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Michael Paschalis, Stavros Frangoulidis, *Space in the Ancient Novel. Ancient Narrative Supplementum 1.* Groningen: Barkhuis & The University Library Groningen, 2002. Pp. xiv, 192. ISBN 90-807390-2-2. EUR 50.00.

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This is a collection of papers originally presented at an international conference held in Rethymnon and organized by the Department of Philology of the University of Crete on May 14-15, 2001.¹ This meeting was the first of the biennial *RICAN* (Rethymnon International Conferences on the Ancient Novel),² which intend to continue the tradition of *GCN* (Groningen Colloquia on the Novel).

Since this book also appears as the first supplement of a new electronic journal, *Ancient Narrative* (henceforth *AN*), with which it shares some features, it makes sense to introduce both together: the articles published in *AN* appear on its website with free access to abstracts and reviews (a [website](#) every scholar interested in ancient novel should visit) and they are subject to discussion for some months; after a year the authors revise their papers and they are definitively edited both in a printed version of the journal and on the website. The same procedure is followed for the chapters of the supplements. An abstract of every paper in this book and brief curricula of all the contributors can be found on this web page.

As usual in this kind of books, the quality and originality of the articles and even the ways they fit the subject of the compilation are rather diverse. Nevertheless most of the articles do actually encompass the idea of *space*, partly because it is used in such a broad sense that it comprises, for instance, cities and countries (Graverini, Harrison), roads and travels (Zimmerman) and even the room included in some buildings (Panayotakis, Perkins). Yet, although it may always be alleged that everything happens somewhere, it is difficult to discover any link between the theme of *space* and some other papers (Winkler and Frangoulidis, for example).

As the criterion for gathering these articles was their relation to a theme, there is not an equitable distribution of papers among the extant ancient novels: there are no contributions about Petronius, for example, but there are six items devoted to Apuleius *Metamorphoses*, while Chariton, Longus, and Apollonius of Tyre, Achilles Tatius and Philostratus (together), and the Apocryphal Acts of Apostles are each studied in a single chapter.

In the first paper ("Narrative Spaces"), David Konstan ascertains a notable difference between Roman and Greek narrative in the fact that Latin novels restrict themselves to a single action space (the narrator always follows the central character), while among the

Greek novels, those of Xenophon of Ephesus, Chariton, and Longus shift their focus among several action spaces. His study of the devices used by Greek writers to change locale (pp. 4-9) and his attempts to explain them as ways to express aspects of the narrative are remarkable. Finally, Konstan finds in historiography a possible source for this technique of switching spaces: this aspect of the influence of historiography³ upon Greek novel deserved, in my opinion, more *space* than only a paragraph and the final conclusions.

Catherine Connors's main purpose in "Chariton's Syracuse and its Histories of Empire" is to demonstrate that this novel can contribute to our understanding of constructions of Greek identity under the Roman Empire (p. 13). After adducing the influence of historiography upon the novel, as well as the rough connections between its plot and the actual history of Syracuse, Connors traces links between Augustus and Syracuse on one hand and Chariton and the imperial family on the other to suggest some cryptic allusions in the novel to the Roman rulers. Her conclusions may be stimulating, though they are highly speculative;⁴ but, if there is *allegorical support for Augustus's version of the empire* (p. 24), I wonder why it should appear so hidden in the novel, even if it is supposed to be an "elite Greek response to Roman Empire." Martin Winkler's "Chronotope and *locus amoenus* in Daphnis and Chloe and Pleasantville" is a comparison of this ancient novel and the 1998 film by Gary Ross. Although there are no direct influences, they share some major themes, notably sexual awakening; besides, the movie uses some classical motifs such as the *locus amoenus*. Winkler notices these and other parallels and comments on them. This kind of paper dealing with connections between ancient novels and modern films,⁵ may produce some stimulating observations, and this seems their sole purpose; but from the point of view of ancient narrative, it rarely adds to actual progress in our understanding of the texts.

Stephen Harrison in his "Literary Topography in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*" studies both allusions to other texts through topography and the way some place-names insinuate or introduce themes and ideas into the novel (p. 40). This article includes a good look at the whole text through examples and mixes a complete survey of previous scholarship with some remarkable suggestions. Most of these allusions occur in the inserted tales and, therefore, he mainly studies those of Aristomenes, Thelyphron, the robbers, and, of course, Cupid and Psyche. His conclusions convincingly demonstrate that Apuleius uses topography as a method for intertextual allusion.

