2. Remembering heroic space: a framework of analysis

2.1 Remembering the past

Memory Studies comprises a broad field of theories and approaches and draws on many disciplines, such as sociology, psychology and cultural history. The study of memory has experienced a real boom from the 1980s onwards, although its origin goes back to the 1920s, to the observations of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. This section begins with an introduction to the basic principles of Memory Studies, after which they are applied to the presentation of the heroic world in tragedy.

Collective memory

Memory Studies focuses on the way in which individuals and societies remember their past. Here, ‘memory’ does not refer to an impersonal, abstract past, which is usually studied by historians and archaeologists, but to the way in which individuals and societies deal with and give meaning to their past. Memory Studies, then, examines the remembered past in relation to the remembering subject(s). Since only individuals are mentally capable of remembering, the concept of memory in collective contexts refers to the construction of a shared past. The term ‘memory’ is used nevertheless, since individual and collective memories have many points in common.¹

This last observation was made by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, the ‘founding father’ of Memory Studies. In his book Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire (1925) he showed that the memory of individuals is influenced by socio-cultural contexts.² The context, which can range from conversations to books and places, triggers as well as shapes memories. Halbwachs demonstrated that an individual only remembers what is relevant in a given context and that memories are modified according to the present circumstances. A clear description of this process is given by Welzer:

¹ Erll 2008, 5; Frijhoff 2011, 7-11; De Haan 2012, 100.
² The society in which an individual lives, provides conventions and definitions for the giving of meaning to present and past. As Welzer (2008, 287) puts it: ‘Cultural frameworks have an effect ... in the individual consciousness as a structuring matrix for the processing of information.’ Bourke (1999), for example, has shown that autobiographies, letters and diaries of soldiers – that is, media for the communication of the individual, recent past – are influenced by literary and filmic models on war.
... it is often the case that it is more the emotional dimension, the atmospheric tinge of a report that is passed on and determines the image and interpretation of the past, while the contents themselves – the circumstances of the situation, the causes, the sequences of events, etc. – can be freely altered, in a way which makes the most sense for listeners and those who retell the story (2008, 295).

Halbwachs demonstrated that socio-cultural contexts also influence the construction of a shared past. The same processes – the selecting of relevant parts of the past and their modification according to present needs – are applicable to communities. Halbwachs was the first to undertake research on the memories of societies and he coined for these the term ‘collective memory’ (mémoire collective).3

An important function of collective memory is to constitute and preserve a group. Shared memories of the past connect individuals to each other. An individual who becomes acquainted with the memory of a group can be subsumed into that group. This process is called socialisation. Conversely, individuals who are not acquainted with the collective memory of a group are excluded from that group. Collective memory, moreover, constructs identity. The members of a community obtain a collective, shared identity by remembering the characteristics of the group members in the past and by relating them to the present, for example by putting themselves in a continuous tradition with their predecessors.4 The sixteenth-century inhabitants of the Netherlands, for example, created collective identity by emphasising their shared descent from the tribe of the Batavians (although many of them had no real, historical connection to that bloodline). The Dutch remembered the Batavians as a vigorous and independent people who had bravely offered resistance to the Roman conquerors. They emphasised that these virtues lived on in them and that their ‘ancestors’ had to be imitated in the contemporary battle against the Spaniards.5

Memories of the past have to be repeatedly revitalised in a community in order to exert their binding function. In other words, a shared past can only constitute a group if the individual members are repeatedly reminded of it. Memories, therefore, have to be continually communicated in a group to gain coherence.6 On the basis of its mode of communication, collective memory can be divided in two forms, (1) communicative memory and (2) cultural memory: (1) Memory of the past is, on the one hand, revitalised in private contexts by individual group members – that is, via everyday communication and interaction. (Grand)parents, for example, tell their (grand)children about the past of a community.

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5 Frijhoff 2011, 24-5.
6 Erll 2008, 5-6.
(2) On the other hand, every community has so-called ‘specialists’ whose memory of the past is considered authoritative. The memories of these specialists are communicated to the community by songs and performances at public festivals, at which the whole (or a large part) of the community is present. In ancient Egypt it was the priests who belonged to this category; in archaic and classical Greece it was the poets.7

Greek tragedy

In fifth-century Athens, tragedy played a paramount role in the construction of collective memory. Tragic plays were performed during the City Dionysia, a yearly festival of Dionysus in spring. During this festival, the tragedians communicated their memory of the past to the Athenian community in the theatre.8 The tragedians can thus be regarded as ‘specialists’ in collective memory. The question that is relevant here is how the memory of the tragedians came about – in other words, what factors influenced their construction of the past. Three aspects play a part in this process: tradition, innovation, and lieux de mémoire.

