Space in Ancient Greek Literature

Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative

Edited by

Irene J.F. de Jong

BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2012

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

CONTENTS

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

ACHILLES TATIUS

K. de Temmerman

The Prologue

Achilles Tatius' is the oldest of the extant novels that emphatically draws attention to the importance of an elaborate representation of space. The prologue (1.1.1–2.3) prominently establishes this concern. It evokes three different spaces, two of which consecutively function as setting. Sidon's bay and harbour act as the initial setting. There, an anonymous narrator beholds a painting of Europa's abduction by Zeus. The space in this painting acts as frame and is dealt with in a lengthy description (1.1.2–13). The painting is simultaneously viewed by a young man who turns out to be Clitophon, the hero of the novel, and the two men begin a conversation about the power of *erōs*. The primary narrator then changes the setting by taking Clitophon to a nearby grove (*alsous geitonos*, 1.2.3), where he invites him to recount his own experiences with *erōs*. Once Clitophon has started his narration (1.3.1), the primary narrator never intervenes, and the frame narrative in Sidon is never resumed.[1] This is the only extant novel, then, where we have a minutely defined space of the narrator of the main narrative: the grove.

Whereas the description of the painting of Europa is traditionally interpreted as playing a foreshadowing role in relation to Clitophon's ensuing narrative,[2] scholars disagree about the extent to which the space represented in this painting is associated with—or dissociated from—the settings in the prologue (Sidon's harbour and the grove).[3] On the one

[1] See *SAGN* 1: 494.

[2] S. Bartsch 1989: 50–55; Nakatani 2003: 68–74; Morales 2004: 37–48; Cueva 2006; Reeves 2007.

[3] Morales 2004: 37 contrasts the sensuality and vividness of the ekphrasis of the painting with the economical and verbless sentences in the description of Sidon. S. Bartsch 1989: 168–169, on the other hand, points to similarities between the two descriptions, such as their formulaic style with short, asyndetic statements.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

hand, these two spaces are fundamentally different. As S. Bartsch rightly observes, within the fictional setting of the prologue the painting of Europa is 'not a natural and geographic feature like the "real" harbour but a contrived and artificial work'.[4] Moreover, as Martin (2002: 148) points out, the meadow (*leimōn*) in the painting parades itself as a 'lover space', whereas the grove is constructed to be read as a 'speaker space', which is a 'much cooler, less erotically charged place, a location where Eros is put into the properly distanced perspective'. But Achilles Tatius is notorious for transgressing boundaries and blurring clear-cut distinctions,[5] and this prologue offers a good illustration. Despite differences, the two spaces are also similar to each other in certain respects. Indeed, the narrator is explicit that the setting where the abduction of Europa is imagined to take place is identical to that of the prologue itself: both are Sidon (*Sidōn*, 1.1.1, and *Sidōnos*, 1.1.2).[6] This observation immediately destabilizes any fixed boundary between the setting and the frame space evoked in the painting. And it is not the only instance of 'leakage' between the two different universes. The two spaces are also represented through similar techniques. Both are depicted from a scenic, actorial standpoint. Although at first it appears as if the Sidonean setting is presented from a panoramic standpoint by an external narrator, the narrator ultimately introduces himself at the scene ('It was there that I arrived'), which leads the narratee to realize that the description is the direct result of the internal narrator's own observations at the time of his arrival. The description of the painting also adopts a scenic standpoint: the primary narrator notices (*horō*, 1.1.2) the painting as he walks around Sidon and describes the various scenes depicted on it as he sees them while standing before it, although he occasionally cedes focalization to a hypothetical observer constituted by a second person verb ('You might have said …', 1.1.13).

The two descriptions are similarly organized too. Both revolve around land and sea and their intermingling and interpenetration. The two harbours of Sidon are said to 'enclose' (*kleiōn*) the sea and the bay 'bellies out' (*koilainetai*) down the flank of the coast, thus creating a channel for the influx (*eisrhei*) of tidal waters. Likewise, the painting of Europa

[4] S. Bartsch 1989: 169.

[5] See de Temmerman 2009: 668 (with references).

[6] See also S. Bartsch 1989: 168–169. Reeves 2007: 92 incorrectly states that Europa in this painting is abducted from *Tyre*.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

underlines the fuzziness of the boundary between the meadow (*leimōn*, 1.1.3–8) and the sea (1.1.8–13). The scene on the painting is announced as 'a landscape and a seascape in one' (*gēs hama kai thalassēs*, 1.1.2) and a group of maidens are positioned 'at the edge of the meadow, on the parts of the land that jutted out into the sea' (1.1.6).[7] They are 'stepping into the edge of the sea, enough for the waves to lap over their feet a little'. This spatial representation blurs the border between land and sea and gives physical form to the ambiguity of the maidens' emotional disposition, as the narrator is explicit that their mien betrays 'at once terror and pleasure' and they seem 'both to desire to pursue the bull and to fear to enter the sea' (1.1.8).[8]

In sum, the prologue stages two universes that are ontologically different on the one hand (a setting that is a verbal representation of a 'real' space vs. a frame space that is a verbal representation of an iconic representation of space) but on the other hand similar, interconnected and, indeed, identical (both are Sidon). This blurred distinction within the prologue foreshadows a similar dynamic between space in the prologue as a whole and space in the rest of the novel. Again, we have a verbal depiction of a 'real' space (the grove) in which an artificial, contrived work of art is represented. This time, the work is not an iconic, but a verbal representation: Clitophon's narrative, which occupies the remainder of the novel (and we will return to the implications of the contrivance involved in the representation of space).