Luca Graverini begins his "Corinth, Rome, and Africa: a Cultural Background for the Tale of the Ass" by observing that Apuleius changed dramatically the geography of Lucius's story when adapting the Greek original: the main character comes from Corinth instead of Patrae and his metamorphosis into a human being takes place in Cenchreae near his native city, not in Thessalonike; and especially, while the travels in the *Onos* are clearly headed to the north, the settings in the Latin text are completely undefined between Hypata (books i-iii) and Corinth (book x). The final location in Rome is also an Apuleian innovation. Graverini's article deals with the reasons for these changes. After a brief survey of reasons proposed for Corinth as the setting of Lucius' conversion, he points to the history of the city and chiefly its famous destruction in 146 BC; thus, the relationship between the Roman Empire and the Hellenic world would probably be the most obvious idea coming into the mind of the Latin or Greek public of Apuleius when reading about this town. As for Rome, Graverini argues that the *Metamorphoses* was not necessarily written for a Roman audience⁶, and even some concrete references to the city of Rome could be easily understood by any learned reader in Africa or elsewhere in the Empire. He argues convincingly for a "Romanocentric" view of the novel but in a very broad sense, as a text intended not only for a Roman audience but for any literate public throughout the Empire.

By examining roads as an important element of space in Apuleius' novel, Maaïke Zimmerman attempts to show in her paper ("On the Road in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*")

how the observations of the narrator about the roads he has to travel along are meaningful when related to the emotional states of the protagonist. Following the course of Lucius's journey, Zimmerman highlights, for instance, the association of 'slippery roads' and the degenerate priests of Dea Syria. She finally suggests, though very cautiously (p. 95), that difficult roads have a possible symbolic value as roads to virtue. If this is only tentative, Z. does succeed in showing 'that the moral connotations attached to the roads descriptions increase', especially from the ninth book onwards. Her conclusions are cautious as they are attractive.

After some observations about the figure of the absent mother in the romance of Apollonius, Stelios Panayotakis ("The Temple and the Brothel: Mothers and Daughters in Apollonius of Tyre") discusses the 'contrasting but identical' (p. 104) adventures of Apollonius' wife and their daughter, who enter the temple of Diana in Ephesus and the brothel of Priapus in Mytilene respectively: both keep their chastity and purity, and the young woman retains her virginity until she is found by her own father. As for the theme of the virgin kidnapped and sold to a pimp, Panayotakis examines its possible literary sources and proposes as its origin the Prostitute-turned-Priestess figure, exploited in a declamation by Seneca the Elder: this character will reappear also in the *Acts of Christian Martyrs*, notably in the account of Saint Agnes' martyrdom. It is finally argued that the evolution of Apollonius' wife from mother to priestess may be influenced by the idea of a Virgin Mother like the Christian Virgin Mary. Though this is not wholly conclusive, there are many tempting suggestions in P.'s interpretation of the way mother and daughter transform themselves and the locations they occupy.

In "Social Geography in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles", Judith Perkins exposes how some spaces of the pagan world, like the bedrooms of women or, above all, prisons, are transformed by the irruption of Christians, who thus destroy social boundaries and reject the juridical order, "rearranging the spatial bases of community" (p. 129).

Michael Paschalis' "Reading Space: A Re-examination of Apuleian ekphrasis" can be divided into a first, general part concerning the concept of sophistic *ekphrasis* and a second, concrete section about its employment in a famous piece of description in Apuleius' *Metamorphosis*, Diana and Actaeon in II.4. As for the beginning, the definition of this idea against the classical *ekphrasis* (132-134), and the fixing of its double role as interpretation and discursive exposition of a work of art (p. 134) are irrefragable arguments. The analysis of the Apuleian *ekphrasis* is also interesting, but the final suggestion that the person describing the group is Lucius-*auctor* is somewhat more problematic, as is the application of these conclusions to other descriptions in the novel which are different enough from each other to deserve individual treatment.