Tradition

Specialists in general do not have absolute freedom in their construction of the past, but instead have to take the already existing collective memory into account. Earlier specialists have already communicated their memories of the past to the society and have thus contributed to the formation of collective memory. New specialists have to conform their constructions to those of their predecessors. The sum of these earlier constructions is called the tradition.9

Specialists, however, need not follow the tradition in all respects. In other words, new constructions need not be simple copies of earlier ones. Nevertheless, every tradition has certain elements – that is, events and people – that cannot be omitted in a new construction. These elements are called the canon of the past.9 Canonical elements lend authority to a new construction. If a new construction

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7 J. Assmann 2000, 1-29; 2008, 109-18. Assmann also makes a distinction in the temporal dimension of the two forms of collective memory. According to him, communicative memories always relate to events from the recent past – that is, events of which (some) eyewitnesses are still alive. Only after the disappearance of all eyewitnesses (that is, after eighty years at the most), the memory of these events is communicated by specialists at public festivals. Sluiter and Visser (2004, 239-48) have shown that this distinction is too rigid. The memory of the recent past can also be communicated by specialists. An example of this is the Athenian memory of the battle of Salamis in 480. This event was brought onstage by Aeschylus in his Persians already in 472. Many spectators of this tragedy would also have been eyewitness of the battle.

8 For a description of this festival see e.g. Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 57-125.

9 A. Assmann 2008, 97-107. Aristotle remarks in his Poetics that the tragedians vary the details of heroic stories, but also stick to a certain ‘traditional’ core (1451b1-26).
does not contain canonical elements from the tradition, it cannot become part of collective memory; in that case, the construction would differ too much from what the community holds true about the past. As Foxhall and Luraghi put it:

... [T]he existence of frameworks of ‘fixed points’ in the past serve as a foundation of belief in the truth of the past for most societies. ... [S]uch waypoints serve both to anchor and to validate narratives of the past. ... [L]ater works become contingent upon earlier templates, and in the classical tradition permanence attaches itself to well-established pasts which come to hold authority (2010, 9-10).

Canons of memories play an important role within communities:

(1) Canons offer communities a ‘usable’ past. The storage capacity of individual and collective memory is limited in extent. Individuals as well as communities cannot remember the whole of their past, since in that case their memory would be overloaded. Canons permit a group to remember only a select amount of persons and events, which are most important for the constitution of collective identity.

(2) Canons contribute to the diachronic preservation of a group. Canonical memories remain part of the tradition for several generations. If every generation constructed its own past, independently of previous ones, a community would dissolve after the disappearance of a generation. To preserve a community for more generations, a new generation has to remember the same past as the previous one. By remembering the same past, the identity of a community is passed down to the next generation.\textsuperscript{10}

An example of a canonical Dutch memory is the Eighty Years’ War (1568-1648). The memory of this war has been of paramount importance for Dutch group identity for many generations.\textsuperscript{11}

The tragedians, too, had to include canonical events and persons from the tradition in their constructions of the past. An example of a canonical event is the Trojan War, including, for instance, the Judgement of Paris and the murder of

\textsuperscript{10} Marcel and Mucchielli 2008, 147-8. In addition to canonical memories, which are important for the survival of a group, communities also have memories that are not repeatedly communicated. These memories are called the archive of a community. Memories of the archive do not meet the standards of the canon, but are nevertheless deemed important enough not to let them disappear into total oblivion. In ancient Greece, for example, there were aristocratic families who tried to preserve the memory of their clan by committing their achievements to writing and store the texts in temples (Thomas 1992, 141-4). Archival memories do not belong to the active collective memory of a community, but to the domain of study of historians. It is possible, however, that historians bring archival memories back into collective memory by striving for their adoption in the canon (A. Assmann 2008, 97-107).

\textsuperscript{11} Frijhoff 2011, 16.
Priam, as well as the heroic deeds of the early Athenian kings, such as Theseus and Erechtheus.

In addition to the inclusion of canonical events and persons, the tragedians also had to include canonical spaces in their construction of the past. To lend their constructions authority, the image of the heroic world had to conform to the traditional image of this world. It is an aim of this book to determine what spaces are adopted from the tradition and why.

In chapter 1, it was stated that many scholars regard Homer as the main source for the image of the heroic world in tragedy. However, the tradition on which the tragedians were dependent, had not been created only by Homer, but also by other specialists, such as the lyric poets and those of the Epic Cycle. In addition, visual artists, such as vase painters and sculptors, had contributed to the tradition about the heroic past. This study aims to investigate in detail to what extent the heroic world in tragedy is influenced by Homer and to what extent by other specialists. This book will address that question by making specific comparisons between the Homeric and tragic world on the one hand, and by taking account of the wider tradition on which the tragedians were dependent on the other.

**Innovation**

Tradition contains both canonical elements that remain stable for several generations and elements that can change. Memories of the past must remain meaningful for the community in changing social and cultural situations. Memories can only exert their binding function and construct identity if they relate to contemporary beliefs, needs and values of a community. Specialists, therefore, do not preserve traditions unchanged, but instead subject them to constant revision. As early as the 1920s, Halbwachs demonstrated that memory, both individual and collective, is dynamic. Individuals as well as communities only remember what is relevant in the present context. Regarding collective memory, Marcel and Mucchielli state:

... [A]s members change, die or disappear, as ... the concerns of the time replace past concerns, the collective memory is continually reinterpreted to fit those new conditions. It adjusts the image of old facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the moment (2008, 148).