Forms of Space in Clitophon's Narrative

Let us now consider the most important forms of space in Clitophon's narration. Just as in (→) Chariton, space is structured around three geographical areas, and three urban centres in particular. In Achilles Tatius these areas are Phoenicia (1.3–2.31; especially Tyre),[9] Egypt (3.5–5.15;

[7] Translations are taken from Whitmarsh 2001 and slightly modified where needed.

[8] This rhetoric of intermingled emotions is part of a rhetoric of blending in this novel (see also S. Bartsch 1989: 53–54). Indeed, such rhetoric informs other descriptions of space throughout the novel, such as the description of a storm which intermingles various noises (*summigēs*, 3.2.8) and various spaces (the sea is represented in terms typical of *landscape*: crests of waves are compared with mountain peaks, and troughs with chasms, 3.2.5 and 3.2.7).

[9] The Phoenician episode is interrupted by one brief episode set in Byzantium (2.13–15).

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

especially Alexandria) and Asia Minor (Ephesus exclusively; 5.17–8.19), all connected by sea voyages (2.31–3.5 and 5.15–17). Unlike the novels of Chariton and Xenophon, however, space in Achilles Tatius' novel does not (really) describe a circle: the story ends with protagonists' arrival at Byzantium (8.19.3), Leucippe's home city, rather than with their return to Tyre.[10]

A number of settings are represented by stray indications only. Parts of the house of Clitophon's father (1.4), for example, which is the scene of substantial parts of the first two books, are not described at all and merely mentioned in passing (for example 'the room where I generally passed the night', 1.6.2; 'the inner parts of the house', 1.6.6; 'the *peripatos*', 2.10.2). Nevertheless, Achilles Tatius' most prominent innovation over (→) Chariton and (→) Xenophon of Ephesus in terms of space representation is his frequent adoption of descriptions of not only setting (see below) but also objects (paintings at 1.1.2–13; 3.6.3–8.7; 5.3.4–8; a mixing-bowl at 2.3.1–2, etc.), animals (a hippopotamus at 4.2.1–3; a crocodile at 4.19.1–6, etc.), persons (Leucippe at 1.4.2–5; Melite at 5.13.1–3, etc.) and events (a procession at 2.15.2–4; a storm at sea at 3.1.1–4.6, etc.). Some of these descriptions show a clear paradoxographical interest reminiscent of historiography (see, for example, Herodotus' descriptions of exotic and strange lands) and ethnography,[11] a mode of writing aligning Achilles Tatius' novel with (→) Philostratus and (→) Josephus.

Most of the descriptions adopt the same representational technique as the prologue: they are inserted by Clitophon-narrator but usually adopt a scenic, actorial mode that re-enacts the gaze of Clitophon-the-character.[12] Such re-enactment is sometimes made explicit, as, for example, in the descriptions of a painting representing the rape of Philomela by Tereus (*parestōs … horō*, 5.3.4) and paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus (*horōmen*, 3.6.3). Moreover, spatial descriptions are often introduced into the narrative when a specific location becomes rele-

[10] In the final paragraphs of the novel (8.19.2–3), attention is drawn to the fact that Byzantium, and not Tyre, is the final destination.

[11] Rommel 1923.

[12] This mode of presentation is given special prominence by the fact that characters within Clitophon's story only give synoptic descriptions of space that do *not* act as setting in the story at the time (but rather as frame space): examples are descriptions of the city of Tyre and an olive tree and fire there (2.14.2–6), a Sicilian spring (2.14.7), a river in Spain (2.14.8), a lake in Libya (2.14.9–10), a Phoenix bird (3.25.1–7) and panpipes (8.6.1–7).

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

vant for Clitophon-the-character and is about to function as setting—a device well known from (→) Homer onwards (see also (→) Chariton). The description of the women's quarters in Clitophon's house (2.19.3–5) is a case in point.

The scenic, actorial mode of presentation often goes together with a fixed standpoint (e.g. the garden of Clitophon's house, 1.15.1–8).[13] In other cases, the standpoint is shifting, which affects the organization of the ekphrasis. Clitophon's description of Alexandria (5.1–2), for example, is focalized by Clitophon-character as he *walks through* the city. Consequently, its organization is both temporal (as it follows Clitophon's movement through the city) and spatial (as it discusses various aspects of the setting from each vantage point). The first few lines are dedicated to what he sees upon his arrival ('as I entered', 5.1.1) and cover several objects (the so-called 'gates of the Sun', rows of columns and the open part of the city extending between these columns). Subsequently, Clitophon describes the view after he 'has advanced a few stades into the city' and again lists several objects seen from this new vantage point (a festival, a procession and the temple of Zeus *ouranios*).

