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’.¹ 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’.² 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,³ 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.⁴

The frame dialogue between Basilocles and Philinus in On the Oracles of the Pythia⁵ provides a most vivid illustration of how the three concepts are intimately linked (394E, transl. F.C. Babbitt, Loeb):

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

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110539479-001
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 straightway 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 ... πολεμικοὺς) that sprouted and grew, as it were (βλαστάνον- τας ... καὶ ὑποφυομένους), from the occasion of the interlocutors’ tour of the sanctuary underscores the site’s capacity to engender combative discourse.⁶ 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 literature⁷ 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’,⁸

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6 On this topic, see Brenk in this volume.
7 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).
since constructions of time, themselves relative,⁹ 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’.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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

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¹⁰ Tuan (1977) 12. See also Pelling in this volume.
¹¹ 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’ Periegeis 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.¹²

**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 Plutarchian 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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¹² 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 5th 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 5th and 4th 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 worldviews 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 (‘Symptic 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 *pepaideumenoi* 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.