Changes in the tradition roughly take place in two ways:

(1) Memories that are no longer in accordance with the present conditions can be omitted in a new construction. This process is called forgetting. Forgetting has an intentional and an unintentional variant. Intentional forgetting refers to the conscious destroying or suppressing of memories, such as censorship. This process,
which is also called *damnatio memoriae*, is usually initialised by political leaders. Unintentional forgetting refers to the unconscious disappearance of memories. Memories that do not support contemporary needs anymore can fall into oblivion, as they have lost their relevance for the group.\(^{12}\)

(2) New memories can be constructed that support the needs of the community in the present. These new constructions of the past are a reflection of the contemporary circumstances. This process is called *projection*. Like forgetting, projection has an intentional and an unintentional variant. The intentional variant refers to the conscious modelling of the past on the basis of the present needs of the community. The non-intentional variant refers to the unconscious equation of past and present: specialists may model the past after the present without being conscious of the historical differences.\(^{13}\)

It is often difficult to determine whether the processes of forgetting and projection have taken place intentionally or unintentionally. Specialists may in some cases have *intentionally* changed the past (be it under the command of rulers) to support contemporary needs. When the newly constructed past is repeatedly communicated to the community, the collective memory will change as new memories replace old memories. The group members, for their part, may be unaware of this process.

It is not always the case that the tradition is adjusted to the contemporary situation. Traditional elements are sometimes preserved in a new construction of the past, without corresponding any longer to the present circumstances. These elements are called *archaisations*. Archaisations *preserve* the past and emphasise the difference between past and present. They are regarded as typical or 'genuine' elements of the past, in contrast to the present.

An example of the processes of forgetting, projection, and archaisation is the fifth-century Athenian memory of the heroic king Theseus.\(^{14}\) The memory of Theseus belonged to a long tradition. He was a canonical figure in the Greek past and was part of Athenian collective memory for many generations. The tradition *before* the fifth century (on which classical constructions were dependent) considered Theseus’ character contradictory. On the one hand, he was presented as a civilising hero who freed Greece from monsters, such as Centaurs and the Minotaur (e.g. *Il. 1.262-70*);\(^{15}\) on the other hand, he was an abductor of women and a breaker of boundaries. One of the women he abducted was Helen from Sparta. As a result of this abduction, he endangered the whole of the Athenian community: Helen’s brothers, the Dioscuri, lay siege to the city in order to save her (e.g. Alcm.

\(^{12}\) A. Assmann 2008, 98.
\(^{13}\) Foxhall and Luraghi 2010, 9-14; Gehrke 2010, 15-34.
\(^{14}\) I have adopted this example from: Graf 1993, 136-41; Mills 1997, 2-18.
\(^{15}\) Cf. *LIMC* VI.1 575-6; VI.2 316-20 (no. 6-29).
Theseus, moreover, supported his friend Pirithous in his hubristic attempt to abduct Persephone, Queen of the Underworld, which was frustrated by Hades, who locked them up in the Underworld as punishment (e.g. Hes. fr. 280).

Around 500, the Athenian memory of Theseus changes. In this period, Theseus is appropriated as representative and national hero of the Athenians and he becomes a model citizen in whom all classical Athenians can recognise themselves. He is therefore invested with the collective values of the contemporary Athenian community.

Theseus’ civilising role from the tradition continued to correspond to the situation in the fifth century and is therefore preserved in classical constructions. The classical Athenians regarded themselves as civilisers, too: their battle against the Persians, whom they regarded as a tyrannical and hubristic nation, was a proof of this. Theseus’ civilising nature was, for example, presented on the metopes of the Athenian treasury in Delphi, where he had defeated monsters and bandits (cf. B. 18.19-30).¹⁶

What is more, the negative aspects of Theseus’ character are suppressed in classical Athenian constructions. For example, the abduction of Helen, which caused the Dioscuri’s attack on Athens, became omitted from the narrative. Tragedy and the monumental arts are, for instance, reticent about this episode. It did not correspond to the contemporary Athenian ideal of placing collective concerns above private interests. The absence of this episode in specialists’ constructions may have caused its complete disappearance from collective memory. In other words, due to its suppression by specialists, the community may have forgotten this episode.¹⁷

In classical constructions, Theseus is also invested with new features. He is presented, for instance, as an ambassador of Athenian democracy. In the fifth century, democracy played an important part in the collective identity of the Athenians. It is therefore reflected in the construction of the past. Theseus, for example, does not govern the city alone, but together with the community, which is a hallmark of democracy. Moreover, he is credited with the foundation of the council (βουλή) and the prytany (πρυτανεία), which were democratic institutions in the fifth century (Th. 2.15). The presence of these customs and institutions in the past must be considered projections of the contemporary situation.

Although Theseus shares his power with the people, he is also presented as a king in classical constructions. Theseus’ royal status was a canonical element in

¹⁶ Von den Hoff 2010, 161-88. Cf. LMIC VII.1 928; VII.2 633-4 (no. 54).
¹⁷ The abduction of Persephone is not suppressed but modified. In Critias’ tragedy Pirithous (TrGF 1 43), for example, the blame of the attempt is wholly put on Pirithous, whereas Theseus is exonERated. Moreover, although Hades only locks up Pirithous, Theseus stays with his friend out of loyalty until Heracles frees them both. Privileging friendship and loyalty over private interests corresponds to the contemporary values of the Athenians (cf. Mills 1997, 257-62).
the tradition and was therefore preserved. Kings, however, were not included in the democratic constitution of fifth-century Athens. Theseus’ status as king must therefore be considered an archaisation. The Athenians may have regarded kings as ‘typical’ characters of the distant past, in contrast to the present.