In some cases, Clitophon's representation of space exceeds the scenic mode and adopts more overtly narratorial techniques. These instances often thematize the knowability and (more or less overt degrees of) communicability of space. In some cases, for example, Clitophon adopts a panoramic standpoint rather than a scenic one. The description of the Nile delta is a case in point:

> The Nile flows down from Egyptian Thebes, and continues to flow as before as far as Memphis (and a little way beyond: the name of the village that lies at the point where the great river ceases is Cercasorus). Thereupon it fragments around the land and three rivers are born from one, two of which spread out on either side, while the remaining one continues to flow as it did before it was divided, forming the land into deltoid shapes. Not even each of these rivers manages to flow all the way to the sea: they bifurcate variously around cities (…). Although the water is everywhere diffused, it does not lose its capacity to be sailed on, drunk and farmed. (4.11.3–5)

Although the description is inserted into the story when Clitophon is himself in the Nile Delta, it is not scenic: it covers the entire area between Thebes and the sea, providing a schematic, panoramic overview of the

[13] Other examples are descriptions of a storm at sea (3.1–2) and a lighthouse on Pharos (5.6.3).

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

river's many bifurcations as visible from, say, the air or a map (for example, 'deltoid shapes', 'bifurcate variously', 'everywhere diffused') rather than from autopsy anywhere in the delta itself. Rather than having this region focalized by Clitophon-character, then, Clitophon-narrator draws upon his (bookish?) knowledge of the geographical characteristics of the Nile delta. This technique is reminiscent of (→) Apollonius Rhodius' (2.970–984) description of the Thermodon Delta, depicted not as the Argonauts could have seen it but depicted 'from above'. As so often in Greek narrative, the description adopts the present tense throughout, which suggests that it represents general truth or common knowledge rather than personal observation and hence confirms the analysis in terms of focalization by the narrator rather than a character.

Another marker of distance between Clitophon's observation of space as a character and his representation of it as a narrator is found in the way he presents his own awe at novelties. A prominent tool to convey such disposition is the rhetorical figure of antithesis.[14] The description of Alexandria is a case in point:

> I saw two extraordinary novelties, grandeur competing with splendour and the populace striving to exceed their city. Both sides won: the city was bigger than a continent and the people more numerous than an entire race. When I considered the city, I could not believe that it could be filled with people; when I beheld the people, I was amazed that a city could hold them. The scales were that finely balanced. (5.1.6)

This description employs rhetorical strategies located more, it would seem, with Clitophon-narrator than with Clitophon-character. It contains opposites through which Clitophon-narrator processes and structures his earlier perception of the surrounding space: grandeur vs. splendour, populace vs. city, city vs. continent and populace vs. race. This conspicuously rhetorical arrangement of space suggests some distance between Clitophon-character on the one hand (awe-struck and bedazzled), and Clitophon-narrator on the other (rhetorically narrativizing his earlier awe and bedazzlement).[15] Another indication of such distance, I argue, is the fact that the description lacks specific details.[16] Its

[14] See Saïd 1994: 230 on Achilles Tatius' descriptions paying attention to the unusual and paradoxical rather than to precision. On paradox as a stock trait of rhetorical writing in general, see S. Bartsch 1989: 138.

[15] Morales 2004: 100–106, on the other hand, reads this description as a 'psychotic' type of autopsy.

[16] See Morales 2004: 100–106 on the 'impressionistic' character of the description. S.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

vagueness resonates with the fact that it seems to be drawn, like many other ekphrases in this novel, from cultural imagination: Alexandria was a well-known stock subject of description in schoolbooks of rhetorical exercises (*progumnasmata*).[17] Also a popular subject in cultural imagination during this period (particularly in painting) was another of Clitophon's descriptions: that of the Nile delta. The description below induces a distance between observer and narrator similar to that found in the description of Alexandria above:

> The mighty Nile is everything to the locals: river, land, sea, and lake. What a novel spectacle (*theama kainon*)! A ship serves as a mattock, an oar as a plough, a rudder as a sickle! This is the habitat of sailors and farmers alike, of fish and oxen alike. You sow where once you sailed, and the land you sow is cultivated sea, for the river comes and goes. … It is also possible to see river and land competing (*philoneikian*): the one strives (*erizeton*) with the other, the water to deluge such an area of land and the land to absorb such an expanse of sweet sea. The two share victory between them (*nikōsi … nikēn*); the vanquished party (*nikōmenon*) is nowhere to be seen, and the water merges into the land. (4.12.1–4)

This description is again built around antithetical poles to convey awe at the novelty of the spectacle: this time the central antithesis, land vs. water (which echoes the intermingling of land and sea established as early as the novel's prologue), is made specific in a series of sub-antitheses such as land vs. sea, land vs. rivers, sailors vs. farmers, fish vs. oxen, sowing vs. sailing and deluge vs. absorption. Moreover, both this description and that of Alexandria consciously adopt a rhetoric of competition, strife, and victory. This rhetoric of competition (and the conscious humanization of space it implies) is part, as are the frequent antitheses, of the rhetorical contrivance that contributes to creating distance between Clitophon-character's bewilderment and Clitophon-narrator's narrativized and rhetorically organized communication of this bewilderment. In these instances, then, space is the object of rhetorical, narratorial construction at least as much as it is re-construction of personal observation.

The prominence of Clitophon's narratorial activity as a driving force behind the representation of space is taken to an extreme degree in a number of instances where Clitophon's representation of space not

---

Bartsch 1989: 159–161, on the other hand, reads this and other descriptions as devices to 'lend realism' to the novel.

