loeb edition by B. Perrin.

<sup>2</sup> de Jong and Nünlist (2007) 2–3.

<sup>3</sup> de Jong and Nünlist (2007) 2–3.

rearrangement of this tight chronological order that the narrator undertakes in his text is termed the story.<sup>4</sup> The narratee may reconstruct the *fabula* from the story and the text.<sup>5</sup> The narrator may vary the temporal arrangement (anachrony) by altering the order of events (order), by dwelling to a greater or lesser extent on some events (rhythm), and by relating events once or more than once (frequency).<sup>6</sup>

In characterising the narration of space, we may also distinguish between *fabula*-space and story-space with *fabula*-space being a total depiction of the location(s) that come into play in a narrative, whereas story-space refers to the actual place depicted or referred to.<sup>7</sup> Detailed and rich descriptions of space or objects (*enargeia*, *ekphrasis*) that assume a greater importance than the simple narration of space as a backdrop to the narration of events engage our attention and usually warrant special interpretive consideration vis-à-vis the work's narrative strategy as a whole.<sup>8</sup> I view such detailed descriptions as the spatial correlate to a slowing of the temporal rhythm.

## Time

In most cases Plutarch had access to an abundance of mostly historical sources that afforded him adequate material for the writing of the *Lives*.<sup>9</sup> The 'important' events that Plutarch stressed in constructing his narrative are revealing of character and were incorporated in preference to other events that his historical sources may have magnified. This means that Plutarch gives cursory attention to what he might regard as insignificant detail.<sup>10</sup> The well-known proem to his *Lives of Alexander and Caesar* articulates this fundamental contrast between the historian's approach and the biographer's (*Alex.* 1.2).<sup>11</sup> The first layer of material collection leaves therefore much on the cutting room floor. The silence of his sources on the personal lives of historical figures would also hinder a complete cradle to grave reconstruction simply because the ancients usually paid little attention to early events in the lives of great individuals prior to their becoming great. Childhood was thus usually overlooked in the chronological sequence. Nevertheless he generally appears to use whatever information he does have about his protagonists' childhood in constructing the narrative.<sup>12</sup> The *fabula* for biography comprises an individual's sequential lifetime experi-

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4 de Jong and Nünlist (2007) 3.

5 de Jong and Nünlist (2007) 3.

6 de Jong and Nünlist (2007) 3.

7 de Jong (2012) 2–3.

8 For a different viewpoint on *ekphrasis* see de Jong (2012) 5–8.

9 On Plutarch's use of copious historical source material see now Schettino (2014) 417–436.

10 On the major characteristics of the genre of ancient historiography see Marincola (1997).

11 On biography as the *genus proximum* of ancient historiography see Geiger (1985) 22 and Burridge (1992) and (1997) 371–391.

12 Rosenmeyer (1992) 210. Plutarch frequently displays concern for chronological accuracy, e.g., *Them.* 2.5.