The processes of forgetting, projection, and archaisation play a part not only in the memory of persons and events, but also in the memory of space. In new constructions, traditional space can be forgotten or preserved. If traditional spaces no longer correspond to the contemporary world, they must be considered archaisations. Contemporary space, moreover, can be projected in the past.

An example of a spatial archaisation is the presence of the city of Phthia in classical memories of the heroic past. This city had been destroyed for centuries, but it was preserved in some classical constructions as the residence of Achilles (e.g. E. IA 103). In the fifth century, the city of Pharsalus claimed to be founded on the remains of the city of Phthia. Some classical constructions account for this contemporary state of affairs, presenting the city of Pharsalus as the residence of Achilles and his family (e.g. E. Andr. 16-23). The presence of Pharsalus in these constructions can thus be considered a projection from the contemporary world.

This book aims to determine to what extent the processes of forgetting, projection and archaisation play a role in the construction of the physical heroic world in tragedy.

Anachronism
In chapter 1 it was stated that ancient and modern scholars generally call contemporary elements in tragedy ‘anachronisms’. In my opinion, this concept should not be used of the Greek heroic world. The concept of anachronism presupposes a fixed (static) world, to which ‘inaccurate’ elements of later times are added. The example of Theseus has shown, however, that the Greek heroic world is dynamic and subject to constant revision: changing contemporary situations influence memories of the heroic past. Therefore, when the past contains elements from the present, I use the term ‘projection’. This concept takes account of the dynamic character of the heroic world and has a less negative connotation than the term ‘anachronism’.

Bronze Age
As was stated in chapter 1.2, some modern scholars hold the opinion that the tragedians have modelled the heroic world after the Bronze Age. However, when one takes into account the theory described in this chapter, this suggestion becomes highly unlikely. The archaic and classical Greeks, in all probability, had no coherent and clear view of the Bronze Age:

(i) They did not possess documents from the Bronze Age, in which the memory of this age was preserved. The alphabet they used was only adopted in the eighth
century. Their ancestors from the Bronze Age, on the contrary, had used Linear B, a syllabic script for administrative purposes. There is no evidence that the archaic and classical Greeks were able to read this script.

(2) The memory of the Bronze Age that was handed down in oral performances had probably largely changed by the time it reached the archaic period. From the end of the Bronze Age onwards, Greek society witnessed many changes. After the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces, the Greeks first lived in small tribes (in the so-called ‘Dark Ages’), after which in the eighth century polis and interstate (panhellenic) connections arose. These changes in the social context would also have changed the memories of the past.

The Bronze Age, however, may not have been completely forgotten in the archaic and classical period. The Greek landscape contained many physical traces of this age, which most likely influenced the memory of the past. This brings us to the last group of factors that play a role in the construction of the heroic world: lieux de mémoire.

*Lieux de mémoire*

Memories are often connected to space. Events from the past leave physical traces in the landscape. Places, monuments, and ruins therefore evoke memories of the past. For example, the battlefield at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania may remind the passer-by of the turning point in the American Civil War in 1863, when the northern ‘United States’ gained a decisive victory on the southern ‘Confederate States’. Similarly, the bullet holes in the wall of the nunnery of St Agatha in Delft are still silent witnesses of the murder of Willem van Oranje in 1584.

Places that evoke memories of the past, are called lieux de mémoire. This term was coined by the French historian Nora, who led a project on the constitution and identity of the French nation in the 1980s and 1990s. In his view, the process of globalisation and the increasing influence of the European Union weakened the French identity and the collective memories that constituted the nation. To preserve these, Nora made a catalogue of ‘places’ that had played an important part in the national past of France, such as Verdun, Versailles, and the Bourbon palace. This catalogue was called *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-92). Nora, however, uses the term lieu not literally, but metaphorically. He includes not only physical

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*E.g. Raaflaub (1997, 85-9) has attempted to reconstruct the way in which collective memories of the Bronze Age changed in these centuries.

*The reasons given here are also used by those Homerists who hold the opinion that the heroic world in Homeric epic resembles the early archaic age, that is, the time when the texts became largely fixed. See introduction note 3.*
‘places’ of memory, but also symbols and persons that are important for French identity, such as the French flag and Jeanne d’Arc.\(^{20}\)

In the first decade of the 21st century, similar research projects were started in other countries, which in their turn resulted in catalogues of symbols, people, and places that are constitutive of national identity. In Germany, for example, the historians François and Schulze have led a project about Deutsche Erinnerungsorte (2001-9); under the supervision of the historian Wesseling, the Netherlands now has its own series of Plaatsen van Herinnering (2005-7). The Dutch catalogue uses the term lieu de mémoire in a literal sense and only includes physical places of memory. This seems to serve a certain touristic interest. Readers can visit the places of the catalogue and can ‘come in contact’ with the past on the spot.\(^{21}\) In this book I, too, restrict the term lieu de mémoire to physical places.