[17] S. Bartsch 1989: 10–12, 165.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

only exceeds the scenic, actorial mode typical of Clitophon-character, but also transgresses the boundaries of hermeneutical possibility. Being internal, Clitophon's narration, like the novel's prologue, is (or should be) subject to certain restrictions. Unlike an omniscient, external narrator, Clitophon does not know *by default* what happens at different places. Consequently, settings mostly correspond to the movements of Clitophon-character. However, there are notable exceptions, especially from the middle of the fifth book onwards, where the settings shift to places where Clitophon, as a character, is not present at the time.[18] Calligone's abduction by Callisthenes, for example, is recounted only after the setting has been moved to Sarapta, a village on the Tyrian shore, where Callisthenes secretly makes preparations, and to a small harbour where his accomplice lies in ambush for Calligone before kidnapping her on the seashore in Clitophon's presence (2.17.2–3). Such temporary excursions create hermeneutical difficulties, since they beg the question of *how* Clitophon, as a narrator, knows what was happening at one place while he himself was elsewhere.[19] Of course, as a narrator he can sometimes draw upon information gathered between the occurrence of events in the story and the act of narrating them in Sidon (*ex eventu* knowledge),[20] but sometimes even this option is logically impossible. When, for example, Clitophon has been smuggled out of an Ephesian prison cell, we are told that Melite, who had remained there, explains to the guard why she helped Clitophon escape (6.2.2–6). Since Clitophon does not know the guard and has no further contact with Melite after this episode, it is hard to see how he knows what happens in the cell after he has left.

Logical inconsistencies such as these have been explained as technical incompetence on the part of the author,[21] who, it appears, is unable to live up to the strict limitations imposed by internal narration. More recently, they have been interpreted as indications of narratorial unreliability.[22] The question of whether we are to read such hermeneutical transgressions as the author's or Clitophon's may well be one of the deliberately insoluble ambiguities so typical of this novel, but both readings agree that

[18] Hägg 1971: 130–135.
[19] *SAGN* 1: 496–497.
[20] Melite, for example, discovers a letter in Clitophon's absence (5.24.1) but later produces this letter in front of him (5.25.4). In other cases (e.g. 2.20.3–22.7), we are left to assume that Clitophon has been informed by someone who was present at the scene.
[21] Reardon 1994.
[22] J.R. Morgan 2007b.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

Clitophon at times behaves as an omniscient, external narrator. It is possible to read this behaviour as the adoption of a narratorial pose that takes to an extreme the above-mentioned tendency to privilege narratorial construction over straightforward communication of observations. In some cases, that is, Clitophon's narratorial construction of space may be read as going beyond the hermeneutically possible and thus moving into the realm of fictionalization. This observation, in turn, resonates with the very beginning of Clitophon's narration, where he informs the narratee that his story is true but 'resembles fiction' (*muthois eoike*, 1.2.2).[23] It also resonates with (more or less) contemporary fiction, such as (→) Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, where, according to Whitmarsh in this volume, the construction of space as determinate and knowable plays to the portrayal of the narrator as a figure of intellectual authority, a *pepaideumenos* such as the historical period typically demands. In Achilles Tatius, Clitophon's representation of space highlights his concern not only with the knowability of space (as foregrounded by his panoramic description of the Nile Delta), but also with its communicability and the distance between the observing and the narrating selves that such communicability involves (such as in the rhetorically moulded descriptions of Alexandria and the Nile).

Functions of Space in Clitophon's Narrative

The main functions of space in Achilles Tatius bridge the prologue and Clitophon's narrative. One such function is thematic, not simply because travel (present as early as the first lines of the prologue, when the setting is said to be a *harbour* and the anonymous narrator presents himself as the victim of a severe storm at sea, 1.1.1–2) is one of the main ingredients, as in (→) Chariton, (→) Xenophon and (→) Heliodorus, but also because descriptions of space sometimes drive the plot. In the prologue, it is precisely the erotic theme of the painting of Europa that triggers the conversation between Clitophon and the primary narrator about the power of *erōs* and, ultimately, Clitophon's own narration about his own erotic adventures, which is referred to as an erotic story (1.2.3) and constitutes the rest of the novel. Such a protreptic (the term is S. Bartsch's) function

[23] See, among others, Marincic 2007: 189–200.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

of description frequently resurfaces in Clitophon's narrative, for example when Sostratus' description of the island-city of Tyre results in the decision to send an embassy there.[24]

Secondly, the thematically relevant erotic function of space is intimately interwoven with a symbolic dimension of spatial representation: several spaces (again, both in the prologue and Clitophon's narrative) are semantically charged as erotic spaces.[25] The description of the meadow (*leimōn*, 1.1.3–6) on the painting of Europa, firstly, writes itself into a long tradition in Greek literature of descriptions of meadows as well-known literary *topoi* in contexts of eroticism,[26] which, notably, are often associated with the abduction of marriageable girls.[27] The flowery meadow in the painting is particularly reminiscent of that in Moschus' *Europa*. In this poem too, Europa's abduction is repeatedly said to take place in a meadow (*leimōn*, 32, 63, 67, 89) and some of the flowers populating it are the same as those in the novel.[28] Just as in the novel, Moschus' meadow too is staged as an erotic space: the narrator is explicit, for example, that the bovine Zeus is struck by the arrows of Aphrodite when abducting Europa (*Kupridos*, 76), while Zeus in Achilles Tatius is being guided by *erōs* himself (1.1.13, 2.1). In line with this erotization, space in the painting in Achilles Tatius is depicted in words bearing sexual connotations and possibly hinting at the impending intercourse between Europa and Zeus: trees intermingle (*anememikto*, 1.1.3) with flowers, branches unite (*sunēpton*, 1.1.3) their leaves, which embrace (*sumplokē*, 1.1.3) each other.[29]

---

[24] S. Bartsch 1989: 148–151.