Richard P. Martin ("A Good Place to Talk: Discourse and Topos in Achilles Tatius and Philostratus") examines initially several landscapes in Leucippe and Cleitophon: the painting of Europa described by the first narrator in 1.1.3; the *amoenus* grove he enters to hear the young man's story (1.2.3) -- a good place to talk; the garden where Cleitophon meets his beloved and whose erotic nature is remarked on page 151 (1.15.1-2); the account of palms falling in love each other (1.17.3.5), and the beauty of Leucippe's face regarded as a flowery meadow. Three more passages by diverse authors are cited to define the features of Achilles Tatius' landscapes: the beginning of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, which provides a contrast in the fact that it is a painted narrative that inspires the story; the *Heroikos* by Philostratus, an important text according to M. for recognizing the allegorical figure of the gardener as the narrator and interpreter of numinous landscape. Finally, a famous place, *Phaedrus* 229b-230d, supplies both the traditional parallel for a *locus amoenus* full of religious and erotic implication and the opposite to the novel when Socrates rejects Phaedrus' mythical interpretation.

In "Space and Displacement in Apuleius", Niall W. Slater seeks to discern a pattern of persistent displacement in the *Golden Ass*, illustrating how Aristomenes and Socrates are both displaced by their adventures, as Thelyphron in book II. Geographical details in these two inset stories do not provide an accurate idea of motion but a sense of the subjection of characters to displacement (p. 172). Since Lucius does not end his wandering in his own city, Corinth, but continues his journey to Rome, he also follows the pattern of displacement: the way this is to be elucidated should be furnished by comparison with the former tales.

Stavros Frangoulidis' "The Laughter Festival as a Community Integration Rite in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*" is basically chapter I.3 of his book *Roles and Performances in Apuleius' Metamorphoses*.⁷ Frangoulidis' aim is to discard the interpretation of this passage as a scapegoat ritual and propose viewing it as an integration rite by which the community of Hypata adopts Lucius as one of its members. Nevertheless, he refuses the honours the magistrates offer him and, thus, declines his inclusion into the city. F's reasoning against the consideration of Lucius as a *pharmakos* is fully credible; I am not so sure about his own proposal, but I am most sceptical about links between Laughter Festival and his metamorphosis into an ass (p. 187).

Every chapter ends with its own bibliography and the whole work has been completed with two useful, though not exhaustive, indices: an *Index locorum* and a *General index*. The book itself has been carefully produced and I have noticed only very few typographical errors.⁸

Since most of the papers assembled in this book concern Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, it will be very useful for those interested in this author: one can find new perspectives and ideas about the *Golden Ass* throughout the whole work. But it could also attract the attention of those scholars generally interested in the ancient novel: despite differences in approach and quality among the parts, the whole definitely deserves consideration.

Notes:

1. Exceptions are the contributions of Catherine Connors and Judith Perkins (read in ICAN at Groningen July 25-30, 2000) and that of Stelios Panayotakis.
2. The second has just taken place, on 19-20 May 2003: see its summary and a brief report by Ken Dowden in the website at [Ancient Narrative](#). Its publication will become the second supplementum of *AN*.
3. About the relationship between narrative and historiography and the use novelists (especially Chariton) make of History, see the bibliography in Kostan's note 14 (p. 10) and Connors' note 3 (p. 14).
4. For example, I find it too risky to base an identification between two characters (Theron in 1.7.1 and Caesar in Plut. *Caes.* 32,5-6) on a proverbial phrase; the questions about Persius are really provocative, as Connors herself affirms.
5. This is one of the main research interests of Professor Winkler, but I am also thinking of Paula James's "Keeping Apuleius in the Picture. A Dialogue between Buñuel's Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie and The *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius" (*Ancient Narrative* 1, 2000-2001, 185-207).
6. His reasoning against Ken Dowden's "The Roman Audience of *The Golden Ass*" (in J. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Baltimore-London, 1994, 419-434) is quite persuasive.
7. Published in Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2001. Frangoulidis notes (p. 187, n. 25) that "an analysis of the Laughter Festival from the Greimasian perspective of Roles and

Performances appears in my recent book". In my opinion, it would be more accurate to say that it is simply a previous version, because the aim, the arguments and many paragraphs of the chapter and the article are the same; see, for instance, p. 51 and p. 178 respectively. [8.](#) Some repeated words, for instance (see note 9 on page 17), or little slips like those on p. 22, penultimate line, or p. 121, line 11.

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