Like modern nations, the ancient Greeks had their own lieux de mémoire. The majority of Greek heroic stories takes place in Greece and the Mediterranean. The Greeks thus supposed that the heroes, whom they considered their ancestors, had lived in the same area. Consequently, they associated elements in their landscape, such as rocks and caves, with the heroic past. It was above all conspicuous elements, which demanded explanation, that were connected to the time of heroes.\(^{22}\)

On the one hand, Greeks related physical elements to existing traditions, for instance as ‘proof’ or illustration of a story. For example, Theophrastus (\textit{HP} 4.13.2) and Strabo (13.1.35) identify the oak tree in the Trojan plain that is repeatedly mentioned in the \textit{Iliad} (e.g. 9.354). On the other hand, elements of the landscape can also inspire new memories. Pausanias, for example, describes the origin of little holes in leaves of a myrtle tree in Troezen. The inhabitants of this city supposed that the leaves had been pierced by Phaedra with a hair-pin when she grieved at Hippolytus’ rejection of her love (1.22.2). In all probability, a biological explanation, such as ravaging by aphids, would have been more correct. It is usu-

\(^{20}\) Nora (1993, 3-10) claims that the concept of lieu de mémoire can only be connected to France, because its past differs from that of other European countries: the French past has witnessed clean breaks and traumatic experiences, whereas the past of other countries, such as that of England, is characterised by tradition, continuity, and gradualness. In Nora’s view, a past such as that of France is necessary for the construction of lieux de mémoire: places and symbols are in general reminiscent of watershed events. However, research projects in other countries have demonstrated that this statement is incorrect. Every community constructs its own ‘landscape’ of memory, which consists of places and symbols.\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) Cf. Nauta 2007, 258-62.\(^{22}\) The observations and examples in this section are largely adopted from Boardman 2002, 79-126. For lieux de mémoire in ancient Greece see further e.g. Jung 2006; Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010.
ally difficult, or even impossible, to determine whether a place has inspired a story or the other way around.23

The connecting of places to the past by the ancient Greeks usually lacked a historical basis. Archaeologists have demonstrated that the Greeks identified many places incorrectly. Pausanias, for example, labels a pyramid-like structure near Hellenicum, a place near Argos, as a common grave for fallen warriors in a battle between the heroic kings Proetus and Acrisius (2.25.7). Archaeologists, however, have shown that this structure was in fact a guardhouse from the fourth century. The meaning ascribed to a structure or natural element by the ancient Greeks is largely determined by its location in the landscape. Elements on sacred ground, for example, are generally invested with a religious connotation.24

Since elements of the landscape can evoke all sorts of memories, sometimes various, even mutually contradictory, stories are told about a particular place.25 The Athenians, for example, knew different versions of the institution of the court on the Areopagus hill (e.g. A. Eum. 482-4, E. IT 945-6).26 According to Van Sas, such a place consequently becomes a noeu de mémoire, a 'node' of conflicting memories that has to be unravelled. In his view, one has to determine the 'cor-

23 The connecting of the physical landscape to the past played an important role in colonisation processes. Unknown areas that were colonised could inspire new memories or be related to existing traditions. Colonists often presented heroes as inhabitants or visitors of the area in the distant past. It was particularly wandering heroes, such as Heracles and the Argonauts, who were fit candidates for these roles. For example, the fertile region of Benghazi was presented as the place of the garden of the Hesperides, where Heracles had once stolen the golden apples (A.R. 4.1396, D.S. 4.26.2). By inventing a relationship with the past, the Greeks could justify the colonisation of the area: they could claim to have the right to colonise the region, since their ancestors had been there before. Moreover, they could connect the new area to the fatherland and preserve cohesion with their compatriots (by using traditional heroes from the mainland as a link between them). For prototypical themes and patterns in colonisation-stories see: Dougherty 1993, 3-82.

24 Winter 2008, 68. Heroic lieux de mémoire were often used as 'background' during a ritual. When members of a community were present at a ritual, the meaning of a lieu could be revitalised in collective memory (Alcock 2002, 28). For example, the procession during the Great Panathenaea, the festival celebrating the benevolence of Athena, led to the Athenian acropolis, where stood the olive tree that the goddess herself had once planted, according to the tradition.

25 It is also possible that one and the same story is connected to different landmarks. For example, according to the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, Leto bore her son under a palm tree on the island of Delos (15-8). However, according to a local tradition in Asia Minor, this event took place at an olive tree in Ortygia, a place near Ephesus (Str. 597). By presenting Ortygia as the birthplace of Apollo, the local inhabitants could contest the existing tradition and raise the status of their city. In a similar vein, there were several tombs in Greece that were purported to be that of Agamemnon. Pausanias, for example, says that both the inhabitants of Mycenae and those of Amyclae claimed to possess the tomb of the general (3.16.7, 3.19.6).

26 See further 4.2.
rect’, historical version of a lieu de mémoire and reject the other versions as ‘unhistorical’. Since (in case of the Greeks) the connection of physical elements with the past usually had no historical basis, it is better to regard the past as ‘many-voiced’ and not to dismiss any of the versions. In my opinion, it is important to determine the functions of the different versions. These can be deduced from the socio-cultural context: the memories with which a place is ‘invested’ are modified according to the changing needs of the community.