[25] On the erotics of space in Achilles Tatius, see S. Bartsch 1989: 48–49, 53; G. Anderson 1984: 79; and Martin 2002: 144–154.

[26] See, among others, Motte 1971: 9–10, Bremer 1975: 268–274; D.L. Cairns 1997: 60–65.

[27] Martin 2002: 148.

[28] These flowers are roses (Mosch. 36, 70; Ach.Tat. 1.1.5) and narcissi (Mosch. 65; Ach.Tat. 1.1.5). There are a number of other similarities between the two passages: both meadows are explicitly said to be flowery (Mosch. *anthemoentas*, 63; *anthesi*, 64, 72; Ach.Tat. *antheōn*, *anthesi*, 1.1.5), in both scenes the onlooking girls form a *khoros* (Mosch. 30; Ach.Tat. 1.1.3), Europa takes the bull by its horn (Mosch. 113, 117; Ach.Tat. 1.1.10), the bull in the sea is surrounded by dolphins (Mosch. 113, 117; Ach.Tat. 1.1.13) and Europa's cloak is compared to the sail of a ship (Mosch. 130; Ach.Tat. 1.1.12). Other ancient accounts give only one or two of these details at the same time (e.g. meadow flowers in Hor. *Carm*. 3.27; the girl taking the bull's horn in Ov. *Met*. 2.833–3.9 and Lucian *DMar*. 15.2; dolphins in Lucian *DMar* 15.3). See Reeves 2003 on ancient accounts of this myth. See Mignogna 1993: 180–181 on similarities and Whitmarsh 2011: 89–90 n. 98 for verbal echoes.

[29] See also S. Bartsch 1989: 50; Reeves 2007: 89 n. 8.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

Both the erotic theme and the concomitant erotization of space are yet further instances of leakage between the two universes evoked in the prologue, as they are prominent not only in the painting, but also in the description of the grove (1.2.3). As has often been noted, this setting verbally recalls the famous *locus amoenus* that acts as the setting of the act of narration in Plato's *Phaedrus* (238b–c).[30] This resonance is not only programmatic of the recurrent Platonic intertextuality that informs the ensuing novel,[31] but also thematically significant, as *Phaedrus* famously deals with *erōs*—a connection made explicit when the primary narrator urges Clitophon to tell his story since 'a setting such as this (*ho toioutos topos*) is delightful and just right for erotic fiction' (1.2.3).

Spatial erotization bridges not only the setting and frame space within the prologue, but also these two different spaces and space in Clitophon's narrative. An example of such erotization by Clitophon-narrator, firstly, occurs in his lengthy description of Alexandria, in which he describes himself as an 'unsatisfied viewer' (*akorestos theatēs*), which applies a word common in sexual discourse to his relation with the overwhelming surroundings.[32] He also recounts his own love for Leucippe and his encounter with her in a garden (1.15.1–19.3), another place of lush vegetation traditionally associated with eroticism and female sexuality. Clitophon also eroticizes this setting. Firstly, he casts the interlocking and intermingling plants in terms of sexual union which are reminiscent of spatial representation in the prologue:[33] 'leaf caressed leaf (*periplokai*), beside frond embracing frond (*peribolai*), beside fruit coiling around fruit (*sumplokai*), so intimate was this kind of mingling of trees (*homilia*)' (1.15.2). Secondly, he adduces a number of elements from this setting as *comparantia* to convey Leucippe's beauty:[34]

> the beauty of her form was vying with the flowers of the meadow: her face gleamed with the complexion of narcissus, the rose bloomed forth from her cheeks, violet was the radiance that shone from her eyes, the clusters of her locks coiled more than ivy. Thus was the brilliant meadow that lay on Leucippe's face. (1.19.1–2)

[30] See, among others, Morales 2004: 51.

[31] On the use of Plato in Achilles Tatius, see Repath 2002.

[32] Morales 2004: 105–106.

[33] See Martin 2002: 151 on reading this 'loving landscape' as part of a series starting with the spatial descriptions (meadow and grove) in the prologue. On the similarities between these spaces, see also S. Bartsch 1989: 50–55 and Morales 2004: 39, 138.

[34] On the accommodation of spatial terms to depict Leucippe in this passage, see Martin 2002: 153–154; S. Bartsch 1989: 52; Littlewood 1979: 107.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

The various *comparantia* in this series of comparisons take up elements discussed by Clitophon in the preceding description of the garden ('ivy', 1.15.3; 'violet, narcissus, rose', 1.15.5)[35] and may also recall the description of the painting of Europa in the prologue ('meadow', 1.1.3–6).[36]

A number of other instances of spatial erotization by Clitophon-narrator seem to playfully eroticize spatial configurations familiar from the novelistic tradition. Whereas in (→) Xenophon of Ephesus caves are spaces of outlaws and brigands, in Achilles Tatius they act as the setting of Leucippe's chastity test (8.6.12) and Melite's fidelity test (8.12.7). Whereas in (→) Chariton open and closed spaces serve to flesh out the themes of secrecy, self-control and control over others, in Achilles Tatius they constitute a potent sexual metaphor.[37] Regions and cities also have strong erotic connotations: Phoenicia, for example, is traditionally associated with lecherous behaviour and lust[38] and even Ephesus, the city of Artemis, whose sanctuary acts as setting (7.13–8.14), is strongly marked as a place of sexual activity: whereas in (→) Xenophon it is a closural space celebrating reunion and chastity, in Achilles Tatius it is home to Thersander (a sexual predator who insists on having sex with Leucippe) and it is there that Clitophon finally has (adulterous) sex with Melite (after having repeatedly associated this city with the consummation of their love: 5.12.2, 14.3).[39]

