

Myths on the map: the storied landscapes of ancient Greece / edited by Greta Hawes.

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The fifteen essays collected in this volume explore the connections between myth and space (or landscape). Any narrative unfolds in space and time, and in a short but dense introduction, Hawes sketches possible ways of addressing the topic, emphasizing the diversity of approaches adopted by the authors. Not all chapters can receive discussion here, but most make a worthwhile contribution to the overall topic. Clarke's essay continues the introductory reflection by exploring the problematic nature of the terms 'myth' and 'landscape' (which may be used to refer to both a physical entity and a discursive construct). Clarke then discusses the connection of space with time and myth through the tropes of the 'palimpsest' (pointing to the layers of meaning which coexist through time at a given location) and of 'islands of myth' (discrete places where something significant happened); she closes by noting how it is movement, that is the travels of heroes, but also of historical figures, that transforms space into significant, resonant places: 'it is travel, connections, and journeys from which the real power of myth in geography and geography in myth derives' (31). Sites can anchor and evoke stories; at the same time, stories have the potential to give meaning and significance to specific landscapes. Thus Minchin argues, in a paper which brings together memory studies, cognitive studies, and the spatial turn, that the precise location of the story of Hero and Leander, the straits of the Hellespont between Abydos and Sestos, is crucial to the persistence and memorability of the story itself; at the same time, the story gives the location 'sedimented layers of meaning' and thereby humanizes the landscape. While the methodological discussion is solid, not all details are convincing: the story of Hero and Leander is relatively late, and it is unclear in what sense exactly it is a 'myth'; furthermore, it is true that that particular strait is significant, both in myth (Helle) and in history (the crossings of Xerxes, Alexander, and others); but the versions we have do not suggest or imply a link between the story of Hero and Leander and the other reasons of fame of the location.

Myths can be at the same time Panhellenic and local: Aston thus looks at how Centaurs and Lapiths function on the Panhellenic scene, before focusing on their local, Thessalian associations, highlighting for instance how the myth is used in connection with the foundation of Demetrias. Some landscapes tend to be associated with particular story types: Buxton's chapter argues that the common link between two sets of homonymous Cyclopes, the 'Polyphemans' and the blacksmiths, is the molten fire of Aetna. Salowey, in turn, studies two heroic riverine battles, the fight between Scamander and Achilles in the *Iliad* and the myth of the fight between Heracles and Acheloos, relating them to the hydrogeology of the karstic Mediterranean environment. The two stories are well known; but Salowey highlights convincingly both the similarities between the two stories and the different characters of the rivers (underscoring, in particular, the association between Acheloos and fertility). McInerney looks at myth and the construction of identity in the Hellenistic period through an analysis of Callimachus' 'diaspora poetics'. Other papers look at imaginary maps – maps (or itineraries) within myths. An outstanding example of this approach is Suksi's paper. Taking as her point of departure Purves' analysis of the differences between the eusynoptic, divine vision of epic poetry and the human mapping of archaic Greek prose, Suksi explores tragedy, focusing specifically on the description of Io's wanderings in the *Prometheus Vincetus* and Clytemnestra's beacons, mapping the itinerary from Troy to Argos, in the *Oresteia*. She offers fascinating readings of the linkage between technology (fire, writing), mapmaking, and power in these plays, and concludes that although the medium is poetry, tragedy's mapping does not assume the divine perspective of epic: rather, it is in the hand of humans. Not everyone will accept all the connections she proposes (those between Io and the oxen sacrificed at Methone, for instance, may appear to some tenuous); nonetheless, this is an impressive discussion, very much worth reading.

Imaginary itineraries also appear in the papers of Fowler and Delattre. Fowler focuses on maps of the beyond, contrasting the strategies employed in the *Odyssey* to emplot the hero's wanderings, Pherecydes' perspective on the travels of Heracles, and the way Herodotus describes the edges of the world. For his part, Delattre emphasizes the indifference to cartography of imperial mythographers, providing thus an interesting counterpart to Clarke's essay: for him, in imperial mythology geography is 'consequential upon a character's actions, and not a setting for his deeds to take place in' (272); instead of networks grounded in two-dimensional space, we get hodological 'meshworks'. The final chapter offers a further take on imaginary landscapes: taking as his starting point the Libyan myth of Dio Chrysostom's fifth oration, Hunter offers a finely tuned analysis of a set of 'Libyan stories'; he shows how the terrifying (imagined, and often allegorically interpreted) landscape of Libya is repeatedly and allusively, throughout Greek and Roman literature, used for a discourse concerning the control of human passions.

Despite certain centrifugal tendencies, the diversity of approaches to the phenomenon of physical and discursive space by and large succeeds in conveying a sense of the vibrancy of this field of research.