The Greeks connected not only natural places (such as caves and rocks), but also objects, to the distant past. On the one hand, Greeks collected ‘real’ objects from the distant past, such as grave gifts from the Bronze Age, and preserved them by storing them in sanctuaries. On the other hand, they also associated more ‘modern’ objects – that is, archaic and classical objects – with the time of heroes (projection). For example, the Athena temple in Lindos contained a golden omphalos phiale, a votive offering supposedly given by Telephus, the heroic king of Mysia (IG XII, 1 Lindos II 2, 48). This specific type of phiale, however, was only produced in Greece from the archaic period onwards. The Greeks, then, supposed that the heroes had used the same objects as they themselves did.

According to Boardman, the archaic and classical Greeks rarely attempted to recreate objects from the distant past. Although such objects were diligently collected and stored, they were rarely copied. Before the Hellenistic Age, moreover, the Greeks were not acquainted with the concept of restoration. When an old building was damaged, it was repaired with modern, contemporary building pieces. For example, the Hera temple in Olympia, which was built around 600, contained wooden columns in its original form. These columns were gradually replaced by stone columns at different times. This is the reason why the columns and capitals that have been found by archaeologists differ from each other.

It seems likely that lieu de mémoire, which were omnipresent in the Greek landscape, influenced the construction of the past by the tragedians. This book examines how this has happened and aims to determine which lieu the tragedi-

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27 Van Sas 1995, 10.
28 Alcock 2002, 28-32. Lieux de mémoire can eventually fall into oblivion. This can happen unintentionally, for example, when the community dissolves and the need to remember the past disappears, or intentionally, when groups try to destroy traces of the past (damnatio memoriae). In Greece, for example, the rise of Christianity caused the forgetting of many classical lieux de mémoire. For the process of forgetting lieux de mémoire see: Winter 2008, 72.
29 What is more, Greek sanctuaries contained objects made from perishable materials. The temple of Apollo in Sicyon, for example, allegedly possessed Penelope’s wooden loom and Marsyas’ reed flute (Ampel. 8.5). It is of course unlikely that these objects were ancient and had stayed intact from a distant past.
30 Boardman 2002, 45; 91.
31 Grethlein 2010, 286.
32 Coldstream 1985, 73.
ans have incorporated in the heroic world, and why. Moreover, it analyses whether the tragedians adopted only existing traditions about lieux de mémoire, or also connected new memories to these places themselves. Lastly, the book examines whether or not the tragedians connected stories to elements of the landscape that were unspecified before or, in other words, whether they themselves have made indefinite, physical places in the landscape lieux de mémoire for particular stories.33

Final remarks
This section has demonstrated that memories of the past are influenced by tradition and innovation and can be connected to the actual, physical landscape in the form of lieux de mémoire. It has also shown that both the concept of anachronism and the identification of the heroic world with the Bronze Age are problematic. These approaches will therefore not be further pursued in this book.

In chapter 1 it was stated that many scholars criticise the presence of contemporary elements in the heroic world, in particular spatial elements. In their view, these elements violate the image of the heroic world. This section, however, has demonstrated that the presence of contemporary elements relates to the dynamic character of the heroic world. Contemporary elements can enter a construction of the past, since memory changes in accordance with the situation in the present.

33 Tragedy often presents aetiologies about lieux de mémoire. Aetiologies describe the origin of a place or structure in the heroic past. They connect the heroic past to the present of the audience, in which the lieu still exists. For general discussions on aetiology see e.g.: Graf [1987] 1996, 110-7; Mastronarde 2010, 158. In tragedy, aetiologies are often spoken by characters that have knowledge of the future. This character can be a god (e.g. E. IT 1466-70) or a human who has received an oracle (E. Hec. 1265-73). It is also possible that an aetiology is presented as a promise. For example, in Euripides’ Heracles, Theseus ensures his friend that the Athenians will honour him with a temple in the future (1330-1). Aetiologies are often marked by phrases like ‘henceforth’ (E. HF 1330 τὸ λοιπόν) and ‘forever’ (A. PV 732 εἰσαεί). What is more, according to Dunn (1996, 56-7) and Scullion (1999-2000, 217-33), tragic aetiologies sometimes refer to buildings and objects that do not exist in the world of the audience. They call these fictive aetiologies. They state that in these cases, the buildings and objects only have a thematic function in the plot. Seaford (2009, 221-34) and Mastronarde (2010, 183 n59), on the contrary, claim that aetiologies always refer to existing structures. In their view, the relation between past and present would be undermined, if the structures mentioned in the aetiologies were absent in the contemporary world. For example, in Euripides’ Suppliants, Athena instructs Theseus to engrave a peace treaty on a bronze tripod and erect this object in Delphi (1191-1204). According to Seaford, this tripod has really existed; according to Scullion, it has not. Both of these views, however, are based on speculation. Grethlein (2003, 120), for his part, states that it is impossible to determine whether the tripod has really existed, since we have no further evidence about it. This seems to me to be the best course.
Scholars not only criticise the presence of contemporary elements, but also show little understanding of their function. It is an aim of this book to analyse whether contemporary spatial elements are really ‘dramatically inappropriate’, as scholars have claimed, or whether they have a function in the plot. The last section of this chapter provides the analytical tools for determining the function of space in literature.