As a character too, Clitophon repeatedly eroticizes space. When finding himself in the garden with Leucippe, he embarks on a speech about the power of *erōs*. Since this speech is aimed at seducing her, it overtly illustrates the rhetorical purpose of digressions in an erotic context.[40] The connection between flowers and feathers, to which Clitophon-narrator draws attention at the end of the preceding garden description ('the spectacle of the flowers gleamed in rivalry with the plumage of the birds—a garland of feathers (*anthē pterōn*)'), resurfaces in this speech: he twice refers metaphorically to the beauty of a peacock, whose tail is said to have 'a meadow of flowers in his feathers' (*leimōna pterōn*, 1.16.3; *ho tou taō*

[35] S. Bartsch 1989: 52.
[36] De Temmerman 2009.
[37] Guez fc a.
[38] Morales 2004: 191–192.
[39] See also Guez fc b.
[40] Other such speeches are Charmides' description of the habits of the hippopotamus and Indian elephant (4.2; 4.4.2–8; S. Bartsch 1989: 155) and Clitophon's excursus on palms (1.17.3–5; Martin 2002: 152).

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

leimōn, 1.16.3) that blossoms more richly than the peahen's. Since these words are part of Clitophon's speech on the erotic behaviour of peacocks, intended to assimilate his own love for Leucippe with the peacock's love for the peahen (as is explicitly pointed out in 1.16.1),[41] this metaphor clearly appropriates the term *leimōn* for erotic discourse and prepares the ground for the narrator's comparison of Leucippe herself with a *leimōn* shortly after (1.19.1).[42] As noted above, the connection between a flowery meadow and *erōs* enacts a well-known literary *topos*, but it also complicates Leucippe's association with the peahen by aligning her with the peacock through the common imagery of the meadow. Since the peacock is traditionally regarded as an animal of Hera, the goddess of, among other things, marriage,[43] this twofold association further highlights the transition of the term *leimōn* from the purely spatial to the erotic realm.

Other characters also appropriate space for rhetorical purposes—mostly, again, in contexts of erotic persuasion. Clinias, for example, draws upon spatial imagery to condemn marriage, characterized as it is, he argues, by 'the cacophony of the flutes, the crashing of doors, the waving of torches' (1.8.3). In his discussion with Clitophon about whether homosexual or heterosexual love is to be preferred, Menelaus adduces the well-known Platonic spatial metaphor of heavenly (*ouranion*) beauty to associate it with the beauty of boys (2.36.2–3). Clitophon, for his part, aptly supplants this metaphor with equally explicit spatial imagery by adducing a number of female *exempla* (such as Europa, Antiope and Danaë) that demonstrate that female beauty brought Zeus himself down from heaven (*katēgagen ex ouranou*, 2.37.2).

A character for whom space becomes a particularly important rhetorical resource is Melite. She repeatedly eroticizes space and rhetorically appropriates it to persuade Clitophon to have sex with her. On the voyage from Egypt to Ephesus, she argues that the sea is appropriate for Eros and Aphrodite because the latter is the daughter of the sea (5.16.3) and the sea god, Poseidon, married his wife Amphitrite at sea. She corroborates this point by metaphorically connecting various parts of the ship with female fertility and marriage:[44]

---

[41] On Clitophon's association with the peacock, see also Morales 2004: 185, 190.
[42] On this passage, see also de Temmerman 2009.
[43] See *LIMC* s.v. Io (I), 662 for the myth behind the association.
[44] See also Morales 2004: 224–226 on Melite's 'formidable command of language'.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

> It seems to me that our surroundings are symbols (*sumbola*) of marriage, this yoke (*zugos*) dangling above our heads and the bonds taut around the yardarm. The omens are good, my master: a bridal suite lying under a yoke and ropes bound tight. Even the rudder is close to the bridal suite: see, Fortune is piloting our marriage. … See how the sail billows out like a pregnant belly. (5.16.4–6)

Clitophon, who refuses to have sex with Melite, responds by systematically *de-eroticizing* the setting, and thereby rejecting Melite's reading of it. He argues that the sea is not a suitable place for sex and apologetically deconstructs Melite's carefully eroticized spatial construction:[45]

> Does this seem to you a suitable place for conjugals? A marriage on the wave, a marriage tossed around by the sea? Do you want us to have a mobile bridal suite? … the sea has its laws. I have often heard it from those of a nautical inclination that boats should be undefiled by Aphrodite's acts, perhaps because they are hallowed ground, or perhaps to prevent anyone relaxing in the midst of such great danger. (5.16.2, 7–8)

Melite characterizes this speech as sophistry (5.16.3), a concept taken up and again connected with eroticized space when Clitophon finally agrees to have sex with her in his prison cell in Ephesus: 'we needed no bed … Eros is a resourceful, improvising sophist, who can make any place (*panta topon*) suitable for his mysteries (*mustērion*)' (5.27.3–4). Clitophon-narrator here relegates to Eros the sophist's qualities that Melite has earlier attributed to Clitophon-character. In both cases, the characterization is closely connected with the ability to eroticize or de-eroticize space. But in fact, the point made by Clitophon-narrator about *erōs*' ability to facilitate sex in *any* place inverses Melite's preceding speech, where she foregrounds precisely the *specificity* of the environment as an argument to persuade Clitophon, arguing that, thanks to her, Clitophon has found Leucippe back in Ephesus (the evocations of sacred space connect the two speeches):

> A man who comes across a treasure trove pays honour to the place (*ton topon*) where he finds it, building an altar (*bōmon*), performing a sacrifice (*thusian*), and garlanding the ground. You found the trove of your love in me, yet you pay no honour to these benefactions. (5.26.9)

[45] A similar case for the inappropriateness of a particular place for sex is made by Leucippe when she has been taken prisoner by Thersander in Ephesus, city of Artemis, the virgin goddess (6.21.2).

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

Whereas Clitophon, then, repeatedly tries to discourage Melite from having sex with him by de-eroticizing the setting, he is ultimately persuaded by yet another of Melite's spatial erotizations. He portrays himself as finally understanding that Eros does not pay attention to setting as he does: Eros is the greater sophist. Or, we may wonder, is Melite?

The observation that space is in several instances appropriated by characters as a rhetorical tool resonates, firstly, with the traditional notion of space as a means to control people.[46] Moreover, the attention paid in this novel to the characters' rhetorical, verbal imaginations and representations of space as tools to establish such control is reminiscent of the use of spatial configurations as rhetorical tools known from (→) Lysias, (→) Plutarch and (→) Chariton. But given the context of erotic persuasion in which these episodes occur, they are no simple rehearsals of this tradition; like other aspects of spatial representation in this novel, they can be read as a deliberate erotization of it.

The interconnections between space and control also resonate with another important theme in the novel. This theme, which again is present in both the prologue and Clitophon's narrative, is fairly well-known from other literary genres (e.g. (→) Apollonius of Rhodes and (→) Herodian): the human controllability of space (see also the chapters on (→) Apollonius of Rhodes and (→) Herodian). Here the question is no longer how space is used by characters to control others, but how space itself is subjected to human control. The notion of human control over space is omnipresent from the prologue onwards. Although the meadow of the painting of Europa is imagined to be a natural space, there are several markers of its cultivated, and therefore controlled, status. Trees and plants are said to constitute a *phalanx* (1.1.3) and the foliage is said to form a vault (*orophos*) over the flowers. Moreover, attention is drawn to the painter (1.1.4, 6) and to the figure of a ditch-digger (1.1.6). The emphasis on the human construction of space is only one instance of a broader concern with the controllability of space throughout the novel. In the main narrative, this theme is taken up in different instances and at different levels. Firstly, the garden (*paradeisos*) of Clitophon's house echoes the notion of human cultivation.[47] It is surrounded on all sides

[46] About Achilles Tatius' novel in particular, see Perkins 2001: 119–120 (on domestic space as mapping male authority over females) and Whitmarsh 2010 (on domestic space as a site of tension between paternal control and its subversion).

[47] S. Bartsch 1989: 52, on the contrary, defines this garden as 'nature'.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

by a wall (*teikhion*) and by columns (*khionōn*). Moreover, it harbours vines (*ampeloi*) supported by canes (*kalamois*), a fountain (*pēgē*) and even a square conduit for its stream which has been traced around it by human hand. The columns are even emphatically humanized by the fact that they are said to constitute a 'troupe' (*khorōi*), which echoes the human *khoros* of girls in the painting of Europa (1.1.3). Finally, the cultural organization of the description of the birds, divided into tame (*kheiroētheis*, 1.15.7) and wild, further contributes to the garden's cultivated status. Significantly, some of the animals are even imagined to be performing cultural acts based upon their mythological aetiology: the cicadas and swallows are said to be singing of the Love of Eos and the feast of Tereus respectively.

Secondly, on a metatextual level, attention is drawn to the shapeability of space by aligning it with language and, therefore, the text itself. A collapse between text and space is found in the prologue, where the Phaedran setting of Clitophon's narration contains profound markers of the novel's self-reflexiveness.[48] Another instance of such collapse occurs in an episode foregrounding the importance of spatial disposition. When Clitophon has fallen in love with Leucippe, he has supper with her and the rest of the family:

> My father had arranged it (*etaxen*) so that we were drinking together on couches that had been allotted in twos: he and I on the middle couch, the two mothers on the left, and the maidens on the right. When I heard about this splendid arrangement (*tēn eutaxian*), I almost ran up to my father and kissed him for placing the maiden on the couch under my eyes. (1.5)

In this passage, emphasis is put on the advantages of a specific spatial disposition or arrangement. The repeated use of derivatives of *taxis*, which can also refer to the rhetorical disposition of a speech, draws attention to the shapeability of space and to the effect of such moulding. Although Clitophon's father is not shown to have a specific reason in mind in placing the couches as he does, the disposition does facilitate Clitophon's visual contact with Leucippe.[49] The dynamics of space and those of the text constructing this space overlap. Space, like language, can be moulded to achieve certain effects.

---

[48] Ní Mheallaigh 2007; S. Bartsch 1989: 44.