2.2 Literary functions of space

For many centuries, the concept of time has dominated literary theories. The opinion of Lessing (1766) that literature is temporal art, and that visual art is spatial art, set the tone for many critics until the twentieth century. In the 1930s, however, Bakhtin paved the way for the study of space in literature by developing his concept of the chronotope. Bakhtin argued that time and space are intrinsically connected – in literature as well as in empirical reality – and must therefore be studied together. Since then, space has become a popular research topic among literary critics. One of the (numerous) current approaches to space concerns its functions in the plot of a literary work. This section gives an overview of these functions.

Background

A first function of space is the creation of background for a story – in other words, to set up a world in which the events can take place. The heroic world created in Greek tragedy is physically presented in the Greek theatre, which can be divided in three parts:

1) The orchestra of the theatre, also called the scenic space, represents the setting of the play – the place where the actual events take place. The setting can be, for example, the Greek army camp at Troy (E. Tr.) or the island of Lemnos in the Aegean (S. Ph.). The scene building, which demarcates the orchestra, usually represents a specific heroic space, such as the barrack of Agamemnon (E. Tr.) or the cave of Philoctetes (S. Ph.). The setting can remain constant during a play, or it

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34 In his Laocoön, Lessing compares the narrative of Laocoon's death in Vergil's Aeneid with the ‘Laocoön group’, the statue of Athanodorus and Polydorus. According to Lessing, literature presents progressive actions, of which the various parts are presented after each other (nacheinander), which results in a sequence of time. Visual representations, Lessing claims, show static actions, of which the various parts are presented next to each other (nebeneinander) in space.


36 The functions of space in this section are adopted from De Jong 2012, 13-7. For an overview of other approaches to space see e.g.: Buchholz and Jahn [2005] 2008, 553-4.

can change. In Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, for example, the setting changes from the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi to that of Athena in Athens (235).

(2) The interior of the scene building is called the *extrascenic space*. Characters can enter this building, but what happens inside remains hidden from view of the audience. However, parts of the interior are sometimes shown by the *ekkyklema*, a wheeled platform that rolls through the doors of the scene building into the *orchestra*. For example, in Euripides’ *Heracles*, the Theban hero is shown on this platform, sitting dispiritedly against a column of his palace, after having killed his children inside.

(3) The other parts of the heroic world, which do not belong to the scenic or extrascenic space, are called the *distanced space*. This part of the heroic world is not physically represented in the theatre but evoked by the words of the characters. Euripides’ *Ion*, for example, takes place in Delphi, but the characters frequently refer to events that have happened in the distanced space of Athens. Characters have access to the distanced space via the *eisodoi*, the ways leading to and from the *orchestra*.

In addition to the creation of background for the events, space can also be connected to specific elements of the plot, such as themes or motifs, and add special connotations to these.

**Thematic function**

Space that supports, reflects or sustains a *theme* of the plot has a thematic function. An example of this function can be found in the *parados* of Euripides’ *Ion*, which gives a description of the sculptures of the temple of Apollo in Delphi. These sculptures portray the battle of the Olympian gods against the earth-born Giants (218 Γᾶς τέκνων) who attempted to overthrow their power and order. Athena, for example, is presented as chasing the Giant Enceladus, and Zeus is depicted as hurling his thunderbolt at his opponent Mimas (206-15).

These sculptures have a *thematic* function in the play, since they relate to one of its central themes: the taming of violent, chthonian forces by Olympian gods. The Olympian Apollo tames the violent actions of Ion and Creusa in the play, who are ‘chthonian’ characters like the Giants, because they belong to the earth-born royal family of Athens. Apollo, who has brought Ion as an infant to Delphi, wants to restore his status as legitimate heir of the Athenian throne. He therefore plans to reunite him with his mother Creusa, who wrongly believes that her son has died (64-75). Although mother and son meet in Delphi, Apollo’s plan almost fails, since they do not recognise each other. Creusa thinks that Ion is bent on capturing the Athenian throne – to which in her view he has no right – and therefore attempts to kill him. When Ion discovers her attempt, he plans to kill Creusa in return. Apollo nonetheless tames their violent actions, like the Olympians on the sculptures, and saves both of them from death: first he reveals Creusa’s
intentions to Ion (1196-1200) and then sends the Pythia from his temple, who reveals to them their true relationship (1347-9).38

Symbolic function

Space has a symbolic function when it is semantically charged with certain cultural or ideological ideas. An example of space that often has a symbolic function is the sea. The archaic and classical Greeks associated the sea with threat and danger. The sea was a place where many fatal accidents occurred, particularly as the result of shipwreck, and where dangerous creatures were supposed to live. Overseas trade was interrupted during winter, when the Greeks considered the sea too turbulent for sailing (Hes. Op. 618-30).

This cultural stance towards the sea is reflected in literature. Poets often use the sea as a symbol of danger. For example, in Aeschylus’ Seven against Thebes, the maidens of the chorus compare their city with a ship on sea when they are under attack from the Argive army:

κακῶν δ’ ὥσπερ θάλασσα κῦμ’ ἄγει,  It is as if the sea brings waves of evil.
tὸ μὲν πίτνον, ἄλλο δ’ ἀείρει  As one subsides, the sea raises another
τρίχαλον, ἃ καὶ περὶ πρύμ- of triple force, that crashes around
ναν πόλεως καχλάζει. the stern of the city.