[49] See Whitmarsh 2010: 330–332 on Clitophon's erotization of the normative domestic order in this episode.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

A third area in which human control is prominent is constituted by episodes where characters actively try to establish control over space. Part of the description of a storm, for example, deals with a battle between the sailors and the passengers for the limited number of places in a lifeboat (3.3.1–4.6). Here, then, space is the object of human control in a very strong way (on such control, see also (→) Chariton). Often, characters go further than merely controlling space and actively try to manipulate it. Egyptian swamp dwellers, for example, entice their opponents onto a narrow causeway and then break the river dykes to unleash the water of the Nile onto them (4.14.3). This ability to manipulate the surrounding spatial constellation is cast as a result of their knowledge of and competence in dealing with the environment. Their ability to navigate the area where others fail is explicitly addressed and their relation with the Nile is even phrased in terms of trust (the Egyptians await the deluges, for 'the Nile never cheats') and abundance (the Nile 'is always plentiful among the Herdsmen').[50]

Next to its thematic and symbolic functions, space also has a characterizing function. In some cases, this function is rather straightforward. The fact that Melite's house, for example, is 'huge, the pre-eminent one in the city' and extravagantly furnished (5.17.1) and that she owns a country estate that contains orchard avenues (5.17.2–3) recalls her introduction into the story by Satyrus, who emphasizes her wealth (5.11.5) as a rhetorical stratagem to persuade Clitophon to marry her.

In other cases, the characterizing function of space is more subtle. The depiction of Leucippe's bedroom at the moment when Clitophon is about to enter it to have sex with her for the first time is a case in point. This room is implicitly aligned with the famous cave of the Cyclops, which therefore briefly acts as a frame against which the evolving plot can be read.[51] Satyrus informs Clitophon that Conops, the guard, has been knocked out by a sleeping potion: 'Conops is lying fast asleep: over to you! See to it that you play the part of Odysseus well' (2.23.2). For the characters, Satyrus' association of Clitophon with Odysseus is part of a word-play drawing upon the phonetic resemblances between 'Conops' and 'Cyclops'. The two figures, indeed, display thematic resemblances. Both represent obstacles that are eventually overcome by sleep.

[50] Another example is 3.1.1–4.6, where efforts to control a ship in a tumultuous sea also involve conscious efforts to reshape a given spatial constellation.

[51] See also de Temmerman and Demoen 2011: 8–9

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

As all readers of Homer know, the Cyclops falls asleep after drinking (*Od*. 9.371–374). It is, therefore, no coincidence that Conops is also put to sleep by a sleeping potion put in his drink (2.13.2). For the narratees, on the other hand, Satyrus' wordplay evokes significant *differences* between Clitophon and his paradigm. The spatial organization of this episode is significant. Whereas Odysseus puts the Cyclops to sleep in order to *escape* from a cave, Conops is put to sleep to allow Clitophon to *enter* Leucippe's room and, given the explicitly sexual purpose of his visit, Leucippe herself. This inversion of the spatial dynamic inherent to the intertextual frame can easily be read as a characterizing device. The evocation of the Homeric episode, indeed, characterizes Clitophon as a non-Odysseus. Unlike Odysseus' escape, Clitophon's entrance is not successful in that he does not attain his goal of sexual union with Leucippe. He is discovered by her mother and escapes at the last moment. This forced escape further subverts the Odyssean paradigm of the meticulously devised escape: Clitophon admits to being afraid (2.23.3) and trembles both before and after his visit (2.23.3, 6), which characterizes him, together with his flight, as a coward rather than as a courageous Odysseus.

Conclusion

Achilles Tatius was the first of the novelists to emphatically draw attention to the importance of an elaborate representation of space. This is evident not only in his innovative, pervasive use of synoptic descriptions, but also in the extent to which different spatial realms are playfully (and often ambiguously) associated with or dissociated from each other. This dynamic often entails a radical blurring of the boundaries between these spaces. The border between land and sea in the initial ekphrasis, for example, is blurred, like that between the setting and frame within the prologue: the two spaces are interconnected, similar and indeed identical. Moreover, different thematic functions of space as well as its erotization, its overlap with language and the Platonic imagery informing both space and text all bridge the prologue's two settings, the prologue's frame space and various settings in Clitophon's narrative.

Within Clitophon's narrative, spatial depictions often create distance between his observations as a character and his representations as a narrator. Many depictions are characterized by topical modes of description rather than specific detail. Moreover, they often exceed the scenic,

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1

actorial mode that re-enacts the gaze of Clitophon-the-character and privilege more overtly narratorial techniques, such as a prominently rhetorical, antithetical mode of narrativizing. Thirdly, the prominence of narratorial activity is taken to an extreme degree when the representation of space transgresses boundaries of hermeneutical possibility, as a result of which the distinction between internal and external, omniscient narrator becomes just another instance of blurred boundaries in this novel.

In addition to the traditional thematic and characterizing functions of space known from Chariton and Xenophon, the symbolic prominence of different spaces as erotic settings is striking. Space is eroticized not only by the narrator (often for reasons of thematic resonance), but also by characters in the story (Clitophon, Clinias, Melite) as part of rhetorical strategies. On both levels, the novel can be seen to reconfigure in an erotic key spatial configurations from the literary tradition. Moreover, this rhetorical erotization is part of a broader concern with the interconnections between space and power, which, in turn, aligns Achilles Tatius with Apollonius of Rhodes and Herodian. Next to the adoption of spatial configurations to control others, human control over space *itself* is thematized through different images, such as the shapeability of space and its human cultivation and manipulation.

 ISBN 978 90 04 22257 1