(A. Th. 758-61)

The pounding of the waves against the ship symbolises the danger of the war for the city: as the sea endangers the ship, the war threatens the city. In this passage, the sea is not a real constituent of the heroic world (it does not lie outside the walls of Thebes) but a product of the imagination of the maidens. The comparison of a city in trouble with a ship on sea is a standard literary motif that was frequently used in Greek literature. It is known as the ‘ship of state’ motif.39

Characterising function

Space has a characterising function when it relates to the traits, disposition or behaviour of a character. For example, in his name play, Hippolytus gathers a garland for Artemis from an ‘undefiled meadow’ (73-4 ἀκηράτου λειμῶνος).40 This meadow is watered by the goddess Reverence and is only accessible for those who are ‘virtuous by nature’ (78-81).

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38 Mastronarde 1975, 163-76; Zacharia 2003, 19-20. The Pythia reveals their relationship by bringing onstage the basket in which Creusa had exposed Ion after birth.
40 The term ἀκηράτος is often associated with chastity (E. Tr. 675, Or. 575).
The features of the meadow relate to the character of Hippolytus, who embodies the qualities needed for entering the meadow. He is a chaste young man who rejects all kinds of sexual desire, and a devout worshipper of Artemis, the traditional goddess of virginity (14-6). Hippolytus’ chastity plays an important role in the play: it arouses the wrath of Aphrodite, the goddess of sexuality, who causes his eventual downfall (9-56).

Psychologising function
Space has a psychologising function when it relates to the feelings or emotions of a character. Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* provides an example of this function. In this play, Prometheus is punished for his disobedience to Zeus and his theft of the divine fire. Zeus orders Hermes to chain the Titan to a rock in Scythia, which is an uninhabited region lying at the margins of the earth (1-2). When Prometheus is exposed to the elements of nature, Zeus rouses a devastating storm. The Titan wails:

... χθὼν σεσάλευται, The Earth is shaking,
βρυχία δ’ ἠχὼ παραμυκᾶται and from the deep the sound of thunder
βροντῆς, ἕλικες δ’ ἐκλάμπουσι echoes. Fiery twists of lightning
sigmaτηρήσεις ζάπυροι, στρόμβοι δὲ κόνιν shine forth, and whirlwinds turn
εἰλισσοῦσι, σκιρτὰ δ’ ἀνήμων the dust around. Blasts of all the winds
πνεύματα πάνω εἰς ἄλληλα are leaping at each other,
στάσιν ἀντίπνουσι ἀποδεικνύμενα, showing an opposite strife.
ξυντετάρακται δ’ αἰθήρ πόντῳ. The air is confounded with the sea.

(A. *PV* 1081-8)

The elements of nature have a psychologising function, as they arouse a sense of fear in Prometheus (1090 φόβον) and add to his despair (1091-3).

A special form of the psychologising function is the pathetic fallacy.41 This concept refers to the attribution of human feelings and emotions to space. Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* presents an example of this phenomenon. After the death of Eteocles and Polynices, the Theban maidens are stricken by grief and sing a lament (822-956). The maidens are not only in distress themselves, but they also present the physical structures of the city as grieving:

διήκει δὲ καὶ πόλιν στόνος· Grieving spreads through the city:
στένουσι πύργοι, στένει the walls lament, and the soil
πέδον φιλανδρον. that loves these men laments.

(A. *Th.* 900-2)

41 For an elaborate analysis of this concept see: Jenkyns 1998.
The feelings of the environment reflect those of the maidens. This intensifies the atmosphere of grief that the maidens create.

It is not always easy to determine one specific function of space in a certain context: it is possible that several functions are at play at the same time. For example, a spatial element can have symbolic connotations, which in their turn may support a theme of the plot. Such an element, then, has both a symbolic as well as a thematic function. What is more, the functions given here are only meant as an instrument to facilitate the literary interpretation of space. They are not a straightjacket into which every spatial element has to be forced.

**Preview**

The remaining chapters will be devoted to a detailed analysis of the physical heroic world in tragedy. Since it would be a too extensive task to analyse the whole of the heroic world in all tragedies, the study will be restricted to the presentation of the cities of Troy (chapter 3) and Athens (chapter 4). The chapters will analyse the layout of these cities and determine to what extent they contain traditional or contemporary spaces. Moreover, comparisons between Homer and tragedy will be made to evaluate the supposed Homeric character of the tragic world. Each paragraph will begin with a short description of the relevant space in Homer, to which the space in tragedy will be compared. The cities of Troy and Athens are useful case studies, since they are each other’s opposites. An analysis of Troy and Athens will make clear how the tragedians presented a ‘Homeric’ city on the one hand and a ‘non-Homeric’ city on the other.  

The chapters will also analyse the literary function of the various spaces: it will be determined whether contemporary spatial elements have to be regarded as ‘dramatically inappropriate’, as scholars have claimed, or whether they have a function in the plot.

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42 See also: introduction.